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Sermon Notes

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The Seventy “Weeks” of Daniel

Daniel 9:20-27

I. Our Meticulous God

A. Meticulous as Creator

Atomic nucleus meticulously created with an amazing balance of forces; proton slightly heavier than neutron, or else universe itself could not exist

Solar system: Newton, 1686: "This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being. This Being governs all things, not as the soul of the world, but as Lord over all, and on account of His dominion He is wont to be called Lord God, Universal Ruler."

If earth were just 1% closer or 1% further away from sun, life itself would be impossible

Cells: recipe for life mapped out meticulously in the perfect order of the DNA sequence; alter small portion of that sequence and life becomes impossible

B. Meticulous as Provider

1. God created trillions and trillions of life forms on this planet
2. He feeds each one daily with whatever it needs to survive

Psalm 145:15-16 The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. ¹⁶ You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

C. Meticulous as Protector

1. Keeping close watch over His people

Matthew 10:30 “Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.”

Every time you brush your hair and some hair comes off onto the hairbrush, the count changes in heaven!

2. Keeping close watch over His people's spiritual lives

He goes and leaves the ninety-nine sheep on the hills and diligently searches for each lost sheep until it's been found; and when he finds it, he carries it back to the flock

John 6:39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.

D. Meticulous as Judge

Daniel 7:10 "The court was seated and the books were opened."

Matthew 12:36 "I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken."

E. Meticulous as Prophet

1. Meticulous about Jesus' hands and feet: pierced while on the cross (Psalm 22:16)
2. Meticulous about a jar of vinegar placed at the foot of the cross so Jesus could drink it (Ps. 69:21)
3. Meticulous about the number of silver coins Judas would get for betraying Christ: Thirty (Zechariah 11:13)

Question: Would it be impossible for God to speak meticulously through Daniel the prophet also about the time of Christ's coming and death on the cross ?

This is the question before us today, as we look at the mysterious "Seventy Weeks" of Daniel

More importantly, however, is the clear prophecy of the coming Messiah, who will atone for all sins

Peter's Contribution:

1 Peter 1:10-12 trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing.

According to Peter, prophets of old were given information about the TIME of the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow; what else could this be if not Daniel's Seventy Weeks?

II. The “Experts” Disagree

III. Context: Daniel’s Prayer, Gabriel’s Answer (vs. 20-23)

vs. 1-2 *In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom-- ² in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years.*

A. Time & Circumstances

B. Exile to Babylon

Lamentations 1:1, 3 *How deserted lies the city, once so full of people!³ After affliction and harsh labor, Judah has gone into exile.*

C. Jeremiah’s Prophecy

Jeremiah 29:10-14 *This is what the LORD says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. "¹¹*

D. Daniel’s Intense Prayer (vs. 20)

vs. 20 *While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the LORD my God for his holy hill-*

E. Gabriel Dispatched to Answer

vs. 21 *while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice.*

F. Gabriel’s Mission: Giving Wisdom to Daniel and Us

vs. 22-23 *He instructed me and said to me, "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. ²³ As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision*

Summary: Daniel prayed to God intensely about Jerusalem and God’s people, the Jews; God dispatched Gabriel to give him one of the most remarkable prophecies in all the Bible

IV. The Six-Fold Purpose of the Seventy Weeks (vs. 24)

vs. 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."*

A. Topic: Your People; Your Holy City

1. The salvation of Israel from their rebellion against God
2. The redemption of Jerusalem to be the holy city of God

B. Six-fold Purpose

Three negative, three positive... all of them descriptive of the work of Jesus Christ

1. "to finish transgression"

2. "to make an end of sin"

3. "to make atonement for iniquity"

Jews' clung to the temple and the sacrificial system to atone for sins; but the prophets knew that the blood of bulls and goats could never atone for sin

"What can wash away my sin?" "Nothing but the blood of Jesus!!"

4. "to bring in everlasting righteousness"

Sin atoned for... even better, everlasting righteousness brought in: this is the gospel

Romans 1:16-17 *I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ¹⁷ For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."*

Romans 3:22 *This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.*

There is absolutely no provision for "everlasting righteousness" in the Old Covenant... only for judgment because Israel lacked righteousness

Daniel 9:7 "Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame--the men of Judah and people of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far, in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to you.

