

Daniel 06-02-19b

We're ready now to formally address ourselves to Daniel chapter 9 verses 20 and following. Gabriel comes in answer to Daniel's prayer at God's time and in God's place being caused to fly swiftly. The command went out when he began to pray and Gabriel has come to tell Daniel because he is greatly beloved.

This is not because Daniel is any kind of a fair-haired, elect child of God beyond any other fair-haired, elect child of God. It is because Daniel is obedient. God is able to give Daniel answers to his questions because he is one who asks, he is one who seeks, he is one who knocks on the door.

If you want to be beloved by God, it's not happenstance, it's not an accident. It is the result of putting oneself in the place where God can express the love that he has for all his children. Consider the matter and understand the vision.

Now, first of all, what did Daniel pray about? Daniel is praying about the end of the 70 years of discipline that he understood from reading the book of Jeremiah, right? This answer to his prayer doesn't really exactly correspond to the prayer that he prayed, does it? He said, oh Lord, we're sinful and we acknowledge that and we have been disobedient and we see that the end of this discipline is approaching and we pray that you'll restore us and bless us for your great name's sake. But the answer that comes from Gabriel is sort of the answer to a different question, isn't it? And this is another great principle that we observe and that we interpret and apply to ourselves. As Paul says in Romans chapter 8, we do not always pray as we ought.

We see things from a certain perspective, we define a problem, we see a challenge, we address ourselves to an issue and then we go before God in prayer and many times the answer that God gives back isn't really answering the question that we ask. It's not really a response to our request or our supplication. Why is that? Daniel is looking at 70 years of discipline when he prays.

God is looking at the sweep of human history when he answers and that is exactly the difference between our prayers and God's answers. We're looking from a very narrow, earthbound, limited scope of view. God is answering with everybody in view, with everybody in mind.

We see the things from our point of view and we pray as best we can and we do our best to apply the Word of God but God's ways are higher than our ways, his thoughts are higher than our thoughts and his answers are a lot better than anything we could think up and they benefit more people and accomplish his purpose to a much fuller and greater extent than we could possibly imagine. Now this should not deter us or discourage us from praying to the best of our ability. Daniel prays here.

Gabriel isn't going to come down and say, now Daniel, what are you praying that for? Where's

your perspective here? You've got kind of a self-centered prayer going. You're just praying for yourself and your people and that's fine but you know God is bigger and grander. Nobody comes down and rebukes Daniel for his prayer but the answer shows God's comprehensive involvement in all of human history, past, present and future and that's the way God responds.

So we pray as best we can. I see many parallels to this. I was a fire direction officer in the Marine Corps.

I would sit in my fire direction center monitoring nine different radio nets at once, listening to significant traffic on say three at a time simultaneously. It's an art that you and a thing you have to learn by experience. I can't tell you how confused I was the first few times I was a battalion fire direction officer and had three batteries worth of traffic plus monitoring the air and the guys who were flying around plus monitoring the tactical nets and the administrative nets and all of this radio traffic and I've got guys listening to some and I'm listening to others and you just have to kind of go into a zone where you absorb multiple sources of information all at once and you have to learn to pick out the salient and important things.

If somebody calls for fire, silence is consent. If I don't intervene that mission is going to get fired and I may need to intervene but I in the fire direction center have access to all of this information. Now somebody is out there, a forward observer with an infantry unit and he calls for fire on a target and I look at my map and I see well now if we fire that mission are we going to be inside or outside our safety box? Are we going to be endangering any kind of air missions? I'm listening to the air traffic control net if you will and I know who and when and where or I should know where these aircraft are going to be.

We don't want to just rely on the big sky little bullet theory and hope that when we fire a artillery round well there's no possible way we can knock an airplane out of the sky with it. You can't do that. I have to look at and sometimes I have to deny a mission that seems perfectly legitimate to an observer who's calling it in and I have to say we can't fire that right now because if we do we're going to endanger a troop movement.

We're going to endanger. I have a lot more facts than that observer out there. He sees things that are very real and very immediate but there is a bigger picture.

