

20th CENTURY BIBLE COURSE

LESSON TWENTY

Dear Friend:

In the next two lessons we will study the longest time prophecy in the Bible, as well as the one that extends the farthest into our day. It is found in the eighth and ninth chapters of the book of Daniel. Here we see unfolded . . .

- (1) the rise and fall of empires,**
- (2) the precise time the Messiah would arrive and when His death would occur, and**
- (3) the opening of God's great judgment day-all events of tremendous importance.**

It is said that Goethe, the famous German poet, remarked at the age of 75, "I have the great advantage of having been born at a time when the *greatest world events were the order of the day.*" He then made mention of "the defection of America from England, the French Revolution, and finally, "the whole Napoleonic era down to the fall of its hero and the events that followed."

What would Goethe say had he lived today and actually witnessed those "events that followed" Napoleon's age? The prophecies of the Bible foretell one great happening after another. But the greatest events have happened in the last century and a half.

Before beginning this study, be sure to read carefully Daniel 8 and 9. This is not an easy lesson, so think hard, pray earnestly for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and God will reward you with the discovery of the master key to all prophetic truth. May God bless your study and bring you close to Jesus, our Saviour and Friend.

Most cordially,

Your Bible Instructor

LESSON 20

THE TIME OF THE MESSIAH FORETOLD

SCRIPTURE READING: DANIEL 8 AND 9

We are now back with Daniel in the palace of an ancient empire where he received a dramatic vision from God. A few questions will help you get your bearings, especially if you have first read chapters eight and nine of Daniel.

Part 1-- THE VISION OF DANIEL 8

- 1. Who does the ram represent? Daniel 8:20** _____
One horn was higher than the other (verse 3), indicating that one of the powers of this dual monarchy would be stronger than the other.
- 2. Who is represented by the goat? (verse 21)** _____
Who is symbolized by the great horn between his eyes _____

Alexander the Great of Grecia overcame the Medo-Persian empire in the battle of Arbela in 331 B.C. The goat "touched not the ground," so rapid was he. Alexander died eight years later of a fever following a drunken spree.

3. What do the four horns of the goat represent? (verse 22)

After Alexander's death, his warring generals (Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy) divided the kingdom into four provinces-east, west, north, south--"toward the four winds of heaven" (verse 8).

4. What happened to one of the four horns? (verse 9) "Out of one of them came forth a _____, which waxed _____, toward the _____, and toward the _____, and toward the _____."

This prophecy does not specifically name Grecia's successor. However, Daniel's previous prophecies (Daniel 2 and 7) follow the pattern of the four historic world empires-Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Daniel 8 begins with Medo-Persia, for Babylon was now about to leave the scene of action. The little horn came forth from one of the four horns. The Romans, or western province of Grecia, defeated the Macedonians in 168 B.C. From this beginning pagan Rome pushed south toward Egypt, east toward Syria and Palestine ("the pleasant land"), conquering everything until it became "exceeding great."

Pagan Rome was followed by papal Rome. (See Lesson 26 for a prophetic study on Daniel 7 and papal Rome.) Finally all earthly powers would be "broken without hand" (verse 25), reminding us of the "stone . . . cut out of the mountain without hands" in Daniel 2:45 when God will set up His everlasting kingdom.

5. Describe several characteristics of this "exceeding great power" (verses 9-14 and 23-25)

(verse 10) "It waxed great, even to the _____." (The host of heaven" refers to God' people, the Jews).

(verse 11) "He magnified himself evorn to the _____." (It was pagan Rome that crucified the "prince of the host"-Jesus Christ.)

(verse 11) "By him the _____ was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was _____." (In 70 A.D., under pagan Rome, Jerusalem was besieged and the beautiful sanctuary burned to the ground.)

(verse 12) This power would "cast down the _____ the ground." Verse 12 says "an host [arny, or military strength] was given him." (Papal Rome received its lands as a gift from the emperor of pagan Rome! More in a later lesson.)

(verse 24) "He shall _____ wonderfully," (or cause frightful destruction, doubtless a reference to his persecuting character.)

(verse 25) "Through his policy also he shall cause _____ to prosper." (Subtlety and deceit would characterize his cruel methods.)

(verse 25) "He shall _____ himself in his heart." How uncannily these words resemble those describing antichrist in 2 Thessalonians 2:4, "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God."

(verse 25) "He shall also stand up agaainst the _____."

6. What time period is next introduced? (verse 14) _____

7. To what period of earth's history does this vision point? (verse17) _____

Daniel was probably now in his early eighties. As Gabriel opened his mind to these great events, Daniel was so overwhelmed that he fainted.

Part 2--THE VISION CONTINUED IN DANIEL 9

As chapter nine opens, we find Daniel still distressed over the unexplained portion of the vision, apparently confusing it with Jeremiah's prediction that the captivity would last 70 years. As Daniel puzzled over the meaning of the 2300 years, he may have feared that the sins of the people were so great that God had lengthened their captivity. Verses 17-19 seem to indicate that the burden of his prayer was that God not defer the fulfillment of His promise to Jeremiah, so that the sanctuary and the city could be rebuilt as promised.

It is also obvious that Daniel recognized that these 2300 days represented years, for if they were literal days (less than six years), he would not have been concerned, but would have rejoiced that they could soon return to their beloved Jerusalem. The day-for-a-year principle had been in use long before Daniel's day (Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6).

