

Q – Have you ever read something in the Scripture that seems to make no sense and yet you knew it had to be true because it was and still is God speaking? (Have someone read Mark 12:18-27. That makes no sense to us today because it is a future state we cannot understand. However, it is absolute truth we will one day understand and embrace and praise God for!)

Background: I want to cover the second half of this passage which is very controversial and has led to scores of books and commentaries that do not agree with each other on the interpretation. My sermon is focusing on the first part, the prayer of Daniel that caused God to send Gabriel to give him this prophecy of what was to come. The sermon will analyze the incredible heart of Daniel's prayer. The lesson will give you the other half of the information in chapter 9. Chapter 9 starts out with Daniel explaining the prophecy of Jeremiah and how the desolation of Jerusalem would last 70 years, which caused Daniel to mourn and pray over the suffering of God's people and His holy city. Darius the King of the Medes has just conquered Babylon and has taken over the entire kingdom. Who knows what kind of treatments he will get now? At this time Daniel now understands the prophecy written long by Jeremiah about the desolation of Jerusalem that would last 70 years. This was the approximate number of years that Jerusalem was conquered and the Hebrews were in captivity because of their sin, paying for their lack of understanding WHO God is! So He prays and His prayer opens Him up to God's angelic messenger.

Read Daniel 9:20-23

1. Daniel is praying for the people, but also for God's holy hill, So what happens and why? (The angel Gabriel appears to Daniel, the same angel God sent to Mary to explain her pregnancy was from the Holy Spirit and to Zechariah to announce the birth of John the Baptist. Daniel is praying for the people's sin including his own and for God's holy hill. Psalm 2 speaks of God's Anointed One who will be established as King on His holy hill. The holy hill always referred to the site of the Jerusalem temple. Gabriel swiftly flies, he is on a mission at the time of the evening sacrifice. His mission from God is to give insight and understanding. Daniel's humble pray caused him to be highly esteemed in the eyes of God and therefore God sent the angel to bring Daniel a message and a vision to understand.)

Q – Do you think the prayers of a righteous man prayed offered in humility still move God today? (Yes, and here is why I believe that so deeply. Prayer aligns our will with the will of God. As we trust Him to move for His glory, knowing He understands what we do not, that God is outside of time and sees the big picture, then we find a peace from God as we seek His will rather than ours. The more we pray with that type of humility, the greater our trust and reliance on Him, the greater our understanding that the right answer is coming at some point.)

Read Daniel 9:24

2. The first message is that 70 sevens are decreed for your people and the holy city. How long is that and what are they to do? (70x7=490. That probably means years. During that time the people of God are to put

an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, meanin

prophecy, meaning to end or complete it, and notice it is accomplished by anointing the most holy. Have someone read Hebrews 1:1-2. In the last Days all things will be accomplished and the visions and prophecy are not necessary because the reality has appeared in the anointed one who will be established as absolute. With seven being the Hebrew number of perfection, this does not necessarily have to be an exact date to be absolute truth in Hebrew writing. It is a time period long in length but absolute in perfection. The writer of Hebrews verifies that God's plan was fulfilled in Christ, the Anointed One Who is heir of all things. So, here are the steps that show how this prophecy would play out and seal the prophecies and visions in the future.)

(Taken from Paul Butler's Bible Study Textbook on Daniel, College Press, 1982)