The PBS folks, Frontline, has a documentary about the methamphetamine scourge that began on the west coast out in Oregon has been working its way east and people basically boiling down cold medicine and turning it into the most addictive drug there is and so as this begins to spread due to a number of factors the state governors in the west go to the DEA and the Drug Enforcement Agency and they say we need this and we need that from the federal government because this is wrecking people's lives. In places like Portland, Oregon eighty percent of crime is related to methamphetamines. People are committing these property related crimes because they have to get money to get this drug crystal meth because they cannot do without it and they lose their jobs, they lose their families, they lose their children, they lose their lives.

They show before and after pictures of these people. You know the police bring them in and arrest them and book them and take their mug shot and a guy from the newspaper there in Portland did a study and kind of helped in the assembling of this documentary and he put the before and after pictures, early booking pictures and later booking pictures of these methamphetamine addicts and it is shocking. It looks like a before and after for somebody that went into Dachau or Auschwitz.

It's lesions on the face and teeth coming out and big dark circles under people's eyes and a bright healthy looking young woman turning into this looks like her grandmother after a hard day. Just awful destruction and so these governors go to the DEA and they say look you have got to put these regulations in place. You have got to make these ingredients for cold medicine illegal.

They said you know there's been a success story. Do you remember quaaludes? Remember when they used to talk about quaaludes and people? Well the fellow back in the mid-eighties who was at the DEA at the time tracked down the source the chemical from which they make quaaludes is very sophisticated and there's only a few places that have the ability to manufacture that essential ingredient. Well they went to those sources and essentially shut them down and quaaludes disappeared.

You don't hear anybody talking about quaaludes don't even exist anymore and that problem went away. Well they tried to do the same thing with amphetamines, a problem with methamphetamines. There's a difference.

Methamphetamines are an amphetamine with a methyl group in them and so the ingredient from which these are made is the ephedrine or pseudoephedrine that's in your cold medicine and there's only nine factories in the world that make ephedrine or pseudo ephedrine and if you can go to those companies and put some controls on who is allowed to buy those substances. If you can go to the cold medicine companies and get some controls. Anyway for lobbying reasons and big money reasons the cold medicine companies didn't want to do that but here's my point.

Those governors have a narrow view and it's a very compelling view of the destruction of human life and property that's going on in their states because of this but when they go to somebody at the national level and say you have got to do something about this why there are larger issues because it's not just methamphetamine addiction and use and related crime that the country faces. We also have black tar heroin and we have cocaine and crack cocaine and we have all these other issues and you can essentially rob Peter to pay Paul. You can divert resources from these others and say okay we're really knocking down the methamphetamine but now look at what's happening on this other.

I mean there's a bigger picture and sometimes you get a no answer to something that seems so compelling and once again this could be a source of discouragement. This is where faith comes in. We don't put our faith in an interpretation of scripture that is in a non-essential area.

This was our point in the first lesson. Nor do we put our faith in God only when he continually says yes to us. This is like your children only being obedient when you always give them what they want or what they ask for and if you say no to them why then they throw a screaming conniption fit.

A good child, an obedient child, a well-trained child will be just as obedient when you say no as when you say yes and a child of God will be just as obedient and just as faithful and have just as much faith and trust in God's judgment and in God's wisdom in praying over something and the answer does not come. Paul, how many times did he pray for the removal of the thorn in his flesh? Three times. Notice, three times.

He didn't pester God. He didn't say well today I prayed three times. When we have something on our mind we just go to God over and over and over don't we? And Jesus said watch out for those scribes and Pharisees and hypocrites who make long prayers and who repeat themselves you got the Jews over there bobbing in front of the wailing wall and saying the same thing over and over you might as well be a Catholic and just run through your, you know, get yourself a chain of beads, get yourself a rosary and just work through them over and over, hail Mary full of grace and so on.

You can have a very important issue on your mind and you can take it to God once and if you want to continue to pray about it, well elaborate, don't repeat. God is not hard of hearing. He heard you the first time and faith is not reflected in repeating a prayer over and over and over.

If you want to bring an issue to God, bring it to Him and if you want to talk to Him about it at length, bring in your details, bring in your scriptures, bring in your application. Do the kind of prayer that does your soul good, that's the reason we pray. God does not need our prayers to inform Him of a situation, does He? He doesn't need our prayers to tell Him what He ought to do.

