

One Penny.



Daniel's 70 Weeks Explained.



By W. Easton.



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DANIEL IX. 24-27.

WE are often asked by Christians, both young and old, "What are we to understand by 'the 70 weeks of Daniel;' and 'the last week of Daniel;' and 'the last half week of Daniel;' which we sometimes hear mentioned at lectures and readings? We would like a little help as to this if you could give it to us."

Well, these are very important subjects to be clear about, especially in connection with prophecy and the Book of Revelation. Of course there are many valuable books on prophecy where this information can be obtained, but let us see if we can put it in a simple way, and as briefly as possible, for those who may not have the means to buy, nor the time to read such volumes, yet desire to understand the subjects. Let me then say to all such readers, it will greatly help you if you will take your Bible and turn to all the references and verify what is here written.

Turn then to Daniel ix. and read ver. 2. You will

see there that Daniel understood by books (probably the writings of Jeremiah—see xxv. 11, 12 ; and xxix. 10, 11) that the desolations of Jerusalem which were running their course and drawing to a close, were sent for a term of 70 years. These *desolations* were the result of the nation's sins, which were so grievous that God could no longer forbear with them or forgive them ; so He not only allowed Nebuchadnezzar to carry the Jews captive to Babylon, but to burn their city likewise. In this connection turn to Lev. xxvi. 31-36 ; then turn to II. Chron. xxxvi. 14-21 and see its fulfilment. God said He would do it if they disobeyed Him, and He did it. As this period was nearing its completion, Daniel set himself in godly exercise of soul, with prayer and supplication, and fasting and confession, of his own and the nation's sins, to seek the Lord's face about the matter, and the angel Gabriel was sent to him to give him "skill and understanding" in regard to these things (ver. 22).

It would appear that Daniel was anxious to know more of God's thoughts and intentions about His people, and the end of their captivity, and the desolations of the holy city, as I have said ; but God in His grace, as He ever does, goes far beyond what was in Daniel's mind, in the revelations He gives him ; and discloses to him in this remarkable prophecy, the history of his people the Jews, from a given point up to the time when their transgressions will have ended—their sins be pardoned—reconciliation be effected—and everlasting righteousness brought in—no more need for visions and prophecy—and to once more anoint the most holy (turn to and

note carefully verse 24). In short, it was a prophetic forecast of a period of time, characterised as 70 weeks, which was to commence at a given date, and end with Daniel's people, the Jews, brought through all their troubles into Millennial blessing, and the judgment of God poured out on all the nations gathered against them at the end, as well as on their great enemy, *the desolator* (see verse 27 margin).

But let us linger here for a moment or two more ere we proceed further, and get quite clear as to these 70 weeks. We must not run away with the idea that Gabriel was speaking of 70 literal weeks of seven days each. He was not. We only need to remember the length of time that has passed since the prophecy was uttered and still remains unfulfilled to see it is not literal weeks. The late S. P. Tregelles, LL.D., says "the word itself is strictly *something divided into or consisting of seven parts—a heptad, a heptomad.*" A week is divided into seven days, so it is really 70 sevens, or 70 weeks of years—490 years that is meant. The Spirit of God, however, has given it in such a way that there need be no difficulty about it. His division of the weeks and events which end the different sections, are so clearly marked as to make mistake well nigh impossible; unless some preconceived notions fill the mind, and the Scriptures are twisted and used to substantiate *them*, from which may the good Lord deliver us.

Then there is another thing we must keep clear in our minds, as it is most important, and that is, these 70 weeks of Daniel are in *no way* connected with Christianity. Now remember that! They have nothing to do

with the Christian days in which we live. *Time*, and *dates*, and *events*, have nothing whatever to do with Christianity. We, who are believers on the Lord Jesus Christ who died for our sins and redeemed us to God by His precious blood, and who are sealed with the Holy Ghost, and members of the Church which is the Body of Christ, and do not belong to time at all (though in another sense we are of course living in the 20th Century). We belong to eternity, and were "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world" (Eph. i. 4). We have been "predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son" (Rom. viii. 29); and are to be in heavenly glory with and like Christ for ever (1 John iii. 2). All this, and O how much more! is most blessedly true of every child of God to-day, whether they have apprehended it or not, and shows our portion and place is an heavenly one and not earthly, and we are "waiting for God's Son from heaven" to take us there (1 Thes. i. 10). But the 70 weeks is connected with the prophetic history of the Jews; and, as I have said, times, and dates, and events are all connected with *them* as God's earthly people, and are for earth. We don't need them *in* heaven or *for* heaven.

