



"At the Cross and the Coming-1"

by Desmond Ford

In some ways, Daniel 9:24-27 is the greatest prophecy of the Bible.

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. (Daniel 9:24-27 KJV)

Seventy Weeks of Years

According to Daniel 9:24:

"Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy."

Seventy weeks of years, or 490 years, were to see the most astonishing, the most magnanimous, the most marvelous events of all time!

God would do something about sin. Legally, he would banish it. God would start the flow of a stream of influence that ultimately would culminate in Christ's return and the empirical banishment of all evil, all death, all tragedy, all pain.

Calvary D-Day

Calvary was D-Day. Do you remember D-Day in World War II? D-

The greatest prophecy of the Bible is Daniel 9:24-27. It tells of the coming Messiah and atonement. Before receiving the prophecy, Daniel prays.

His prayer words enter the prophecy. As he prays we see again that Daniel himself is a prophecy, or prefiguring, of Christ, the True Daniel.

Day happened before VE-Day (Victory in Europe Day) or VJ-Day (Victory in Japan Day). But once D-Day took place, and was successful, people said, "The victory is ours. The troops are in, they've gone in." D-Day was like Calvary. At Calvary the victory was assured.

Daniel's prophecy points to Calvary—and beyond. The Old Testament always fuses the two Advents of Christ. It has to be that way. One of the reasons is because the Second Advent could have come very quickly after

the First, had the Jewish nation accepted the Messiah. Instead of 12 apostles trying to take the gospel to all the world, there would have been a whole nation of millions of people engaged in the Great Commission!

How the Prophecy Happens

Here is a prediction of the wonderful events to happen, and it tells us how they will happen.

The prophecy divides up the 70 weeks of years (or 490 years), into three divisions: Seven weeks of years to rebuild the city; 62 weeks of years until an Anointed One, Messiah the Prince, would come; and a final week of special importance.

Please notice the reference to the coming of "Messiah the Prince." "Messiah" means "an anointed one." (Every priest in ancient times was anointed.) "Prince" does not mean "son of a king" here. The Hebrew word translated here as "prince," does not mean "the son of a king." Rather, it means "a leader, a ruler, a king."

Put these two ideas together in the title "Messiah the Prince" and you have a prophecy that a new Melchizedek is coming. Melchizedek was a priest-king (see Genesis 14:18; Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:1-28).

So—seven weeks of years from the time Israel leaves Babylon until the city of Jerusalem and the temple are rebuilt. That's nearly 50 years. Then 434 years will pass, and that period will extend to the coming of the Melchizedekean One, the Priest-King, Messiah-Prince. Then there will be a last week. In the middle of it Messiah-Prince will be cut off, and thereby confirm the everlasting covenant.

After that there will be a period of probation for approximately 40 years (that's God's number for probation). Then the Jewish nation will be punished for the most terrible sin that any nation ever committed. The people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the

city and the sanctuary, and the end shall be with a flood, and unto the end, war and desolations are determined. Finally, the world will be tyrannized by Antichrist and that desolator will do his dastardly work until he himself is desolated. (We here employ the prophetic symbolism of Daniel though the ultimate historical fulfillment of Antichrist will be in the form of apostate government power united with apostate religion.)

Daniel's Prayer

Remember, the stories about Daniel and his three friends in the opening chapters of Daniel are the keys to the prophecies that follow in the closing chapter of Daniel.

Now notice how this chapter begins. (Chapter 9, that contains this great prophecy of the seventy weeks of years.) Again, I confess that this was an insight I never gained until I was well into my 30s. I'm ashamed I didn't learn it sooner. Chapter 9 begins with Daniel studying Jeremiah's writings (verse 2). Then Daniel turns to pray to God with fasting, sack-cloth, and ashes (verse 3).

Daniel prays:

"O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands . . . O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: We have not listened to your servants the prophets . . . (Daniel 9:4-6 NIV)

O Lord, we and our kings, our princes and our fathers are covered with shame because we have sinned against you. The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him; we have not obeyed the Lord our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets. (Daniel 9:8-10)

Prayer Words Enter Prophecy

Daniel is asking God for mercy. Daniel is taking the guilt of the people upon himself.

The key words of Daniel's prayer early in chapter 9 recur in the prophecy, later in chapter 9. Those key words are: sins, iniquities, transgressions, the prophecy, the holy city.

Without forgetting that we are studying Daniel 9, let us think for a moment of a passage in Luke's Gospel:

He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. (Luke 22:41-44)



Daniel in prayer prefigures Christ in prayer.

Christ Is the True Daniel

Do you remember what we said in our previous studies on Daniel? Christ is not only the Stone of Daniel 2, he's not only the Son of Man of Daniel 7, he's not only the True Temple, he's not only Michael, the Great Prince—he's also the True Daniel.

Descendence and Exile: A quick sweep through the whole of Daniel's history reveals that he began as a prince of the house of Judah. He was a son of David, a descendant of David. Then Daniel went on a long, long journey into Babylonian exile. You see, this parallels the picture of the true Son of David, Jesus, who left heaven on a long, long journey into exile on this earth. Daniel went a long, long way from home, where he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He witnesses to rulers, but is always being tempted and tried. Yet there is no sin recorded against him in the Bible.

Pit and Resurrection Daniel is a beautiful portrayal of Christ. The descendant of David, of the house of Judah, goes into exile, is tempted and tried, and witnesses to rulers. For false reasons—yet really because of his goodness—Daniel is confined to the pit. This reminds us of the language of the Messiah in the Psalms, who says, "They dug a pit in my path . . . I lie down among lions" (Psalm 57: 6, 4 NRSV).

Daniel is there in the pit, and a stone is rolled over the entrance. A seal is placed on the stone. You know how the same story is told about Jesus in Matthew 28. A stone is rolled across the entrance to the pit in which Christ is incarcerated. A seal is put on the stone. As surely as Christ was resurrected, so was Daniel.

Decree and Commission: When Daniel was "resurrected" out of the pit of lions, a decree was sent forth. King Darius wrote a letter to the whole world declaring that Daniel's God is the true God of all the world, for he is able to deliver his servants from the power of the lions (Daniel 6:25-27). When Christ leaves the tomb, the seal broken and the stone rolled away, he gives a decree. He says, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations" (Matthew 28:19 KJV).

'Go and tell all the nations what God has done. Take the gospel to all the world. Give the good news that God is for people, not against them. That God understands their weakness, that God sympathizes with them, that God is the wounded One who can minister to the wounded. Go and tell all people. Tell them of the scars in My hands, find the man who put the spear in my side, and tell him there's a nearer way to my heart than that. Go and tell them. Tell them.'

Prosperity and Ascension:

Then you read about Daniel, that after he comes up out of the pit, and the decree goes forth, he prospers in the reign of Cyrus and Darius. Here is a picture of the glories of Christ after his resurrection, upon his ascension to heaven above. But that's not the last picture of Daniel that foreshadows Christ.

We come to Daniel 9. What is Daniel doing? This man who has prospered since he came out of the pit of lions, what is he doing? He is interceding for his people. This is priestly intercession. And what has our Lord been doing since he rose out of the pit and returned to heaven? Exactly the same thing. Our High Priest has been interceding in heaven for his people.