Our prayers are designed to benefit us, to give us the occasion to have a conversation with God where He speaks to us from His Word and we take His words and we incorporate those into our responses to Him. So repetitive prayer is a waste of time and it is a reflection of weak faith. Quality prayer is prayer that draws on our knowledge of scripture, that is an analysis of the situation and an exercise in the application of the Word of God in someone else's.

Many times when we're doing a shelf on which that word resides is vacant, where we are making prayer on behalf of others. Intercessory prayer, we're making an intercession, we're making a supplication on behalf of someone else. That is an opportunity, I mean we have a lot of opportunities to apply the Word of God in our own circumstance and in our immediate environment, but here's a situation over here and now we get an exercise, it's like a story problem.

What could God be doing to allow this person to be sick and remain sick, to get a diagnosis of cancer or some ailment where they're traumatized and their family is gathering around them

and there's a big issue there. Why would God be doing that? Well, let me think. What could He be up to? What are the opportunities there? Where's the opportunity to reflect the glory of God, for the gospel to be shared, for the truth of God that is in someone's soul? Is this person a believer? Do they have some maturity there? Is that something where they can win others without a word, where people will say, what is the reason for the hope that is in you? It's an exercise, it's an opportunity and we glorify God by thinking about the principles and about His wisdom and bringing things about in the lives of fellow believers, just as we do in our own life, but many times it's easier to observe, interpret, and apply in someone else's life than it is in our own because we're close, we're emotional, we have our hands full just trying to keep from unraveling.

Well, say all of that to say this, Daniel prays from his perspective, makes a request, makes an expression of repentance and confession and the answer he gets back isn't the answer to the question he asked. Gabriel could have just showed up and said, well Daniel, you know, there is this attitude of repentance amongst the people and particularly you and so, yes indeed, captivity is going to end. Here in just a few years, so good job, well done, see you later, and flies away.

This is what he says. He gives Daniel something that seemingly, initially, is unrelated to his prayer and this will often be the case with us. We will be praying and concerned and focused on one issue, one aspect and God and most of you can think of situations in your own life where this has taken place.

You've been all concerned about a job or a move or a relationship or an issue or a health problem or whatever and ultimately God moves in some other mysterious way and in the course of this other thing taking place, why this first thing becomes a non-issue or gets resolved or gets put in a completely different light. What started out being bad and a worry turns out to kind of be a good thing. Oh dear, I lost my job, unexpectedly.

Many of us have been through that and you think, wow, this is bad so, oh Lord, help me find another job and my money is going to run out by such-and-such a date and I really need a job by then. Well, God does his thing and in the intervening time a lot of stuff takes place and you ultimately get re-employed. When you look back, you say, boy, what a great thing that was.

Look at what God did. What's really gratifying is if you do rest in faith and you say, well, God's giving me a little enforced vacation here. I can take it easy.

I can enjoy my family. I can make a reasonable effort to find another job. I'm not going to kill myself.

I'm not depending on my printer and the number of resumes that I can mail. I'll make the effort I should make and then I'm going to rest in the Lord. And you actually get a great blessing because you get a break.

You get a free vacation. Well, that's what Daniel gets here. So, now formally we will address ourselves to this.

Verse 24, 70 weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city to do these six things. Now, this is in the first year of Darius. 538-537 BC.

We know this from the first verse. We also know this from 2 Chronicles 36 verse 21 through 23. What does it tell us? Seventy years.

If you go back to 2 Chronicles 36, 21 through 23, Daniel knew that the seventy-year captivity prophesied by Jeremiah was nearing its end. Jeremiah himself had spoken of this in Jeremiah 25, 11, and 12. This whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

Jeremiah 25, 11, and 12. Then it will come to pass when seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, says the Lord, and I will make it a perpetual desolation. Jeremiah 25, 11, and 12.

Same thing in Jeremiah 29, 10. Thus says the Lord, after seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform my good word toward you and cause you to return to this place. Seventy years.

2 Chronicles 36, 21 through 23, that I gave you a minute ago, details how this took place. To fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate, she kept Sabbath to fulfill seventy years.

