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THE PIONEER BAPTIST

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VOLUME 38, NO. 1

OCTOBER, 2006

THE GREATEST TIME PROPHECY IN THE BIBLE. . .

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In the ninth chapter of Daniel, verses 24 through 27, we have the greatest time prophecy in the Bible. Here the whole prophetic program of Israel's future is revealed. This portion of Scripture could well be designated “the backbone of all prophecy.”

Listen to the words of this remarkable prophecy: *“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,”* Daniel 9:24.

There are three things I want you to notice in this prophecy before we go any further.

1. These seventy weeks have to do with Daniel's people.

2. These seventy weeks have to do with the city of Jerusalem.

3. Whatever these seventy weeks mean cannot be changed because they are determined by Almighty God.

It is very clear what these weeks mean if we study with an open mind and allow the Lord to speak to us and forget what all men may have said.

It is most interesting to note that God in His dealings with Israel, His chosen people, deals in seventy weeks of years, or periods of 490 years.

FOUR PERIODS OF 490 YEARS EACH

There are four periods of 490 years each in the life of Israel. The period from the call of Abraham until the time when Joshua and the people took possession of the land was 490 years. The period from

the possession of the land until the time of kings was another 490 years. The period from the kings until the Babylonian captivity was another 490 years. And the period from the restoration after the captivity, until Christ was another 490 years (lacking 7 years). It is this period of 490 years, from the restoration until Christ was crucified (plus seven years of tribulation), that we have before us in Daniel 9:24.

Daniel says, *“Seventy weeks are determined upon THY PEOPLE and upon THY HOLY CITY.”* This tells us that the entire prophecy has to do with Israel and the city of Jerusalem. It does not concern the Gentiles or the Church in any sense.

ANALYSIS OF THE PROPHECY

Now the Israelites had sinned against God. They had gone into idolatry and had refused to serve the one true God in heaven. So God said, “I am going to bring upon your nation a great cycle of punishment. I am going to punish you for 490 years.” That's the way God puts it in the Bible. Notice: *“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people...”* Daniel 9:24.

Now this has confused a lot of people. After all, seventy weeks is not such a long period of time, only a little more than a year. However, when we take a peek into the original Hebrew we find that this is not talking about seventy weeks of days as we know them. What the Hebrew literally says is, “seventy sevens of years.” In other words, each week is to represent a seven year period of time.

You can have a week of pencils. You can have a week of clocks. A week means seven. And in this particular prophecy, it is referring to a week of years. It says, “Seventy weeks of years are determined, or

490 years.”

SIX THINGS TO TRANSPIRE IN THE 490 YEARS

Let us now consider the six things that will be accomplished during this period of 490 years. They are all stated in verse 24. Notice: *“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,”* Daniel 9:24.

1. First, *“to finish the transgression”* refers to the transgression of Israel. At the Second Coming of Christ their transgression will be finished.

“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn... In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness,” Zechariah 12:10, 13:1.

2. Secondly, *“to make an end of sins.”* Their national sins will come to an end at the Second Coming of Christ. The cure for sin was provided at His first coming.

“Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall

they be my people, and I will be their God," Ezekiel 37:23.

"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins," Romans 11:26-27.

3. "To make reconciliation for iniquity." In this age there is reconciliation of Jew and Gentile alike in the death of Christ (see II Corinthians 5:18-20).

4. "And to bring in everlasting righteousness" refers to the Return of Christ to establish the kingdom (see Psalm 45:3-7; Isaiah 11:3-5; Jeremiah 23:3-8).

5. "To seal up the vision and prophecy" means to vindicate this prophecy and all other prophecies by their fulfillment.

6. Lastly, "and to anoint the most holy" has reference to the anointment of the Holy of Holies in the millennial temple. This is the temple which Ezekiel mentions (Ezekiel 41 through 46). I personally believe this Holy Place will be anointed with the literal blood of Christ. James mentions this temple in Acts 15:16-17.

THREE SECTIONS

Now as we move along in our study we find that this 490 years of time is split up into three sections. Listen to the prophecy:

Daniel 9:25-27, "Know therefore and under-stand, 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."

The 70 weeks are divided into three parts:

1. 7 weeks – 49 years for the rebuilding of Jerusalem. (Verse 25.)

2. 62 weeks - 434 years to the coming of the Messiah. "...after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off." Daniel 9:26. After 49 plus 434 years (483 years) from the command to rebuild Jeru-

salem, Messiah would be put to death.

There is a time interval between the 69th week and the 70th week. The 70th week does not follow chronologically the other 69.

3. 1 WEEK – 7 years is the period of the Great Tribulation when Israel will be tortured, afflicted and persecuted as never before. (Verse 27.)

The starting point for this period of 490 years is essential for the correct understanding of the prophecy. First, let's notice the starting point.

It says, "Seventy weeks [490 days or 490 years] are determined, [or separated, or cut off, segregated], upon thy people and upon thy holy city." "Where are you going to start?" "Just a minute, Daniel," the angel replies, "I am going to give that to you now." "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." Daniel 9:25.

