

Kings and Prophets 17-06-08b

Let's resume our study now in Daniel chapter 9, and we've embarked on an analysis of the 77's that are determined, they are fixed. This is another look at God's sovereign control over history, and we can take comfort in the fact that God is in control, chaos doesn't escape its bounds, there are limits that God establishes, and there's nothing that befalls us that is beyond what we are able to bear because God does have that sovereign ordained parameter that limits and prevents us from being overwhelmed. So when it says they have been determined, there's no undoing this.

It's not going to change to 71 weeks, it's not going to get shortened to 68 weeks, it is what God says it is, and it is as fixed as the operation of gravity or the speed of light, as far as we're concerned those things are unchanging. So this clock, and we've seen the six purposes in verse 25, know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince. This isn't designed to be an unsolvable puzzle.

He doesn't say, well Daniel, I expect for the next several years you're going to be scratching your head trying to figure out how this plays out, when the clock starts and when it stops. He says know and understand. This is perspicable.

It's understandable. It's graspable. We can figure it out.

You shouldn't have to have a bachelor's or a master's in some branch of mathematics to do it, or advanced study of Hebrew or anything else. He says know and understand. This is written for us, right? All these things are written for our instruction.

So we should know and we should understand. That's why I think it's important for us to take a look at this and not just say, well, scholars disagree and commentators are divided. This isn't supposed to be murky.

It's supposed to be clear. I'm going to offer you a suggestion that I think is in keeping with that. It seems clear to me.

I'm a fairly straightforward thinking guy. I'm not very mathematical. So, know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the command, it's translated command here, but this is just a form of *dabar*, which is the Hebrew word for word.

There's a word that is going to go forth. Now, the Hebrew word for word is *dabar*. Now, if you look in Daniel 9.23, how far away is that? It's the verse before yesterday.

It's the verse before the one we're looking at, Daniel 9.23. At the beginning of your supplications, the word went out. It's the same word. So where does this kind of word come from? First and foremost, didn't we just say these weeks have been determined? Who determined them? Whose authority is backing this whole scenario? So ultimately, what kind of

word starts this clock? There may be something earthly going on, but whose word is going to go forth to restore and build Jerusalem? Look at 9.23. God.

God is going to issue the word. There will be human agency, and there will be human involvement, and there will be human accomplishment involved, but the word, everybody is trying to figure out which decree is it. Is it Longinus or Cyrus or this and that and the other? The word, first and foremost, is God's word.

Our salvation is based on the word of God. The word of God. Remember Hebrews 11? By faith we understand that the worlds were framed.

The cosmos was built by what? The word of God. So that what is seen is not made of things which do appear. God issued a command.

God gives the word, and as we enter into the clock portion of this prophecy, when does it start? How long does it run? Where does it divide? Just remember, the word that goes forth for the people and the holy city that belong to Daniel, it ultimately is sourced in and is started in motion by God Himself. Any kings that issue any decrees, any people that go and build walls or temples or anything else, it's because the word of God was issued first. The word of God is proactive, and the word of God is also prohibitive.

There are things that God ordains and decrees, and they happen. There are things that God says are not going to happen, and they don't. So we are held securely in God's hands.

Long years ago, in the days of black and white television, they used to have a commercial for insurance and they said, you're in good hands with Allstate. At the end, they had what would now be considered a very crude graphic of these two hands, and your little house and car parked in front were in those hands. We are in God's hands.

His word determines what happens to us and what doesn't happen to us. There is great security and a basis for great faith in that recognition. So the word, the command to restore and build Jerusalem, will originate in heaven.

It will originate in God's throne. But it will be visible and manifest on the earth in some form or fashion. So before we get into what all is going to happen, we want to figure out, well, from the going forth of the command until Messiah the Prince.

This is two Hebrew words next to each other. One is Messiah, Mashiach, and the other is Nagid, which is the word for Prince. The Lord Jesus is the anointed of God and He is the rightful heir to the throne of His father David.

There is a reason why He is constantly alluded to as son of David. If David is the king and you are the son, what does that make you? You are the Nagid. You are the crown prince.