We'll come back to that passage here a little bit later. Why was Israel in captivity? Well, we've just studied forty-odd chapters in the book of Ezekiel telling us why. Disobedience.

Removed from the land, scattered among the Gentiles, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. What Sabbaths are those? God said in Leviticus chapter 26, verse 33 and following, I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you. Your land shall be desolate and your cities waste.

Then the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths as long as it lies desolate and you are in your enemy's land. Then the land shall rest and enjoy its Sabbaths as long as it lies desolate it shall rest for the time it did not rest on your Sabbaths when you dwelt in it. So this is sort of like when God told Israel for every day that the spies spent in the land you're gonna be wandering for a year.

Well, the time that the land did not rest on its Sabbaths those are 70 Sabbath years that the land did not enjoy. How many Jubilee years, how many 50th years does that constitute? If you have missed 70 years of Sabbaths and there's a Sabbath year every seven years and a year of Jubilee every 50 years, you add that all up, that takes you right back to the days of King David. Takes you right back into the thousands.

Basically 490 years. Right? Seven times 70, 490 years. That's how many Sabbath years, seventh years when they were supposed to leave their fields unplowed and so on.

490 years they missed the Sabbath years as well as the years of Jubilee. That takes you back 490 odd years. And this took place in what year? Depending on if you want to start at 605 or 586 BC.

But let's just round it off to 600 BC for convenience sake. You go back 490 years and that takes you to just shy of 1100 BC. And that is right around the time of the beginning of the monarchy, the beginning of the Saulide reign and then David.

And you get down to around a thousand and right around a thousand is when you have David and Solomon and so forth. So, from the time that the nation formally should have been observing these Sabbaths and did not, that's how many years? 70 years. So, 2 Chronicles 36:21 said the land would be desolate for 70 years.

And we conclude that in the 800 years of occupation of the land that Israel had enjoyed, they went in 1400 BC, right? Give or take. And we're down to 600 BC. That's 800 years of occupancy.

70 sabbatical years were not kept. Daniel saw that that time was just about up. He knew Chronicles.

He knew Jeremiah. He knew that before they could return, they needed to acknowledge their sin, their national failure. And that's what he did.

And this is also in accordance with scripture, Leviticus 26:40 through 46. If they confess their iniquity, Daniel is applying scripture, and the iniquity of their fathers. If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers.

This is why Daniel is doing a corporate confession here. Leviticus 26:40 is what I'm reading. And that I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies.

If their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they accept their guilt, then I will remember my covenant with Jacob and my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham. I will remember, I will remember the land. The land shall be left empty by them, will enjoy its sabbaths where it lies desolate without them.

They will accept their guilt because they despise my judgments and because their soul abhorred my statutes. Why do we find ourselves desolated? Why do we find ourselves isolated? Why do we find ourselves without power, without peace, and without enjoying those kingdom blessings I mentioned in the first lesson that we can have in our souls? It is for this very reason, despising God's judgments and abhorring his statutes. Now we give lip service.

We can show up for Bible class and all that. The despising and the abhorring comes in the application phase, not in the listening phase. Many people think, well, I'm good to go.

I'm in church every Sunday or I'm in Bible class every time the doors are open or whatever.

That's not it. And I'm not talking about this group specifically.

I'm talking about the Christian world at large. Many people think that their insurance policy is church attendance. Even people who go to strong teaching churches, exegetical, isagogic, categorical, and all the rest of it, they think, well, because I'm there, because I assemble, because I hear, I'm golden.

I'm good to go. It is not the hearing. Israel heard.

Did not Israel hear? Remember that question? Did not Israel hear? Of course they did. It wasn't the hearing that was the problem. It's the accepting.

It is the internalizing. It is the applying where it makes a difference. You and I can miss the blessing of God.

We can miss the plan and purpose of God. We can miss the future hope of the church to rule and reign with Christ and wear those white robes if we do not focus on application. What am I doing today? Am I abhorring? Am I despising the judgments of God, thinking I've got a better plan, I've got a better way? Or are we meditating in the law of the Lord day and night? Verse 44 of Leviticus 26, Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, nor shall I abhor them to utterly destroy them and break my covenant with them, for I am the Lord their God.