All right, there is the starting point. I like to think of that angel Gabriel coming down and teaching Daniel some Bible arithmetic. It is wonderful to me to think of that little lesson. "Daniel, get out your pencil and paper and you can figure that out for yourself." And we can do the same: any Jew, any infidel, any unbeliever can figure out the prophecy for himself if he has finished the sixth grade, - otherwise he might need some help! "Know... 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." That is the starting point.

Now Daniel tells us that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks. In other words, from the going forth of the commandment to rebuild the city of Jerusalem until the time of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus was to be exactly 483 years – and that is exactly how many years there were from the command to rebuild Jerusalem to the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Nehemiah 2:1-8 gives us the exact date of the command to rebuild Jerusalem. Nehemiah was one of the captives of Israel and he was a servant in the king's palace. Listen:

"Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they

may convey me over till I come into Judah; And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me." Nehemiah 2:7-8.

This happened in the month of April in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes. It was that year that the command was given by the king to return to Jerusalem and build again the city. You will find the story in the second chapter of Nehemiah. History tells us that the twentieth year of the king was the year 445 B.C.; therefore, history is in perfect accord with the prophecy of Daniel – you can figure it out for yourself and you will find it to be exactly 483 years from the twentieth year of Artaxerxes to the crucifixion of Jesus. Bible believing Christians need no proof from the standpoint of history, but I thank God that there is no conflict between the Bible and history.

Now, the first seven weeks, or the first 49 years of the seventy weeks, were to be occupied in the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem under the leadership of Nehemiah and Zerubbabel and Ezra (Daniel 9:25). History again bears out the fact that it took exactly 49 years to complete the job.

The second period of time mentioned in the seventy weeks is a period of 62 weeks, (that is weeks of years) or 434 years – this period was to run from the completion of the temple until Messiah would be cut off – this too is a matter of historical fact. History again records that the number of years from the completion of the temple under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, to the cross, was exactly 434 years.

DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

The next part of the prophecy reads: "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," Daniel 9:26

This prophecy was literally fulfilled in A.D. 70 when Titus and his Roman Army completely destroyed Jerusalem. You remember Jesus prophesied this destruction during His public ministry. In Matthew 24:2, speaking of the temple, Jesus said: "...There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

From that time on, the Jews have had no temple and no blood sacrifice. No Jewish king sits on the throne of David. Since

A.D. 70 the Jews have been scattered from one end of the earth to the other.

Now that takes care of 69 of the 70 weeks mentioned in this prophecy. Look at it again:

“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,” Daniel 9:26.

Beloved, Jesus Christ was cut off, but it wasn't for Himself. Jesus did not die because of any wrong that He had done. He died for your sins and mine. He was cut off for the sins of Jew and Gentile alike.

THE COURSE OF THIS AGE

When we come to the last part of the 26th verse we have one of the greatest prophecies in the Bible pertaining to the course of this age. Notice: *“...and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.”*

Now if you will look in the margin of your Bible, or look it up in your Revised Version, you will notice that this verse literally should read: *“And unto the end wars and desolations are determined.”*

I would have you notice that one word particularly. It is the word *“determined.”* God says that until the Messiah comes again, wars and desolations are determined. That is what the Almighty says, and all efforts of peace, therefore, will prove futile and vain.

Never before has there been more talk of peace, and yet never before has there been more fear and threat of war. There are more men under arms throughout the world today than in any period of “peace time” in all of the world's history. And yet all we hear is peace, peace, peace, fighting to maintain peace, police protection to preserve peace, while at the same time we hear of war, war, war, and threatenings of war, and constant bickering among the nations.

Now the Bible is crystal clear that there can be no lasting world peace until the Prince of Peace, the Lord Jesus Christ, returns. The Bible is full of incontrovertible evidence that this age will not end in peace, but in war and end with the greatest of all wars, the Battle of Armageddon. Jesus said the last days would be characterized by wars and rumors of wars, nation rising up against nation, in the greatest armament race of all history. And Daniel says: *“And unto the end wars and desolations are determined.”*

THE 70th WEEK

We now come to the final part of the prophecy, the 70th week, which is yet to be fulfilled. The first 69 weeks have already been fulfilled.

There are some who teach that the 70th week was fulfilled during the life and ministry of Christ. But this couldn't be. The 70th week cannot be fulfilled until the Antichrist makes his seven year “peace treaty” with the Jewish nation. (Daniel 9:27). Furthermore, there are several things that remain to be fulfilled in this great prophecy of Daniel's 70 weeks. Notice some of these things – *“To finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins.... to bring in everlasting righteousness....and to anoint the Most Holy,”* Daniel 9:24.

Although Christ suffered the death of the cross, He certainly did not make an end of sin. Sin, as such, still exists and will continue to exist until the culmination of this age in the Kingdom of Christ. Certainly we are not now living in the age of everlasting righteousness, and will not be until the Lord returns to make an end of sin. So we see that the complete fulfillment of Daniel's 70 weeks is still in the future.