So until the coming of the anointed Prince, and that can only be the Lord Jesus. There is just no

other viable interpretation. Until the coming of people that have tried to interpret this as actual weeks or as a short term thing, nobody else came to the throne of Israel that can even remotely fit this description.

So this is the Lord Jesus. So from the command, from the word, until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, Messiah the Prince, and notice there shall be *is* in italics because there is no Hebrew for that. It just says seven sevens and sixty-two sevens.

And even there I am compressing the Hebrew a little bit. So a word is going to go forth and from the time that word goes forth until Messiah the Prince appears, there is going to be a sixty-nine sevens period that is divided seven sevens and sixty-two sevens. Seven plus sixty-two is sixty-nine, right? During this time, it says the street, and you look at your NKJV text note there, or open square.

This is the public venue. This is where people stand or travel, and it can be either or both. The street and the wall, and if you think about this and it says or moat, it doesn't really matter whether you take this as street or square, whether you take it as wall or moat, because it is what they represent that counts.

What did Gabriel say was going to be communicated to Daniel in this vision's interpretation, in this message? It's not actually a vision. I'm going to give you skill to understand, and what does it pertain to? Verse 24, two things, people and the city, right? So what does the street or square provide? Freedom of movement, freedom of opportunity for the people. You have streets and squares so that people can move about and congregate and do things, right? That's what the street and or square is for.

What about the wall or the moat? What does that pertain to? Do you swim in the moat? Do you bang your head on the wall? Maybe, but what are they for? This pertains to the city. This is protection that the city affords. A viable ancient city always had external protection for the internal citizens.

You could close the gates. You could man the battlements. You could shoot arrows and hurl rocks and drop things on people.

So it's defense and security. So in troublesome times, there is going to be provision for the people to live and function, and there's going to be protection and external defense. But there's going to be a need for that external defense so that the people can mill about in the square or street because there will be troubled times.

You're going to have to be on your guard. You're going to have to be aware of external threat as the people of God during this time, right? Then in verse 26, it says, after the 62 weeks, Messiah will be cut off, but not for himself. Well, let's concentrate on this first part for now because it said 7 weeks and 62 weeks.

People are going to continue to exist and do their business, and there is going to be external

protection, but yet it is going to be troubled times. It's not going to be peace and security. They're not lions laying down with lambs.

There's not milk and honey flowing. Never man doesn't have a chicken in the pot and his vine and his fig tree. None of that, right? There is preservation and there is function, but there's not prosperity and there's not security and there's not peace, right? So that's what's coming up in the immediate future during this specified period of time.

Existence, preservation, but not prosperity and peace. That much is clear. No real argument about that, right? After the 62 weeks, Messiah is going to be cut off.

So until the coming of Messiah the Prince, that's after the 7 weeks and after the 62 weeks. Then you have the people of the Prince who will come, destroying the city and the sanctuary, the end of the flood, and all the rest of it. So it's time for us now to figure out when did the Word go forth? Because this is past for us.

It was future for Daniel. It was future when Gabriel was talking about it and it was recorded here, but it is past for us. So we should be able to look back and see when this happened.

Well, the decree or the command or the Word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem or build Jerusalem. There are four universally cited decrees. The first one, and I'm going to go through these quickly because we don't have a lot of time.

Cyrus, he's the first guy. Remember he comes in, he's the one that got the Babylonians out of the way. Darius is there for a year and then it's all Cyrus, right? Cyrus issued a decree.

This is 538 B.C. Now, when was Jerusalem destroyed? 587, 586, along in there. I just go with 586. So 538, how much time has passed? Well, 48 years, 50 years, roughly half a century there.

Jeremiah's 70 weeks aren't even expired yet and Daniel is talking to Gabriel after that time. So that doesn't seem to be a viable option, timing wise. Plus, and this decree of Cyrus is detailed in 2 Chronicles 36, verses 22 and 23.

It's also mentioned in the very first part of Ezra. Ezra 1, 1-4 give the details of Cyrus' decree. Now, what does Gabriel say the decree is going to specify? Restore and build Jerusalem.

