

DANIEL

Lesson 16: Daniel 9:20-27 Counting the Days

- What's your "unfinished project?" Do you doubt you will be able to complete it?
- All of us in this room are unfinished projects!
- Philippians 1:6 – *For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*
- There is no doubt God will finish what He has started.

- This morning, we will catch a glimpse of an extreme unfinished project and learn how God plans to complete it.
- The breadth and scale of what He has done and will yet do is amazing and encouraging!
- God is capable of taking the worst "fixer-upper" on the block and turning it into something truly magnificent. An angel named Gabriel is going to tell us all about it.

BACKGROUND

Sometime after 597BC, a letter written by Jeremiah was delivered to the exiles in Babylon by two emissaries, Elasah and Gemariah.

Jeremiah 29:1 – Now these are the words of the letter which Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the rest of the elders of the exile, the priests, the prophets and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.

- In this letter, Jeremiah declared that Israel's exile would last 70 years.
- Jeremiah 29:10 – *“For thus says the LORD, ‘When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place.’”*
- This statement informed Daniel's prayer life around the time of the Lion's Den incident.

- Daniel 9:2 – *In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.*
- Daniel knew he was near the 70 year marker.
- So, as we observed three weeks ago, Daniel's prayer journal provided insight into His prayer life in this key moment.

REVIEW – 4 PRAYER PRINCIPLES

1. Daniel used prayer to connect Scripture and circumstances;
 2. Acknowledged how sin looks in God's eyes;
 3. Grounded his request on grace;
 4. Prayed from a passion for God to be well thought of.
- **But his prayer concerns something bigger!**

DANIEL'S REQUEST

- Daniel 9:16, 19 – *“O Lord, in accordance with all Your righteous acts, let now Your anger and Your wrath turn away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; for because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people have become a reproach to all those around us. ...O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”*

- Daniel's prayer was prompted by the mention of 70 years in Jeremiah's "word to the exiles."
- But clearly Daniel is praying for something greater than just a return to Jerusalem.
- Rochelle and I watched "Jesus Revolution" to relive something remarkable from the 70's.
- Daniel is praying for the "Heart Revolution" described by Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 29:11-14 – *"For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the Lord, "and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you," declares the Lord, "and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile."*

GOD'S ANSWER!

- Daniel's prayer for a prompt end to the Babylonian exile will be answered! (In a couple of years!)
- But Jeremiah's informative word to Daniel specifies solutions for three core needs: (1) history, (2) heart and (3) hope problems.
- Vss. 13-14 – *You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you*

GOD'S ANSWER!

- Israel's heart problem was the root cause of the Assyrian exile, the Babylonian exile, and still defined Israel when Jesus came to Israel.
- Mark 7:6 – *And He said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.'"*

GOD'S ANSWER!

- Gabriel will explain that what happens when some exiles return to Jerusalem (as promised in Jeremiah 29:10) is **definitely not** the whole story.
- **Something far better than mere relocation is coming.**
- **God is going to finish a project that permanently solves Israel's (and our) core problem.**

GABRIEL'S INTRODUCTION

- Daniel 9:20-21 – *Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my God, 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.*

GABRIEL'S INTRODUCTION

- Daniel's prayer was interrupted.
- Gabriel (an angel from his past) appeared!
- This was an "evening prayer" that was a remnant from a prayer pattern associated with the temple. No temple, but praying toward Jerusalem.
- Extreme weariness = he is exhausted from praying. Definitely earnest prayer!

GABRIEL'S INTRODUCTION

- Daniel 9:22-23 – *He gave me instruction and talked with me and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding. At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed; so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision."*
- Immediate answer, slightly delayed delivery

GABRIEL'S INTRODUCTION

- Irony: Counted precious ("highly esteemed") by God, not so much by men.
- Daniel 6:13 – *Then they answered and spoke before the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the injunction which you signed, but keeps making his petition three times a day."*
- **Daniel lived for God's good opinion and not as a man-pleaser. Critical life skill!**

WHAT GABRIEL HAS TO OFFER

- Daniel 9:22-23 – *He gave me **instruction** [byn] and talked with me and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you **insight** [sakal] with **understanding** [byna]. At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed; so give **heed** [byn] to the message and gain **understanding** [byn] of the vision."*
- **What are byn and sakal?**

WHAT GABRIEL HAS TO OFFER

- *Byn* is the ability to distinguish between entities or events or to make connections. $A \neq B$ or $A \rightarrow B$.
- *Sakal* is about biblically informed convictions that translate into words and deeds. Fiery furnace!
- **Gabriel is going to (1) connect Daniel's prayer to answers / historical events and (2) fuel conviction: God will finish what He started.**

GABRIEL'S REVELATION

- Daniel 9:24 – *"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."*
- In Jeremiah 29:10, we read "seventy years." Here Gabriel says "seventy weeks." *Shibim shana* vs. *shibim shabuim*. What are these 70 "weeks?"

GABRIEL'S REVELATION

- The term translated “weeks” (*shabuim*) is often translated “weeks” in the OT, but it literally means “sevens.”
- When Daniel (10:2-3) uses *shabuim* to specify days, he adds “days” (*yom / yamim*).
- In Daniel 10:2-3, the expression translated “three entire weeks” is literally, “three sevens (*shabuim*) of days.”

GABRIEL'S REVELATION

- Daniel 10:2-3 – “*In those days, I, Daniel, had been mourning for **three entire weeks** (three sevens [*shabuim*] of days). I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all until **the entire three weeks** (three sevens [*shabuim*] of days) were completed.*”
- So, Gabriel is saying “seventy sevens” have been decreed for your people. What are these “sevens?”