1. Who came to help Daniel understand the vision? (Daniel 9:21-23) _____
2. How much of this time was allotted to the Jewish nation? (verse 24, first part) _____

How many years is this? _____

(Multiply the number of weeks (70) by the number of days in a week (7), to give you the number of days in 70 weeks. Remember that a day equals a year.)



The 2300 days were composed of two segments—one of 490 years for the Jews, and another of 1810 years (2300 minus 490), reaching to the cleansing of the sanctuary.

Now all we need to know is the starting point of this prophecy. Martin Luther, the great Protestant reformer, died at the age of 63. This is a fact of history, but if you know nothing more than this you will never know when he lived. However, if you learn that he was born in 1683, then you can figure out when he died. God knew we needed a beginning time in order for this prophecy to be meaningful.

3. What event marks the beginning of this prophecy? (verse 25) _____

This was 457 B.C. (cf. Ezra 7:11-26)-the seventh year of Artaxerxes. This date is verified historically by the Babylonian king lists, and astronomically by con-current eclipses..

4. What two segments of time would precede the Messiah? (verse 25)

Threescore and two weeks is 62 weeks (a score = 20). Thus we have a total of 69 weeks before the Messiah (7 weeks + 62 weeks = 69 weeks). The seven-week period (49 years) was spent rebuilding Jerusalem. The next 62 weeks (7 X 62 = 438 years) were to reach to the Messiah, or the Anointed One. Jesus was anointed at His baptism in A.D. 27 (Matthew 3:13-17; Acts 10:38). When God's clock struck the hour, Jesus was there on the banks of the Jordan to be baptized by John. Immediately He began to preach, "The time is fulfilled" (Mark 1:15). Jesus knew all about Daniel's prophecies, for He Himself had given them through His angel Gabriel. Thank God, Jesus appeared at the exact time predicted to Daniel six centuries earlier!

Where is there a man who can tell what is going to happen one year from now? Or even tomorrow? But here is a Book--a daring Book, indeed, that, more than 500 years beforehand, dares to predict the exact date Christ would appear! God knows the end from the beginning. Surely we can place complete confidence in His Word.

5. What was to happen after the 69 weeks? (verse 26, first part)

The Messiah was to be "cut off [put to death], but not for himself." How pregnant with meaning are these words! When a Jew was put to death, it was usually for breaking a law, but Gabriel hastens to tell us that the Messiah was not put to death because He had sinned. No. Jesus died because of your sins and mine--His was a sinless life.

6. What was to take place in the midst of the remaining, or 70th week? (verse 27)

When Christ died on the cross, the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom by an unseen hand (Matthew 27:51), signifying the end of animal sacrifices, for the "Lamb of God" had been slain on Calvary's hill.

Jesus died in the Spring of A.D. 31, three and a half years after his baptism, precisely in the middle of the last prophetic week. The remaining half of this week did not end until the fall of A.D. 34. At this time the Sanhedrin put Stephen to death. Shortly thereafter Saul was converted and became the great apostle to the Gentiles.

Thought question: Why do you suppose the Jews were not rejected the moment Jesus was crucified, but were allowed another three and a half years of probation?

The history of the Jews and their rejection of Christ is on record for our admonition. They did not understand the true purpose of Jesus' mission to the world, although the prophecies clearly explained it. They could have known. They need not have rejected their Messiah. But when they did, God had no choice but to turn to the Gentiles with the gospel. The New Testament is equally clear that individual Jews may still be saved, just as any other person is saved-by accepting Christ as their Saviour.

We have now seen how 70 weeks, or 490 years, of this 2300-year prophecy ended in the Fall of A.D. 34. There yet remained 1810 years. Adding 1810 to 34 A.D. brings us to A.D. 1844. What was to happen in 1844? What is the cleansing of the sanctuary? In order to get a clear understanding of this important topic, it will help us to have some background information about the sanctuary services and what they were designed to teach.

Part 3--THE SANCTUARY

1. What did God tell Moses to make? Exodus 25:8

2. What were the sanctuary services to teach the people? Psalm 77:13

The sanctuary was to reveal God's way of saving man. Jesus said, "I am the way" (John 14:6, NT 97 [76]). In the book of Hebrews, Paul shows us how Christ is symbolized in all the services of the Hebrew sanctuary.

3. What were the two rooms of the sanctuary called? Exodus 26:33

These two rooms were situated inside an open-air court surrounded by a wall. Each of these three areas depicted one aspect of Christ's work in saving fallen man.

The Court. Here was located the altar of burnt offerings and a laver for ceremonial washings and purifications.

The First Apartment, or Holy Place. This section of the sanctuary contained the seven-branched candlestick (representing Jesus, the light of the world), the table of shewbread (Jesus, the bread of life), and the altar of incense which stood before the curtain, or veil, which separated the Holy from the Most Holy Place. The incense symbolized Christ's righteousness making sweet the prayers of God's people (Revelation 8:4).

The Second Apartment, or Most Holy Place. Just beyond the veil in the Holy of Holies, was the sacred Ark of the Covenant containing the ten commandments written by God on two tables of stone. Above the law was the mercy seat, shielded by two golden angels.

This lesson is continued in Lesson 21.

For a better look at the time chart (above), connect to the internet and go to the following address . . .

<http://www.r7dac.com/2300day.html>