

DISCOVER PROPHECY



The Beginning of the End

11

Jesus The Focus

Throughout the Bible, as it speaks on various subjects, it always points to Jesus Christ. As we look at this time prophecy, the longest one in the Bible, we will discover that Jesus is the center of attention.

The book of Daniel has both narratives and prophecies. These narratives have become very popular among the children. The fiery furnace, the lions den, etc. But Daniel also contains a great deal of prophetic insight, some we have examined already. Yet this prophecy is one of the most profound and enlightening in the book. This prophecy not only reveals the Bible's accuracy in prediction, as God has informed the world, but points to the centrality of Jesus Christ in the Bible, even the time prophecies of the Old Testament.

Daniel 9:25 says, "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks." This prophecy tells us that the coming Messiah would be an important part of this message. Let's look at this prophecy and how God has worked.

Jerusalem Captured

The book of Daniel begins by telling us that the nation of Israel was taken captive by the supreme power of Babylon. This captivity endured for seventy years until the people were free to return once again to the city and rebuild the ruins of Jerusalem. Prophesying before the event, God said to the nation of Israel, "And this whole land shall be a desolation and a horror, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years" Jeremiah 25:11. God told the nation of Israel that if they didn't change their ways from following after the wickedness of the world, that He would remove His protection from them, the result would be captivity in Babylon for 70 long years. And as foretold, that happened. The country of Babylon came in and took the nation of Israel captive, destroying the temple and taking from it all of its precious utensils. Daniel and his three friends were among those taken to the city of Babylon after Israel was captured.

The Sanctuary Cleansed

Later on in the book of Daniel, we come to the longest time prophecy recorded in scripture. In Daniel 8:14 it reads, "And he said to me, 'For 2,300 days, then the sanctuary will be cleansed.'" Remember now that the cleansing of the sanctuary, known as the day of atonement, was synonymous with judgment. So God then instructed Daniel concerning the timing of judgment.

This judgment or cleansing of the sanctuary was not the typical service that occurred yearly in the life of Israel, but rather a representation of the actual judgment that would occur. Where the high priest was one to intercede for the people before God in the earthly sanctuary, Jesus Christ is now our high priest in heaven in the heavenly sanctuary. So we are looking here at the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the beginning of the end.

Daniel had been given a powerful vision of the future, seeing some awesome and terrifying events that would come to pass. These events were pertaining to the people of God. He saw how God's people would be put under heavy and enormous persecution and many lives lost in death. He saw how God's name would be trampled upon and the ministry of Jesus Christ devalued.

This pained Daniel a great deal, and yet he himself did not fully understand the vision. It had yet to be completely interpreted to him. After receiving the information of the vision, he was perplexed to understand its full meaning. "Then I, Daniel, was exhausted and sick for days. Then I got up again and carried on the king's business; but I was astounded at the vision, and there was none to explain it" Daniel 8:27.

Daniel then enters into a season of intense prayer and intercession for himself and the nation of Israel. During this time Daniel pours his heart out to God and asks for the forgiveness of sin, both himself and the nation as a whole. During this time of prayer, God sends an angel to explain the vision to Daniel. "While I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. And he gave me instruction and talked with me, and said, 'O

Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding” Daniel 9:21-23. What does the 2,300 days mean? When would the sanctuary be cleansed? When would judgment occur? When would be the time of the end?

God’s Special People

Enclosed within this time prophecy is a sad foretelling of Israel’s ministry to the world and its coming to an end. Note what it says, “Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place” Daniel 9:24. Here it says that if the people of God (the Israelites or Jews) could not turn away from their wickedness, seek righteousness and become committed to God again, they would be cut off from God. (Note: the word “decreed” in Hebrew is chatak, meaning cut off). If the people would not recommit to God, they would no longer be God’s special people! He would use others.

When would this occur? How long would the people have to return to God? God says that they would have the length of seventy weeks. If in seventy weeks they did not return to God, they would be cut off.

A Matter of Time

So if the time prophecy is the length of 2,300 days and the sanctuary was to be cleansed at that time, when does this prophecy begin? If the Israelites had 70 weeks to repent, when would it start and when would it end? How do we determine the dates? We let the Bible do that.

It is important to remember when looking at time prophecy that each day equals a year. This is only true in time prophecy, not all references to time. “I have assigned it to you for forty days, a day for each year” Ezekiel 4:6. So when we are looking at the time prophecy, each day we come across actually represent a year. So the time prophecy of 2,300 days would actually be 2,300 years. The seventy weeks would actually be 490 years (7 days a week X 70 weeks = 490 days or years).

“So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks” Daniel 9:25. There we have it! The time prophecy begins at the issuing of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem. Remember it had been destroyed

and captured by Babylon. As soon as a decree goes forth to rebuild it, God tells Daniel, that is when the time prophecy occurs. And from that time, it will be 69 weeks until the Messiah comes (7+62).

So when was the decree to rebuild and restore Jerusalem? “Artaxerxes, king of kings, to Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of Heaven.... I have issued a decree that any of the people of Israel and their priests and the Levites in my kingdom who are willing to go to Jerusalem, may go with you” Ezra 7:12,13. When was that? The date of the decree was 457 BC. There is our starting point.