GABRIEL'S REVELATION

- View A: Those who date Daniel’s prophecy “after the facts” see no clear historical connection and conclude the “sevens” at 185BC.
- View B: The “sevens” are indefinite periods whose numeric segments (7, 62, and 1) have no chronological connection. This is a literary device.
- View C: The 70 “sevens” are literal seven-year periods of time.

GABRIEL'S REVELATION

- Our decimal number system is about multiples of 10.
- But in Israel, seven is key: Creation and calendar orbit around 7 days; every 7th year = sabbatical year.
- Leviticus 25:8: “*You are also to count off seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years, so that you have the time of the seven sabbaths of years, namely, forty-nine years.*” After year 49 = Jubilee.

GABRIEL'S REVELATION

- Daniel is praying based on “70 years.”
- Gabriel declares that **the complete answer to Daniel’s prayer will not be fully realized in 70 years but in 70 “sevens.”**
- Gabriel will provide some key info in vs. 25 that gives those who can make biblical connections some vital intelligence.

GABRIEL'S REVELATION

- Note: These 70 sevens pertain to “your people” and “your holy city.”
- What Gabriel is going to reveal pertains to Israel and to Jerusalem.
- Within the span of seventy sevens, God is going to accomplish 6 things for Israel and for Jerusalem.

SIX OBJECTIVES

- (1) To finish the transgression, (2) to make an 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.
- All six will be accomplished by the 70th “seven.”
- The first three deal with redemption, the latter three with restoration. **Think History, Heart and Hope!**

SIX OBJECTIVES

- To understand the first three, we recall Daniel’s prayer:
- Daniel 9:5 – *“We have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances.”*
- ***If this sin/heart problem is not fixed, then we will keep repeating the same pattern.***

SIX OBJECTIVES

1. To finish the transgression = to bring sin of one against another to an end.
 2. To make an end of sin = Make all sin in general something that no longer affects His people.
 3. **Climax:** To make atonement for iniquity = to forgive sin from the past and provide a clean slate.
- **This is the great longing of the OT & Jesus**

SIX OBJECTIVES

4. To bring in everlasting righteousness = impart to Your people the capacity for righteousness that reflects Your heart.
5. To seal up (same as “make an end”) vision and prophecy = bring Your promises to Your people to their conclusion, ie., fulfill all you have promised.

SIX OBJECTIVES

6. To anoint the most holy place = to anoint **a** most holy place = to bless us with Your presence.
- **Taken together, Gabriel is describing the full realization of God’s good purpose for His people.**
 - **This will be accomplished in the span of 70 “sevens.”**

SIX OBJECTIVES

- **Everything God has promised Israel, everything good He has started, God will bring to completion with nothing left out.**
- **God wonderfully finishes what He starts.**
- **Gabriel then provides an overview of precisely how God is going to do it.**

FROM THE DECREE TO MESSIAH

- Daniel 9:25 – *“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; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.”*
- There are several decrees that pertain to Israel that we are aware of.

FROM THE DECREE TO MESSIAH

- For example, a decree was issued in 538 BC that allowed some exiles to return.
- Haggai reports that eventually, the temple was rebuilt by these returnees after 524BC.
- But **this decree** concerns the rebuilding of Jerusalem including squares and conduits. Think complete restoration.

FROM THE DECREE TO MESSIAH

- The closest candidate is the decree of Artaxerxes in 445 BC recorded in Nehemiah.
- Nehemiah received a depressing report on the state of Jerusalem. Prayed and fasted 4 months!
- Nehemiah 2:5 – *I said to the king, “If it please the king, and if your servant has found favor before you, send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers’ tombs, that I may rebuild it.”*

FROM THE DECREE TO MESSIAH

- 17 • Nehemiah 2:7-8 – *And I said to the king, “If it please the king, let letters be given me for the governors of the provinces beyond the River, that they may allow me to pass through until I come to Judah, and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king’s forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress which is by the temple, for the wall of the city and for the house to which I will go.” And the king granted them to me because the good hand of my God was on me.*

FROM THE DECREE TO MESSIAH

- So from 445 BC, there will be a period of 69 “sevens” to an anointed one (*Mashiah*). Who is that?
- John 4:25-26 – *The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah (μεσσίας) is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am He.”*
- Based on 69 “sevens” we can map the arrival of Jesus.

AFTER THE MESSIAH IS CUT OFF

- Daniel 9:26 – *“Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.”*
- Once week 69 has concluded, two events will follow.
- Messiah will be “cut off and have nothing”

AFTER THE MESSIAH IS CUT OFF

- “Cutting” is the word used of the cutting of a sacrificial victim.
- “Have nothing” suggests being isolated.
- “The people of the prince to come” will destroy the Jerusalem and the temple in an overwhelming way.
- A season of conflict and hardship stretching to “the end” will follow.

THE LAST SEVEN

- Daniel 9:27 – *“And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”*
- “He” is the prince to come.

THE LAST SEVEN

- The “one week” is the final seven years.
- A treaty will be established.
- But at the 3½ year mark, the treaty will be broken, worship of God will be halted and replaced by something abominable, and unprecedented desolation will be unleashed.

THE LAST SEVEN

- But it is fixed and certain that His plans will fail utterly. In this moment, at the end of 70 sevens, six goals will be fully realized:
- (1) To finish the transgression, (2) to make an 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.

APPLICATION

- If God can successfully complete a project of such scale despite daunting opposition and obstacles, then He is more than capable of completing the project that is called “you.”
- Philippians 1:6 – *For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*
- Are you enrolled?