Now let us return to Daniel and observe closely the divisions of these 70 weeks. Verse 25 says: "*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.*" The commencement of the 70 weeks is here clearly set forth. It dates from

the time that Artaxerxes, the Medo-Persian King, issued his decree and gave Nehemiah authority to go and build again "the city of his father's sepulchres" (see Neh. ii. 1-8). There is no other commandment to build *the City of Jerusalem* but that one. Remember it is not the decree of Cyrus to the captives to go back and build their *temple* as recorded in Ezra i.; we must not therefore confound these two great events in the history of the Jews. The 70 weeks begin from the edict given to Nehemiah to rebuild *the city*.

The first division then is seven weeks. That is seven sevens of years—49 years; during which the street and the wall were to be built and in troublous times. This is verified in the book of Nehemiah which gives us the history of it. Then as the second division, of "three score and two weeks," or 62 sevens of years—434 years follow on and run their course, with the previous seven sevens added, making 69 sevens, or 483 years, they carry us right up to "Messiah the Prince," as verse 25 says.

Here again we need to carefully observe what Scripture says. It is not up to the birth of Christ. Nor, to be exact, is it up to the death of Christ on the cross, when the Messiah was cut off and had nothing (see marginal reading of ver. 26); but up to "Messiah the Prince"; *i.e.*, up to the time when the Lord Jesus presented Himself as "Messiah the Prince" for faith to recognise Him as He rode into the City of Jerusalem on the ass's colt, fulfilling the second part of Zechariah's prophecy (Zech ix. 9). But we must turn to and look at that prophecy a little more closely for a moment.

It says, "Rejoice greatly O daughter of Zion; shout

O daughter of Jerusalem ; behold thy King cometh unto thee ; he is just and having salvation ; lowly and riding upon an ass ; even upon a colt the foal of an ass" (R.V.) Now observe, there are two things said about Him ; in fact *two* comings are set forth. (1) He comes as " Just and having salvation " ; (2) He comes " lowly and riding on an ass." This second part we believe to be a parenthetical portion in that chapter.

When our blessed Lord rode into Jerusalem on the ass that day, did He come with the object of establishing His Kingdom and reigning as King in Jerusalem as prophesied in the Old Testament ? Certainly not. How could He do that before He had died ? He came to die not to reign. How could He secure " the sure mercies of David " except in resurrection (Acts xiii. 34) ? But we will not discuss that question here. He does come to take His Kingdom, it will be " with power and great glory " (Matt. xxiv. 30) ; or as Zechariah says " as just and having salvation " for His people ; as a king *should* come ; consequently ver. 10 of Zech. ix. will follow the first part of ver. 9 and find its fulfilment. But what I call the parenthetical portion, which sets Him forth in lowly guise riding on the ass (though none the less *the King who will come*), had to have *its* fulfilment *first* ; and so He came in that way, " the Messiah the Prince," for He was that, but unrecognised and unaccepted by the mass, and was finally crucified by them three days after. Thus on that memorable day the sixty-nine weeks of Daniel's seventy ended, and, to use an oft used figure, the prophetic clock stopped, and prophetic periods ceased for the time being.

With the rejection and crucifixion of "Messiah the Prince," the Jews filled up the cup of their iniquity and "Lo-ammi," which means "not My people," then became true of the Jews, even as it became true of the ten tribes when God cast *them* off and allowed them to be carried away by the Assyrians (see 2 Kings xvii.); though this judgment on the Jews was only publicly put into execution when the Romans burnt and destroyed Jerusalem A.D. 70. Then, of course, every one could see, and can still see, that the Jews, as well as the ten tribes, are "Lo-ammi—not My people" till God takes them all up again by-and-by in His way and time and puts them back in their land (Jer. xxxii. 37-44). The fulfilment of the last week of the seventy was therefore indefinitely postponed until God has carried out His counsels and plans in connection with the Church; then, as I have said, He will take them up once more and re-commence their history at the point where He left off. Read Romans xi. as to this.