This is not a salvation issue. This is a blessing issue. This is a covenant keeping issue.

You can be, you know how they have people that are married, but they're estranged. We can be estranged from God. It doesn't revoke the marriage.

It doesn't revoke the covenant. But all of the benefits are set aside. The benefits are missed.

So Daniel confesses on behalf of the people. He knows Leviticus. He knows Jeremiah.

He knows Chronicles, or at least the content of Chronicles. And that's what he does. He pleads with God that God's anger will be turned away and that restoration can take place.

When he prays this prayer, Gabriel comes. And instead of giving him a thumbs up or thumbs down on an immediate return to the land or a very soon return to the land, he instead gives him this 70-week deal. Well, of course, people have understood these weeks in various ways, as I intimated in our last lesson.

I won't go through all the variations on this. Suffice it to say that people have been all over the map. A lot of predictions have been made that were faulty.

So we're going to try to do it right. Seventy weeks are determined. Is this symbolic? Some people sort of spiritualize this and say you can't focus it down to literal time periods and so on.

Is it literal? Is it day, year? Is it all historically fulfilled? Have all 70 weeks passed and gone by? We, of course, are in the camp that think that 69 of those weeks have gone by until the coming of Messiah the Prince and that there's one week left to go. Well, a lot of people have big heartburn with that. I don't see anything in the Word of God that says that the weeks are not continuous and how can you insert 2,000 years in between the 69th and the 70th week? Well, that is one of the questions we'll seek to answer here.

Our first word here is the Shavuot, Shavuim, Shavim. Seventy weeks, seventy-sevens are determined. This word is used for different things.

Sometimes it is explicitly said in the passage that it is days. I've given you some of those passages already. In Ezekiel 45, 21, Ezekiel says, in the first month on the 14th day of the month, you shall observe the Passover, a feast of seven days.

Shavim, Yamim, seven days. And Yamim is right in the passage. And so there's no question about what seven means there.

In this same book, in the next chapter, in Daniel chapter 10, in verses 2 and 3, he's going to use this very same word again. In those days, I, Daniel, was mourning three full sevens, three full Shavim. Now, if this was a week of years in Daniel chapter 10, Daniel would have been mourning how long? Twenty-one years? Seems unlikely.

And in verse 3, he says, I ate no pleasant food, nor no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole sevens were fulfilled. Now, as old as Daniel is at this point, I don't think you can really argue that it's 21 years. They are clearly regular weeks.

That's the normal expectation, weeks of days. Six times in scripture, this word is used without modification to mean a normal seven-day week. Genesis 29, 27 and 28, Jacob fulfills the week for Leah and then he fulfills the week for Rachel.

You have to understand wedding practices and so on there. Deuteronomy 16, 9, count seven weeks for yourself. Begin to count the seven weeks.

This is between Feast of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost, seven weeks. Leviticus 12, 5, the woman who bears a female child shall be unclean two weeks. Customary impurity shall continue in the blood of her purification 66 days.

Clearly a week of days there. Deuteronomy 16, 10, keep the Feast of Weeks to the Lord your God, tribute of a free will offering and so on. So clearly, it's used for a standard week and then other times it's used as a unit of seven without reference to days.

Our passage here is a case in point. So as is so often the case, the meaning of a word in scripture is determined by context. What is the context? If you go to Romans chapter 9 and look at a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction, what is the context? If he says Jacob I love and Esau I hated, what is the context? You cannot just parachute in, as I said Friday night.

You can't just drop in out of the sky in the middle of a passage and start interpreting it. You have to look at it in context. That's why we always study books from beginning to end, chapter by chapter, verse by verse.

So it says these have been marked out. Very unusual word. It doesn't say decreed.

It doesn't say commanded. It says they've been cut out. They've been carved out.

They've been designated. In the ancient world, when you wanted to designate something, well you'd put a chop in it. You'd put a groove in it and scribe a mark.

And that was sort of a permanent mark. You've seen what they call the James Ossuary that says something about James brother of Jesus on it. There's been a lot of ink spill over whether or not it's the actual bone box of James the brother of Jesus and it says Jacob bar Joseph brother of Jesus or some such thing on it.