- a. Transgressions, sin would be finished; that is, the cup of iniquity of the Jewish people would be filled to the brim. They would reject the Messiah. The full height and depth of their iniquity was yet to be shown but would be shown within the 490 years. In putting the Messiah to death they reached the culmination of all their wickedness. No greater sin was possible.
- b. In the death of the Messiah God will triumph over man's rebellion and give the power, judicial and experiential, to conquer sin. He will, by a sovereign decree of grace, punish all sin in His Son (2 Cor. 5:17ff), and offer man a way (faith) to overcome his rebellion. All sin, even that done previously, was done away with in the death of Christ (cf. Rom. 3:21-26; Heb. 9:15-18).
- c. To reconcile man to God's will and way, God took the initiative and presented His Son as atonement. Man hardened his heart toward God's goodness and estranged himself from God. God so loved the world that He *gave* His Only begotten Son,...and man's heart is broken and he is drawn to God by the love of the Son (Col. 1:20-21).
- d. The work of the Messiah would also bring in everlasting righteousness. There are two aspects of this righteousness: imputed righteousness, that is, the righteousness which God declares we have which we do not merit; and practiced righteousness, which we are prompted to do by faith and love in God as He reveals to us in His Book the way of righteous living (Rom. 1:17; 1 Tim. 6:18).
- e. With the accomplishment of the work of the Messiah in fulfilling God's prophesied plan of redemption, prophecy was confirmed, fulfilled, validated, and thus sealed up—paid in full! (Acts 3:24; 1 Peter 1:10-11).
- f. The anointing of the Messiah is to be accomplished during this period of time. The phrase occurs without the definite article and therefore means the anointing of the most holy “thing”—not place. Literally it should read, “the anointing of holiness of holiness (Acts 10:38).

Q – How would this be a great comfort and give insight and understanding to Daniel when it is so far into the future? (It may be Gabriel is showing Daniel the future in a vision. Maybe Daniel is seeing all this. OR maybe Daniel is being assured that the ongoing sin will take place for some time but God will end, seal up what is foreseen and promised when the time is right and the most holy is anointed. Daniel definitely understood what God meant by the most holy. It was an assurance that God is sovereign, in complete control and nothing will change what is coming. The time is set and it will take place. The Messiah will wrap up all the prophecies about the end of sin He is coming to abolish. That is a powerful and exciting message from God's angel!)

Q – How does this message to Daniel excite your faith today? (We see this part completed. It is finished and Christ conquered death, the grave and gave the means for those who love Him to conquer and put an end to their sin. Nothing can change the outcome. Christ is on the throne, the anointed of God rules!)

Read Daniel 9:25-27

3. From the issuing of the decree to restore Jerusalem until the Anointed One, Jesus comes, there will be 7 sevens + 62 sevens which equal 69 sevens. How many are 69 sevens? (483 years)

Then Gabriel says that the time from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem until the coming of God's Anointed One there will be 7 sevens and 62 sevens = 69 sevens. Seven was a term used for a period of time and could mean weeks or years. Likely it was 483 years. Here is why I say that. The prophet Ezra arrived to help rebuild Jerusalem in 457 BC. IF the 7 sevens are 49 years, that takes us to 408 BC which is the historical time recorded that the temple was rebuilt. Then if we take the 62 sevens which would be 434 years, that takes us to 26 AD. There is a known error of 4 years in our modern calendar as opposed to those days. That would be the exact time Jesus' began His earthly ministry at the age of 30! So this incredible foreknowledge given to Daniel points to the approximate time of the anointed ministry of Christ!

4. Sometime after the ministry of Christ, the 69 sevens, what will happen to Him? (He will be cut off and will have nothing. Obviously this is referring to the crucifixion of Christ.)

5. Who happens to the holy city and the sanctuary? (The people of the ruler, Titus, will come in AD70 as Jesus predicted, and will destroy the city and the sanctuary. War will continue until the end, which comes like a flood and desolations have been decreed. An end to sacrifices and offerings takes place and on a wing of the temple he sets up an abomination that causes desolation until the end when it is stopped.)

Read Matthew 24:1-28

Jesus is predicting the fall of Jerusalem and the worst nightmare imaginable against God's people that will take place in the future, in AD 70. It is interesting that after this, beginning with verse 29, Jesus begins to answer the second part of the Apostles' question and focuses on the end of time, the second coming. However, verses 1-28 are clearly focused on the destruction of the Holy City that would happen in AD 70 when Jerusalem is brutally overpowered. This door to Roman domination would include the abomination of desolation, the setting up of the image of the antichrist in Jerusalem. Note that Jesus is speaking and is pointing the readers to Daniel's prophecy.

Let's spend some time discussing what we can learn from this lesson and even what we can share.

1. *The accuracy of the Bible in prophetic events foretold.*
2. *The accuracy of Daniel and Jesus' future predictions.*
3. *The Anointed One will bring everything to an end.*
4. *All evil will fall.*
5. *Time is always short. Now is the only moment we know we have.*