From that point, *i.e.*, after the prophetic clock stopped, a great parenthesis comes in, based on the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. A period in which God brings into light and carries out His heavenly purposes concerning Christ and the Church. If you will turn to Isa. lxi. 2, you will see that a comma (,) only separates the first two sentences in that verse; yet in between them lies the whole of this Christian dispensation. Our blessed Lord recognised this in reading that Scripture in the synagogue at Nazareth, and stopped at the end of the first sentence—"To preach the acceptable year of the Lord"—and He closed the book (see Luke

iv. 20). The next sentence—"and the day of vengeance of our God"—awaits its fulfilment in Daniel's *last* week.

The rejection and crucifixion of "the Messiah the Prince" by the Jews, furnished God with the opportunity to take up the whole question of sin and settle it for ever at the cross when Jesus was hanging there. There "the Son of Man was glorified, and God was glorified in Him" in connection with that mighty work (John xiii. 31). Then, having been "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father"; and "made Lord and Christ" in ascension; and having received the Holy Ghost as the risen and glorified Man (Acts ii. 33); He sent down the Spirit at Pentecost and baptised believing Jews with the Holy Ghost; and subsequently believing Gentiles (Acts x.) into One Body, and thus "the Church which is His Body," and which is also "the House of God," came into being (1 Cor. xii. 13; Eph. i. 22, 23; 1 Tim. iii. 15).

This period, as already noted, is one of unknown length. It has lasted over 1900 years already, and will continue till the Rapture, as it is often called, when the Lord Himself will descend from heaven, and the saints will be "caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and ever be with the Lord" (1 Thes. iv. 16-18). God will not take up the Jew and start the prophetic clock again in order to complete the unfulfilled 70th week, until the Church is in the glory with Christ, and that ought to be a source of great comfort to all the Lord's dear people. But space forbids us enlarging on that here. But bear it in mind.

Keep clear then in your minds that the seven weeks, and the sixty-two weeks, making sixty-nine out of Daniel's seventy, began in Nehemiah's day, and ended when Jesus entered into Jerusalem on the ass, three days before He died on the cross. They have been fulfilled and are a thing of the past ; therefore you may shut them out of the present, and future too, in your mind.

The present dispensation began at Pentecost, during which the Church is being gathered out as the Body of Christ, and to be the Bride of Christ in the future day of displayed glory (Rev. xxi. 9-11). This period is still running its course, and will do till the Rapture, as already intimated. Then after a probable interval, the seven seals will be broken, which will bring to light the contents of the sealed book (Rev. vi.) The last of the seven seals will usher in the seven angels with the seven trumpets, and *then* it is that the last week begins. Then the last of the trumpets brings in the Lord Himself (Rev. xix. 15) thus ending the week. He appears with the armies of heaven following Him (Rev. xix. 14) ; delivers His people the Jews ; executes judgment on their enemies ; and finally introduces the Millennium.

The division of the last week itself, however, needs a few more words. Notice that after the destruction of the city and the sanctuary by the people of a prince that is to come ; *i.e.*, after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans A.D. 70, that great gap already mentioned comes in between verses 26 and 27 of Dan. ix. ; in other words, the whole Church period comes in there. Then after the Rapture, "this prince that is to come,"

mentioned in verse 26, comes on the scene. But note, he is *not* the Messiah—he is the Imperial head of the Roman Empire which will then be revived and seen in its ten kingdom form. It is this man who will confirm a covenant with “the many”—(that is, with the mass of unbelieving Jews), for *one week* ; and *that event* it is which marks the commencement of the last or seventieth week. Observe that ! All godly Jews in that day will know by *that event* that the last week has commenced.

Then we read, “and *in the midst of the week*,” or “at the dividing of the week,” “he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease,” &c.; *i.e.*, he will suddenly command the Jews to cease their worship of God ; and then it is the awful “time of Jacob’s trouble” will begin (Jer. xxx, 7)—called by many “the great tribulation,” and which will end a short time before the Lord appears (Matt. xxiv. 29, 30). Thus we have the last week itself clearly marked out for us. Its *commencement*—when the covenant is confirmed. Its *division*—when Jewish worship is prohibited. Its *end*—when the Lord appears from heaven with His army. The last part of the week is largely treated of in various parts of Scripture, much more than the first part, for reasons which need not be entered upon here.

If this short paper is quietly and thoughtfully read, and God’s blessing sought in order to understand it, we think all such readers will be able to grasp, in its broad outlines at least, what is meant by Daniel’s 70 weeks ; and its divisions of seven, sixty-two and one ; and the division of the last one, and which will be matter for thanksgiving to our gracious God and Father.

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