Well, how much of the inscription is... Well, it's inscribed. And after 2,000 years, you can still read the inscription on this bone box because it's cut in. It wasn't just painted on or inked on.

It's inscribed. Well, these weeks are cut. Permanently determined is the idea.

So 70 weeks, and we understand these to be years. Why? First of all, Daniel is thinking in terms of years and in terms of multiples. That's how the chapter began.

Chapter 9, which even without chapter divisions is marked by a fresh dividing line there by the date notification, the notation rather, says in the first year of his reign, Guy Daniel understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah that he would accomplish 70 years in the desolations of Jerusalem. So that's 10 times 7 years. That's what he's thinking about.

He's thinking about years and he's thinking about the 70. He's been looking at Jeremiah about the 70 year captivity and he knows from Leviticus that this is a period of time, the 70 years is based on those 7 year cycles, on those 7 year Sabbaths that were missed. So, if you picture Daniel, and here's Daniel standing here, he's looking 490 years in the past from the beginning of the captivity and now God is going to give him near the end of that 70 year period, is going to give him a 490 year view into the future.

Make sense? The 70 years of discipline are based on missing the Sabbaths for 490 years. So you've got 490 years of past history that led to this 70 and there's going to be 490 years marked out when the 70 ends from the going forth of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem. So you've got 490, 70 and 490.

And Daniel is near the end of that 70. He says, well, you've been looking at this 70 years and thinking about it and praying over it and confessing sin about it and that was a result of the preceding 490 years. Well, let me tell you what the next 490 years hold in store.

So, the symmetry there is very compelling that these are weeks of years. Don't you think? That's what the context gives us. You cannot take the things that are described here in terms of finishing transgression, making an end of sin, reconciling iniquity, sealing up vision and prophecy, bringing in righteousness, anointing the most holy and all of the other things that come on down here where the street is rebuilt and the wall in troublesome times and it's cutting off on the side.

You can't fit that into actual weeks. It just won't fit. There's no possible way.

It's just unreasonable to even think about it. You can try it. Only in that number of years would that be feasible or even understandable.

And a final argument I'll offer here is when you get to verse 27 and he says that the prince who is to come confirms a covenant with many for one week. Would this be a seven-day covenant that he's going to confirm with many? I mean, that's unreasonable. This is the same measure of time as the 70 weeks.

He's going to confirm a covenant for one week. Well, what is a reasonable expectation for somebody to make a covenant? It would be seven years, not seven days. And for it to be cut off, do you make it in three and a half days later? You cut it off? It's nonsensical.

So I think we can say with confidence that these are weeks of years. Nothing else really makes any good sense. Now, Daniel 9.25 tells us that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there will be seven weeks and 62 weeks.

So when does this period begin? When does it start? Well, it says that the decree to restore and build Jerusalem, the street will be built again and the wall, even in troublesome times. And this street and wall are words we're going to have to look at. This can also be translated plaza and moat.

So we'll have to take a look at these as we get there. But we want to note, and by the way, we'll come back to the six things that are going to be accomplished during these weeks. But we want to kind of get our bare bones outline here.

So where does it start? It's going to start when the decree goes forth to rebuild Jerusalem. And there's three aspects of this rebuilding. First of all, when it says restore and rebuild, restore and rebuild is pretty comprehensive.

Restore and rebuild. It doesn't mean a little bit of cosmetic cleaning up of trash. If I said, I'm going to go down to Louisiana and Mississippi and I'm going to restore and rebuild everything that happened as a result of the hurricanes down there, what would you expect when I was finished? It would be like it was before.

If I restore and rebuild New Orleans, it ought to be like it was before. It's not sort of a dim copy of New Orleans. It would be like it was.

Restore and rebuild is comprehensive, fulsome, raise the city up to its former state. When it talks about the street and the wall, the first word here has the idea of the open marketplace, the open area in Jerusalem where people come and set up. And this is where a lot of the central life of the city takes place.

It's really a plaza. To which many of the streets lead. But it's this great open, broad space.

You can find this same word used in places like Ezra chapter 10 and verse 9, where the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered at Jerusalem. It was the ninth month on the 20th month. All the people sat in the open square of the house of God, this great open area.

