

Sent: Wednesday, April 27, 2016 8:35 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Daniel 9

Daniel 9 has to be one of the greatest chapters in the Bible! It records one of the greatest prayers--and one of the most significant, and intriguing, prophetic messages--in all of the Bible! It's the prayer of a prophet (Daniel), who was "concerned" about the future of God's "chosen people"--and a prophecy delivered by the same angel (Gabriel) who, more than 500 years later, would be sent from God to announce to the Virgin Mary that she would bear a Son, whose name would be called "Jesus"--who would become the Savior of the world, and "reign over the house of Jacob forever" (Luke 1:26-33)! Both the prayer and the prophecy have important future ramifications not only for the nation and people of Israel, but also for us--and for everybody in the world!

The prayer was addressed by Daniel to the "covenant-keeping" God, identified as "Yahweh," after reviewing Old Testament revelations and realizing afresh that this "great and awesome" God of Israel was serious about dealing with "sin"--and always kept His promises! He was aware of the prophecies of Jeremiah, and particularly the reason for the 70 years of Babylonian captivity (e.g., Jeremiah 25:8-12)! He had seen how God had dealt with His people in the past and what was necessary to experience His blessings, and not the consequences of disobedience (or "curses," as clearly stated in Deuteronomy 28 and elsewhere)! And so he prayed a prayer which expressed the very attitudes and realizations every human being needs to pray in order to make contact with Him and receive His mercy and grace! His prayer was a response to what he had read in the holy scrolls, and it brought Daniel humbly to his knees in acknowledging and confessing the sin and wickedness of all the people of Israel (including himself)--sin which separated them from God and led to their 70 years of bondage--and "made them a reproach to all those around them" (Dan. 9:16). You have to read it for yourself once again (in Dan. 9:3-19) to realize, as Daniel did, the gravity of sin, and why it ultimately required God to send His Son into the world to shed His blood on the cross to make "atonement" for it!

Daniel must have been familiar too with the words of the prophet Isaiah: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not short that it cannot save; nor is His ear so dull that it cannot hear! But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God--and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear!" (Isa. 59:1-2). Or from II Chronicles 7:14--"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and forgive their sin, and will heal their land!"

And Daniel writes (in Dan. 9:20-23) that "while he was praying and confessing his own sin and the sin his people Israel, and presenting his supplication before the Lord his God..." Gabriel appeared to "give him insight and understanding" concerning what was ahead for His people! The message was startling! Gabriel told Daniel that "seventy weeks" (understood as "weeks of years," or a total of 490 years) were "decreed for your people and your holy city" to accomplish six things: (1) to finish the transgression, (2) to make the end of sin, (3) to make atonement for iniquity, (4) to bring in everlasting righteousness, (5) to seal up vision and prophecy, and (6) to anoint the most holy place.

Interesting that instead of dealing with the 490 years that were behind (the number of years the children of Israel had neglected the "Sabbath year rest" for the land, which resulted in the 70 years of Babylonian captivity! Lev. 26: 34, 43), God (through Gabriel) gave Daniel a look into the 490 years ahead! Daniel asked God about the past! God surprised him by talking about the 490 years in the future! (Just a little side note!)

Anyway, Gabriel divides the 490 years (or "70 weeks") into three separate periods: 49 years, 434 years, and 7 years--all focused on Israel! The first 49 years (or seven weeks) is commonly thought to represent the time between March 14, 445 BC (and it's reaffirmed in history) when (in Nehemiah 2:8) Artaxerxes, the king of Persia, would give a decree to Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls, to 396 BC (49 years later) when walls were completed, "even in the midst of troubled times"! The second period of 434 years is commonly interpreted to represent the time from 396 BC to the time of Jesus' triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem to present Himself as Messiah--or, some think, the time of the crucifixion of Christ (both in 30s AD). The time, as Daniel notes (in 9:26) when the Messiah, Jesus Christ, would be "cut off"--thus ending the opportunity, at that time, for the Jews to crown Him as King of the Jews!

According to Wiersbe, the first three purposes noted above--having to do with "making a reconciliation for iniquity"-- though not recognized by the Jewish hierarchy--were accomplished by Christ when He gave His life on the cross as an atonement for the sin of the world! This leaves the last three promises--and the last 7 years (or 70th week) as prophesied but not yet fulfilled! And obviously not in sequence with the first 483 years (or 69 weeks) of the prophecy! There's a "big gap" which is not addressed--or even made known to Daniel!

The 70th week--or last 7-year period--represents a time of great tribulation, still to come! The "gap" between the 69th and 70th week is where we're at! It has to do with the so-called "church age, the "time of the Gentiles," and the "mystery" of Jews and Gentiles brought together in the "body of Christ"--a "mystery" which was hidden by God in Old Testament times and not revealed until the time of Christ and the apostles!

Well, some of the prophecy of Daniel 9 has already been fulfilled, and the rest will be fulfilled in the "end times," in which we're living--we believe! The next event to occur, according to I Thessalonians 4:13-18 and I Corinthians 15:51-58, is the "rapture of the church"--which will then usher in the 70th week, 7-year Tribulation period, along with the coming of the Antichrist--and the so-called "time of Jacob's trouble" (again with a focus on the nation of Israel!), but then, we believe, the second coming of Christ to set up His Millennial Kingdom! But more of this in the lessons to come!

We need to pray like Daniel, seek direction for our lives from His Word--and live with the same kind of tenacity, concern for others, and faithfulness exhibited by him throughout our study of Daniel!

On to Daniel 10!

May God bless your week!

Lowell