Daniel is yearning not just for forgiveness, but for an end to all wickedness... for an everlasting righteousness

That will come only through the salvation which Christ won at the cross, and through the Kingdom which He will set up forever and ever

It will come nationally to Israel only when they turn as a people to their Messiah, Jesus Christ

5. "to seal up vision and prophecy"

- a. all prophecy centers on Christ
- b. His achievements all covered in OT Prophecy given to the Jews
- c. "Seal up" means to fulfill and bring to perfect completion

6. "to anoint the most holy"

Hebrew = a most holy thing, or perhaps the "Holy of holies"

Two schools of interpretation: 1) this refers to the anointing of Christ by the Holy Spirit at His baptism;

Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.

2) this refers to the anointing of the Holy of Holies in the Millennial Temple, which they say is to be found described in Ezekiel 40-44

3) It could refer to the spiritual "Most Holy Place" in the heavenly realms, anointed by the blood of Christ Himself as He appeared before God on our behalf:

Hebrews 9:11-12 When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.

Summary: Seventy "sevens" are decreed to accomplish the complete work of the Kingdom of God through Jesus Christ: a full atonement for sin, a perfect and eternal righteousness, and a total fulfillment of all prophecies... especially focused on Israel: national salvation from their rebellion

V. The Unfolding of the Seventy Weeks: Messiah Comes!! (vs. 25-26)

A. God's Eternal Decree: Seventy "Sevens"

1. A "Decree"... NOTE: the sovereignty of God

God rules over times and seasons; He has the clock and calendar in His hand

2. Seventy 'sevens': The hard part!! God has laid out chronology for 1st Coming of Christ

- a. weeks or "sevens" = seven years
- b. total span is 70×7 years = 490 years... BUT split up into sections!!

B. A King's Human Decree: The Timetable Starts

vs. 25-26 *"Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble.*

1. Timetable starts when some human king decrees that Jerusalem will be rebuilt
2. Which decree? Three possibilities (**talk about tonight**)
3. BEST: Artaxerxes I Decree to Ezra: 457 B.C.

C. What Is Prophesied? (vs. 25-26)

- There will be a decree to rebuild and restore Jerusalem
- Jerusalem will be rebuilt with streets, a trench, but in times of trouble
- Sixty-nine (7 + 62) "sevens" after that decree, the Anointed One, the ruler will come
- After the sixty-two "sevens", the Anointed One will be cut off (i.e. killed) and 1) will have nothing, or 2) but not for himself
- **There will be a ruler to come, and his people will destroy Jerusalem, both the city and the temple**
- **During the time when the temple is destroyed, war will come like a flood until the measured out desolations have been completed**

D. History Fulfills the Prophecy

7 + 62 weeks: 49 years for the rebuilding, 434 years until the Christ

- From 457 B.C. (decree given) to 408 B.C.: Jerusalem rebuilt... walls, streets, moat completed
- From 408 B.C.: count off sixty-two sevens... 434 years... since there was no "0" year between 1 B.C. to A.D. 1, this brings us to A.D. 27, the year Jesus began His public ministry
- Three years later, 14 Abib 30 A.D., Jesus was crucified (according to the best dating analysis available)

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- The prophecy is fulfilled to the letter... 483 years from Artaxerxes' decree in 457 B.C., Jesus Christ began His earthly ministry at approximately 30 years of age... He was anointed by the Holy Spirit at His Baptism; "After" the sixty-two sevens, Christ was killed.
- 70 A.D. During reign of emperor Vespasian over Rome, he sent his son, Titus, with four legions and many others: 80,000 men in all; they besieged Jerusalem, breached the wall in May, and on August 6th, took the Temple and ended the morning and evening sacrifices... they burned the Temple on August 28th, 70 A.D. and it has never been rebuilt

VI. The Interruption of the Seventy Weeks: One Desolation After Another (26-27)

A. Seventy Weeks Divided: $7 + 62 + 1 = 70$

vs. 24 [Hebrew] *"Seventy weeks are divided, for your people and your holy city, to finish transgression..."*

1. Seven and sixty-two weeks

- a. 7 "weeks" first – 49 years (to rebuild Jerusalem)
- b. sixty-two weeks until Messiah comes

2. Why stop at sixty-nine?

- a. because the Messiah was rejected by His own people and cut off unto death
- b. this began the true "desolation" of the Temple
- c. it left one final seven-year period yet to be fulfilled... the end of the "times of the Gentiles"

d. the “mystery”: Gentiles grafted in to Israel

Issue: The Completion of Israel’s “Desolation”

3. “Parenthesis” theory... GAP between 69th and 70th week has lasted almost 2000 years: “times of the Gentiles” also includes salvation for many Gentiles

B. The First Desolation of Israel: Christ Leaves the Temple, Is Rejected, Crucified

1. Christ weeps over Jerusalem

Luke 19:41-44 because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you.

