

Daniel 9A 70 Sevens/Weeks

(April 14, 2024)

We are going to finish up with the last few verses of **Daniel 8:23-27** and then move into **Daniel 9**. We'll cover the first half of **Daniel 9** and save the actual breakdown of the second half of **Daniel 9**, which includes the infamous 70 "sevens" or "weeks" as it has become known to students of the Bible.

23 “And in the latter time of their kingdom,
When the transgressors have reached their fullness,
A king shall arise,
Having fierce features,
Who understands sinister schemes.

24 His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power;
He shall destroy fearfully,
And shall prosper and thrive;
He shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people.

25 “Through his cunning
He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule;
And he shall exalt himself in his heart.
He shall destroy many in their prosperity.
He shall even rise against the Prince of princes;
But he shall be broken without human means.

26 “And the vision of the evenings and mornings
Which was told is true;
Therefore seal up the vision,
For it refers to many days in the future.”

27 And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king's business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it.

There is a difference of opinion regarding how the above verses interpret and who they are ultimately referring to and I'm speaking only of conservative biblical scholars. Some take the above verses to refer solely to Antiochus Epiphanes. Others believe the verses only refer to the coming Antichrist. Still others (myself included), believe that these verses refer first to Antiochus and finally to the coming Antichrist, whom Paul calls the "man of sin/man of lawlessness" in **2 Thessalonians 2**. Each student of the Bible will need to arrive to their own conclusions based on their own study.

Certainly, **Daniel 8:23-27** refers *first* to Antiochus and if we had time and space, we could compare this with 1 Macc. 1:10. Antiochus arose in the latter period of the four kingdoms that came into existence after Alexander's death. He became the 8th king of the Syrian empire portion of Alexander's Grecian Empire.

Because of who he was, Antiochus Epiphanes was very bold and deceptive. In fact, this is a trait of all true leaders. They tend to see things that others do not. In **verse 24**, we learn that his *power shall be mighty but not by his own power*. This essentially means that it was God who allowed Antiochus to have power at all. It is likely God allowed Antiochus' rise to rule in part as an arm of discipline to the nation of Israel. God allows and even causes certain people to rise to the top so that He can use them to do what He

needs to have done. It is the same today with globalists who are literally changing the times, the seasons and morality itself – God allows it.

Verse 24 tells us that Antiochus did tremendous damage, especially to Jerusalem and the temple. He became prosperous and carried out his objectives ("And shall prosper and thrive"). He successfully destroyed many mighty people, including the High Priest and Jewish leaders. He fooled many people with his shrewdness ("Through his cunning He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule"), and as we noted previously, he even exalted himself as though he was a god.

In **verse 26**, Daniel is told to seal up the vision, which likely means to "make it secure," not necessarily secret. This would allow it to remain until the very end of human history. A good question here is does "many days" mean to Antiochus' time or does it refer only to Antichrist's time? In my opinion it is probably best to take it as a near/far fulfillment. What Antiochus did to a small local (Middle East), degree what Antichrist will do *globally*, or throughout the entire world. The text ultimately points to Antichrist and his short reign during the coming Tribulation period that will indeed, effect the entire world.

Now that we have clarified that portion of **Daniel 8**, let's move onto **Daniel 9**, which is neatly divided into two parts. The first portion of the chapter deals with Daniel's prayer based on his understanding of Jeremiah's prophecy (**Jeremiah 25:11-12**). The second portion of **Daniel 9**, which we'll deal with next time deals with what is known as the 70 Weeks prophecy.

Other bits of information that is good to know, but not exhaustive is that **Daniel 9** dates from 539 BC, when Darius (Gobryus) ruled. Belshazzar's feast and the fall of Babylon to Cyrus, in **Daniel 5**, occurred earlier the same year. Daniel's vision of the ram and the goat, in **Daniel 8**, took place 12 years earlier, in 551 B.C.

Daniel had obtained and been reading a copy of Jeremiah's prediction concerning the length of the captivity of Israel/Judah once captured by Babylon's Nebuchadnezzar. Because of his study, Daniel understood the 70 years to be a literal 70-year period. Since the end of that 70 years was approaching, Daniel began to pray.

Jeremiah had revealed that God would restore His people to their land when they prayed to Him wholeheartedly (**Jeremiah 29:12-14**; Constable). Daniel prays his prayer in **Daniel 9:3-19**. Even though Daniel was sure of the prophecy, he petitioned the Lord in prayer anyway. This is a good lesson for us. We should, as Paul says, pray without ceasing (**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**). We should be in constant communication with our God. Our lives should be bathed in prayer for all that we undertake for the LORD.

Through prayer we become partners with God in bringing His will to pass in the world (Constable). Prophecy should bring us to our knees (Feinberg). Daniel's humility, reverence, and earnestness are the hallmarks of effective prayer (Walvoord). In essence, Daniel's prayer begins with confession of sin and guilt and he is actually interceding for himself and all of Israel.

Daniel's prayer ends with a request for mercy and for God to restore Israel to its land. **Verses 5-6**, Daniel stresses God's faithfulness and admits Israel's unfaithfulness. Even though Daniel had been faithful to God, as an Israelite himself, he identifies with Israel's sins. Jesus did the same by identifying with us sinners though He was completely sinless. What made Daniel one of God's greatest saints was not his sinlessness but his sensitivity to the true depth of his sin (Whitcomb).

Israel's main sin was disregarding God's words to them through His prophets (cf. **2 Chron. 30:10**). Daniel contrasted God's righteousness with Israel's unrighteousness. To disregard God's Word is "the beginning of all moral disorders" (Leupold). We are seeing this throughout global society today. What existed and was normalized in Sodom and Gomorrah is now becoming normative throughout the world today. Remember our previous article on what the "+" symbol in LGBTQIA+ stands for?

Israel's sins (rebellion, idolatry), resulted in God's punishment (**9:11-14**), so God did what He promised to do when Israel rebelled (**Deut. 28:15-68**). Daniel praised God for His righteous dealings with His people who had rebelled against Him. Prayer is only acceptable when it is accompanied by repentance – a desire to turn from sin.

After thorough confession, Daniel prays for God to restore Israel. Daniel refers to Moses and the Exodus, comparing that situation to the current situation with Babylonia. In both cases, the Israelites were essentially enslaved by a foreign power and they needed to look to God for release.

Daniel based his entire appeal to God on the fact that God is compassionate (**Exodus 32:12-14**). We deserve hell, but God's compassion/love has given us a way to avoid it, but in general, I'm not sure we can fully comprehend God's love/compassion.

Notice that during this entire prayer, not once did Daniel tell God what to do. Instead, Daniel simply asked God to *hear*, *see* and to *listen* and *act*. Daniel's humility left the decisions to God.

In essence, the Gospel message is built into the book of Daniel in a variety of ways. That Gospel points to the New Testament revelations and to Jesus Himself. It is all based on faith alone in God's power and ability. Without God moving and doing what He has done throughout the ages, there would simply be no salvation for humanity. God reached down and specifically chose a people He called Israel. From this nation, God would bring the Messiah/Savior into the world in order to secure salvation for as many as would come to Him.

We see this working itself out in the life and timeline of the nation of Israel time and time again. It is not by works that anyone is saved, whether in the Old Testament or New. It is always by faith, period.

Next time: We will look at **Daniel 9:20-27**

- Gabriel brings God's response
- Gabriel explains the 70 "sevens"
- These 70 "sevens" take us through to the crucifixion of Jesus and the 2nd Coming