

MIDDLE EAST PEACE – THE FULFILLMENT OF BIBLE PROPHECY (Part 2 of 9)

In order to gain an accurate understanding of the prophecy given to Daniel by the angel Gabriel recorded for us in Daniel 9:24-27, we must determine the length of the seventy weeks which have been ordained for the nation of Israel. Pinpointing a historical setting outside of the Biblical text is always open to conjecture. But using the context of Daniel 9 itself leads to a more common-sense conclusion. In Daniel 9 and vv2-3, the prophet begins his intercession on behalf of Israel in response to the length of the Babylonian Captivity, namely, seventy years.

In addition, the prophecy itself contains details which help us to determine the timeframe. It will begin with the decree of Artaxerxes given in 445 BC (Nehemiah 2:1-10), for the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Then sixty-nine of those seventy weeks will transpire and culminate with the Messiah being “cut off.” This is an unmistakable reference to the crucifixion of our Lord and Savior. In order for this prophecy to make any sense at all, the seventy weeks cannot be seventy weeks of days. The period portrayed in this prophecy covers a much greater length of time. But if each week is viewed as a span of seven years and not days, then that lengthy period of time from the decree of Artaxerxes to the death of Jesus Christ on Calvary’s Cross, makes perfect sense.

So, the consensus is that sixty-nine weeks of the seventy-week prophecy have been fulfilled. However, there is nothing mentioned about the completion of the 70th week, other than what we read in v24. In other words, when the seventy weeks are fully realized, in their entirety, the events described in v24 will have come into existence on planet earth. The current state of affairs in our lost, fallen and sinful world provides us with a polar opposite account of that which is portrayed in Daniel 9:24. Therefore, we can draw two possible conclusions from this stark contrast between Daniel 9:24 and our contemporary world. God’s prophetic promise given to Daniel on behalf of Israel has proven to be an utter failure. Or, the final and 70th week of this prophecy has yet to be fulfilled. As a Bible believing Christian, I choose the latter option.

Then the relevant question becomes “Why?” Some two thousand years have transpired since the completion of the first sixty-nine weeks. Why the delay? Why has the 70th week of Daniel’s prophecy seemingly been put on hold? The answer resides in the text itself. Daniel 9:25-26 tells us that the first sixty-nine weeks have been fulfilled, with that completion occurring at the specific historical point of Christ’s death on the Cross. Ironically, His death on the Cross has become precisely the reason why the 70th week has been postponed. If Israel had accepted their Messiah during His first advent, the Kingdom of God would have been established on earth by Christ Himself. Instead of an acceptance by the nation of Israel, in response to the coming of their Messiah, there was a response of unbelief, of an outright rejection, so monumental in its significance, that it prevented the 70th week, described in Daniel 9:24, from becoming a reality.

But that delay in no way means a denial of what God has promised to take place. There is a future which is reserved for the nation of Israel in the redemptive and prophetic plan and purpose of God. Their rejection of Christ, resulting in the suspension of those promises, has provided an opportunity for God’s redemptive plan of salvation to be offered to the entire world, to Jew and Gentile alike. This prolonged period of time has come to be known as the Church Age. But that age will come to an end, allowing for the fulfillment of Daniel’s 70th week to begin. The apostle Paul describes this entire process in profound and beautiful detail throughout all of Romans chapter eleven. Read it for yourself and consider what it will mean for all of us in these last days.