Now we know that the 70 weeks pertain only to Israel. Let us keep that fact clearly in mind. This prophecy has nothing to do with the Gentiles.

Also bear in mind that God's program for Israel was interrupted at the crucifixion of Christ. That's why Jesus told the Jews, *“...your house is left unto you desolate,”* Matthew 23:38.

Therefore, God is not now counting time on Israel. God never reckons time with the Jews when He is not dealing with them as a nation. Since God is not dealing with the Jews as a nation today, the Jewish clock has stopped.

Today God's program is to finish the Church, the Body of Christ. (Matthew 16:18; Acts 15:14-16.) And when the Church is finished and translated at the rapture, God will again deal with Israel.

Now the Jewish clock only has seven more years to run. 483 years have already been fulfilled. For 2,000 years the Jewish clock has been stopped. And when this church age is finished and God resumes His dealings with Israel, then the prophetic clock will be turned on again and will tick off the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy.

Now let us look at the events connected with the 70th week. Taking an important part in these events will be the “Coming Prince” of Daniel 9:26-27.

If you will study the prophecy of the 70 weeks carefully, you will see that there

are two Princes – *“Messiah the Prince”* (verse 25) and *“the Prince that shall come”* (verse 26) two entirely different persons, *“Messiah the Prince”* is the Lord Jesus, while *“the Prince that shall come”* is the final dictator, the Antichrist. The one is cut off (Christ) while the other confirms an agreement with the Jews for seven years. Christ never confirmed a covenant with the Jews for seven years. The covenant of Christ is everlasting, Hebrews 13:20. However, the Antichrist will make a covenant with the Jews at the beginning of the 70th week of Daniel. Notice: *“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 9:27.

Here we have the great prophecy of the seven-year Tribulation Period. The Antichrist is going to arise and he is going to make a covenant with the Jews for one week of seven years. The Jews are going to rebuild their temple at Jerusalem under this covenant and start again their Old Testament worship. The Antichrist is really going to sell the Jews a piece of goods, and the Jews are going to think they have found the solution to all of their problems. However, after 3½ years have passed by, the Antichrist is going to break every promise that he made to the Jews and *“cause the sacrifice and the oblation (the Jewish temple worship) to cease.”*

The Antichrist is even going to go so far as to enter into the newly rebuilt temple in Jerusalem and demand to be worshipped as God. Notice: *“...and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God,”* II Thessalonians 2:3-4.

This is the *“abomination of desolation”* which Daniel tells us about. The Antichrist will command the Jews to stop their worship of God and to worship him as God. No wonder it is called the *“abomination of desolation”*!

Now an “abomination” to an Israelite is an idol of any sort. The Lord Jesus, referring to these words of Daniel, and looking forward to the time of the faithful Jewish remnant in the day of the Antichrist, said: *“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place.... flee into the mountains,”* Matthew

24:15-16 and following verses.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

The refusal of Israel to worship the Antichrist will set off the period of time referred to in the Bible as “the Great Tribulation.” Then the Jews will once more be persecuted, hunted and slain, “*For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*” Matthew 24:21. Read carefully Matthew 24:15-26 for the Lord’s description of this “*time of Jacob’s trouble.*” The Jews will suffer more under the Antichrist than under Hitler, Stalin, Khrushchev or any other mad dictator.

From all indications it appears that the Jews are just about ready to rebuild their temple and enter into this covenant with the Antichrist. For several years now the Jews have been talking about rebuilding their temple and starting again their Old Testament sacrifices. Last year a call for the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem was sounded by a prominent rabbi. Many Jewish leaders feel that the temple should be re-erected.

Certainly these are outstanding signs of the end-time. The Jews are back in their own land. Israel is a full-fledged member of the United Nations Organization. This is the first time in 2,000 years that the Jews could enter into a covenant with anybody. And the Scripture tells us very plainly that when the Antichrist makes his appearance the first thing he will do is to make a covenant with the Jews for seven years. The prophecy says, “*And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week [seven years].*” Daniel 9:27.

Of course, the Jews have no business entering into a covenant with the Antichrist. It was God who preserved them in their wanderings among the nations. And it is God who has brought them back to the Holy Land. So what business have they accepting a guarantee of peace from an agent of the Devil, the Antichrist?

Beloved, today the Jews are making plans for the rebuilding of their temple in Jerusalem. What does this mean? It simply means that things are all shaping up for the coming of the Antichrist, the world’s political dictator of the last days. And it won’t be long before the Antichrist makes his seven year covenant with the Jews assisting them in the rebuilding of their temple.

Just keep your eyes on the land of Israel because this is the country with which the Antichrist is going to make his covenant. Nothing else is prophesied in the life of the Antichrist before this time. This is the act by which he will be revealed to the world as the man of sin.

Only one week of Daniel’s 70 weeks of prophecy remains to be fulfilled. That week may begin any day. The vital question now is this: Are you ready to meet Christ when He comes? Trials and troubles are destined for the time in which we live, but praise God we can find refuge in Christ. If you’re not saved, won’t you come to Christ and be saved today?

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October 23-25