The Coming Messiah

Daniel 9:25 said that from the decree count 69 weeks. At that time, the Messiah would come. Since a day is a year in Bible prophecy, we would come now to 483 years after 457 BC (69 weeks X 7 days a week = 483 days/years).

Here’s where it starts to get awesome! Count 483 years from 457 BC (keep in mind there was no zero (0) year and you will arrive at 27 AD. According to Daniel, that is when the Messiah would come. Jesus was to come in 27 AD. The word “Messiah” means the “anointed One.” When was Jesus anointed? At His baptism. When was He baptized? “Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberious Caesar when...all the people were baptized, that Jesus also was baptized” Luke 3: 1,21. Jesus was baptized (or anointed for ministry) in the fifteenth year of Tiberious Caesar’s reign. According to history, that was in the year 27 AD. Just as foretold, Jesus came right on time.

But it goes not only into talking about the beginning of His ministry but also His time in ministry. Note what Daniel says next. “And He will make a firm covenant with the many for one week...” Daniel 9:27. Jesus would be committed to the children of Israel, trying to reach them, as the covenant had been, for one week. The children of Israel would have one week to accept Jesus as the Messiah. Since a day in prophecy is a year, we would have seven years. Seven years from 27 AD would be 34 AD.

But there’s more. It gets more exciting. “...but in the middle of the week He would put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering” Daniel 9:27. In the middle of the seven year period, Jesus would do something that would stop the sacrificial system. The middle of the seven year period would be 31 AD. What did Jesus do in 31 AD to stop the sacrificial system? He died on the cross! As the true lamb of God, He paid the price for mankind, no

longer needing a system of sacrifice. Right here in the heart of the 2,300 day/year prophecy, Jesus Christ and His offering salvation to us is central. Praise the Lord! “The time is fulfilled,” Jesus said, “and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” Mark 1:15. Jesus was talking of a time prophecy. The one in Daniel. There are many New Testament verses referring to the time prophecy. “But when the fullness of time came, God sent for His Son” Galatians 4:4.

When Jesus died on the cross, He caused the sacrificial system to come to an end. It was no longer necessary for mankind to take an animal to the sanctuary to be killed. To show that people can now go to God directly instead of through the priest, something happened in the sanctuary at the moment Jesus died. “And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed His last. And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom” Mark 15:37,38. The veil separating the holy from the most holy place was torn in two, now allowing people to go directly into the presence of God, not needing a priest or the sanctuary services. The symbol of the sanctuary now meets reality and comes to an end.

No Longer God’s People

Remember, the children of Israel had 70 weeks to get right with God. Jesus would give them seven years from the beginning of His ministry, thus allowing another three years for them to accept Him before the covenant would leave them and God would use others to proclaim the message of salvation. That time period ended in AD 34, 490 years (70 prophetic weeks) from the decree to rebuild and restore Jerusalem and seven years (one prophetic week) from the baptism of Jesus.

Because they did not accept the gospel of Jesus, it was given to all mankind to share. In AD 34, Stephen, the first Christian martyr, was stoned. The Jewish leaders rejected the gospel and it went to the Gentiles. Now, we are all spiritual Jews; spiritual Israelites being used of God to proclaim the gospel to the world.

2,300 Years Ends

We now know when the 2,300 days begins and can know with certainty that it is correct because the cross of Christ verifies it. We can now go from that time and come to know when the sanctuary will be cleansed. “For 2,300 days, then the sanctuary shall be cleansed” Daniel 8:14.

We’ve covered now 490 years of the 2,300 years. Subtracting 490 years from the 2,300 leaves us with 1,810 years to the cleansing of the sanctuary. So, 1,810

years from 34 AD would bring us to 1844. According to the Bible, the sanctuary would be cleansed in 1844.

“And the vision of the evenings and mornings which was told is true; therefore seal up the vision, for it pertains to many days in the future” Daniel 8:26. Daniel understood the timing of the cleansing of the sanctuary, but it was not to be made known until the time of the end. From the time of 1844 onward would be considered the time of the end. “Behold, I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation, for it pertains to the appointed time of the end” Daniel 8:19. Since we are living after 1844, we can know for certainty that we are living in the time of the end. The year 1844 was the beginning of the end and the beginning of Jesus special ministry in heaven.

Our High Priest

When the day of atonement came, the high priest would enter into the sanctuary and minister in behalf of the people, allowing the people who sought forgiveness to receive reconciliation and cleansing. The sanctuary being cleansed in 1844 is not an earthly sanctuary, but rather the sanctuary in heaven where Jesus Christ is now ministering in our behalf. Jesus Christ is our high priest. As He is in heaven, He is judging all mankind. Judgment began in 1844 and He is judging the people. Remember, God is also being judged. So we find that the sanctuary message and the prophecy of 1844 tells us that Jesus is ministering in heaven in your behalf and your character and its representation of love for God is showing the angels, people and worlds what the character of God is like.

This is the end. There is no other time prophecy from 1844. No more predictions, no more dates! Jesus is coming, and don’t you want to take advantage of the ministry of our high priest in the heavenly sanctuary above?

The 2300 Days (Years)