2. The “Seven Woes” of Matthew 23: Christ’s final pronouncement of judgment on a generation that has rejected Him

Matthew 23:37-39 ³⁸ Look, your house is left to you desolate. ³⁹ For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’

Jews did not recognize time of their salvation when Christ came to them; for this reason, they are rejected in part until the full number of Gentile believers comes in

C. The Second Desolation of Israel: The Gentiles Trample the City Until the End

vs. 26 The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.

1. “People of the ruler who will come” = Romans, under Titus
2. Terrible suffering during Roman war... a blood-bath

Luke 21:20-24 "When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near.... Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

According to Jospheus, approximately 1.1 million Jews perished during the Roman siege of Jerusalem by sword, famine, plague... terrifying

3. “Desolations decreed”

The “Abomination of Desolation” was established... the true “desolation” was spiritual... the Jews had rejected Christ, and the temple was left desolate as a result

Matthew 24: Christ’s Prophecy in Light of Daniel 9

Matthew 24:15-20 "So when you see standing in the holy place `the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel--let the reader understand--¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

NOTE: Some commentators think this only refers to the sufferings under the Antichrist; those sufferings are acted out in history first under Antiochus, second under the Romans and Titus, third, under the Antichrist right before the end of the world

4. Generations of desolation: From Titus to the "Wailing Wall"

- a. Jesus called the surrounding of Jerusalem by Gentile armies its time of desolation
 - b. The ongoing trampling of Jerusalem by Gentile armies its ongoing desolation
- Roman Empire until 637 A.D.: conquered by Muslim Caliph Omar
 - Muslims until 1099 A.D. [Built Mosque of Omar, called "Dome of the Rock" in 688 on the exact site of the Temple!!]
 - European crusaders, 1099-1187; established "Kingdom of Jerusalem"
 - Muslim Turks, 1187-December 9, 1917 [730 years]
 - British Protectorate, December 9, 1917-May 14, 1948
 - National Israel, BUT no control of Jerusalem
 - In 1948, after the first Arab-Israeli war, the city was split into sectors, some controlled by Jews, some by Muslims; in 1967 during the Six-Day War, Israeli commandos conquered the eastern half of the city; it has since then been common to see Orthodox Jews at the Wailing Wall, the last remaining portion of the temple destroyed by the Romans nineteen centuries ago
 - **On March 7, 2001, Secretary of State Colin Powell got into a great deal of hot water when he said the President Bush's policy is to view Jerusalem as the capitol of Israel; Muslim nations around the world howled in protest...**

It is STILL the "times of the Gentiles," when the holy city is trampled by Gentile forces and control

VII. The Completion of the Seventy Weeks: The Final Desolation (vs. 27)

vs. 27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one `seven.' In the middle of the `seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him. "

A. “He”: The Antichrist Reappears in Daniel

1. Antichrist a major theme in Daniel’s apocalyptic visions
2. The “times of the Gentiles” are not yet fulfilled, neither has Israel turned nationally to Christ
3. Thus the Seventy Weeks are not finished until the Antichrist comes as the final Gentile ruler

B. A Familiar Pattern

1. Sly, subtle dealing with Israel

“He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’”

- a. perhaps some kind of agreement to allow the Jews to worship in a temple
- b. gains their confidence by trickery as Antiochus had done so many years before
2. Sudden ceasing of sacrifices
 - a. just as suddenly, the peace ends... the sacrifices are abolished
 - b. the persecution begins one final time... they Jews are attacked
3. Blasphemy: the “Abomination of Desolation”

“...on the wing of abominations...”

- a. perhaps meaning in one wing of the temple
- b. Antichrist will establish his throne and accept worship as god

2 Thessalonians 2:4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

C. The Destruction Decreed & Poured Out

vs. 27 “... until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”

1. Christ will intervene and destroy this final Gentile tyrant
2. The destruction decreed for Antichrist will be poured out on him

3. Christ will overthrow him with the mere breath of His mouth

2 Thessalonians 2:8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.

APPLICATION: God's meticulous nature applied to your salvation!!!!

Also... DESOLATION comes from rejecting God's salvation