Same thing in Esther chapter 4. We'll be seeing this before long. Haytack went out to Mordecai in the city square that was in front of the king's gate. This is in Shushan.

Big open plaza. You get a sense of this if you've ever seen pictures. I actually had the privilege of being there in Rome at St. Peter's, the Pope's big church there.

And you get up there on the dome and you look at it. There's this great plaza that stretches out in front of it. And you got all the marble saints on there ringing the thing.

But you know all these people who get out there and the Pope comes out and blesses them, does his little cross thing on them. Well, that's the idea. That's what this word means, this great expanse.

That's going to be restored and rebuilt. And the wall. When it says that the city is going to be restored in troublesome times, it's not going to be a joyous celebration.

They're not going to come in like David with the ark and oh boy, this is going to be difficult. And troublesome times means it's going to take a span of time. And Jerusalem did not really become the city that it was before under Ezra and Nehemiah.

That was the beginning. But there were troublesome times down through the ages. And you think about the period covered after the return.

We're going to see in Esther that even after the decree and after the people were free to go back, many did not. Why is Esther still in Shushan 100 years after Daniel? That by the way, Daniel is in that place where Esther is going to be. Esther will be there 100 years later.

Well, the decree has already gone forth. Ezra and Nehemiah have already done their thing. And yet Esther and Mordecai and all these Jews that are threatened by Haman aren't anywhere near Jerusalem and aren't in Israel.

Why not? Well, troublesome times. It's a long period of time. These things, the decree is going to go forth and that'll start the clock on these 70 weeks.

But it's not all going to happen at once. Eventually, the plaza, the gathering place, the assembly

place will be rebuilt. And the wall, and again, this is a word that means the border area.

And it can mean, it's kind of a tough word to figure out. It's used like a moat. It's a passive participle from karatz, which is the word that means to cut.

It's a relative of the one that we saw of this decree idea. It means to sharpen. It can be used to decide.

You look at an issue and you cut through it. You figure out what needs to be done. In the Old Testament, this word occurs 14 times.

It can be, it's used for sharpening a threshing instrument or a threshing sledge. It's used that way by Isaiah and Amos. It's used once to give the idea of being maimed or mutilated.

This is Leviticus 22, 22, this very same word. Those that are blind or broken or karatz, sliced, or have an ulcer or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to the Lord nor make an offering by fire of them on the altar of the Lord. No disabled animals, no animals that have some kind of cut in them.

It's used poetically of gold from the idea that gold is bright and it's desired by men. And so it means to be eager or to covet a thing. Anyway, it's used a couple of times for something that's decided like a decision, like the valley of decision, Joel 3.14. Everybody's going to gather in the valley of decision.

Well, the word translated decision there is karatz. The valley where they're going to be divided. They're going to be cut.

They're going to be, there's the live and the die, the bloody and the unbloody, the fodder for the carrying birds and the others. And it's used again here in Daniel chapter nine and verse 25, which is our passage. So in Aramaic, it's used as a trench.

In Akkadian, it means a city moat. At Qumran, in what they call the Dead Sea Scrolls, it was used of a moat that was associated with a rampart or a bulwark, incision, furrow, or trench. So the basic idea is to make a trench or an incision or some sort of a cut.

So there's the flat place, which is the city gathering place, and there is this cutting or trench. And you think, well, now what sort of a trench is associated with Jerusalem? Because it says that the plaza will be built again and the trench, even in troublesome times. So how do we understand this? Well, the plaza is the interior of the city and the trench is the outside of the city.

Part of the defense of Jerusalem to keep this kind of thing from happening was these rocks on the north wall that were natural defense and were augmented by the chiseling and building and so on. And so basically this is the complete restoration of the city, both interior and exterior. It has its defenses back and it has its internal life restored.

This is gonna be done in a time of distress and oppression. Many times we have to rebuild, we have to recover in troublesome times. And it's a process, it takes time, but it can occur.

Well, I'm sorry, we're out of time for this morning. We didn't get as far as I had hoped, but we'll continue our study of the 70 weeks next time. Father, thank you for the privilege of studying your word together.

May God, the Holy Spirit, minister it to our hearts. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.