That's not what Cyrus' decree talks about. It says you can build the house of God. The house of God is not the city and it's not Jerusalem.

It's the temple. That's a different thing. So, number one is the decree of Cyrus, 538 B.C. 2 Chronicles 36, verses 22 and 23, Ezra 1, 1-4.

It's also mentioned in Ezra 5.13 and it gives permission to rebuild a temple to God in Jerusalem, build the house of God, number one. Number two, Darius, and remember he and Cyrus both come on the scene at about the same time, but Darius I, 18 years later in 520 B.C., says that he's going to build a temple to God in Jerusalem. This is detailed in Ezra 6, verse 8. He confirms and

extends the first decree of Cyrus.

This is not Darius the Mede, this is Darius the Persian. Darius I, the Persian. That's why he's later than Cyrus.

Darius the Mede was the year before Cyrus. That was Gobry, I've lost the last part of his name, G-O-B-R-Y, whatever, Gobryanus, whatever his name was. Darius the Mede.

Then you have Cyrus, now you've got Darius I, the Persian. His decree goes out in 520, it's in Ezra 6.8, and this basically confirms and extends Cyrus' decree 18 years earlier. Yeah, that's right, it's Gobaru, he's also listed as Gobryanus or something like that.

So this is a different guy. That's in 520, that also doesn't pertain, and it's also not the right timing. So the third one is Artaxerxes Longimanus.

What does L-O-N-G mean in English? Long, right? And manus, this is like Latin for hand, manual labor, manipulate. So what do you think longimanus means? Longhand. This is Artaxerxes the Longhand.

As near as they can figure out, one of his hands or one of his arms was longer than the other, so they call him literally Artaxerxes Longhand. 457 B.C., he gives a decree, Artaxerxes the Longhand. It's detailed in Ezra 7, verses 11, 13, and following.

And if you read all of that and digest it, this again pertains to the temple, specifically the financing for it. Okay, you've built it, how are you going to run it? What money is going to maintain the thing and operate it and keep the priests going and all the rest of it? So decree one of Cyrus in 538, decree two of Darius I in 520, and decree number three, Artaxerxes Longimanus in 457. These all are targeted on the house of God.

They don't say anything about doing anything to Jerusalem proper. And Gabriel says it's to restore and build Jerusalem. So the fourth is the one of choice.

This is also one from Artaxerxes Longimanus. The date for this one is, and we have the day as well as the year. This came out March the 5th of 444 B.C. or 445, just depending on whose reckoning you want to use.

This is in Nehemiah chapter 2. It's in Nehemiah chapter 3, verses 8 and 9. And this is giving Nehemiah permission and you have some verbiage in there that says rebuild and restore and so on. So this is the one that everybody wants to pick as the one that starts this clock. Now we already have assured ourselves that the coming of Messiah the Prince is the coming of the Lord Jesus.

And if the sevens are sevens of years or weeks of years, then 69 weeks of years, if you do the math there, 69 times 7 is 483. I can do that backward because 7 times 70 would be 490. 7 times 7 is 49.

Take one week off to have 69, you get 483 years. Now if this decree comes out in 445, let's say, well, you get to year 1 A.D. with 445 and then you've got another 30 years beyond that to get to 483. And you've got another 30 years beyond that to get to 483.

And it's kind of close to kind of the time when the Lord Jesus was crucified. And to try to get it exact, they do a lot of fancy math we've talked about before where you take the years and say they're 360 day years. And so multiply the 483 times 365 and divide by 360 or vice versa.

It gets all real complicated. Nobody that can't use an abacus or a calculator or have a degree in math can figure all that out. And Gabriel says no one understands.

You shouldn't have to be a math major to figure this out. So the timing is wrong for that decree as well. Plus, what happens to the seven sevens? Something should happen.

Something significant. Why does God divide it into 49 years and then the remainder, the 62 weeks? Well, there's nothing significant that happens 49 years after this decree. There just isn't.

They said, well, maybe that's around the time that Nehemiah and the rest of them got finished. But there's nothing that corresponds. So me personally, and I'm, as is sometimes the case, in a strange place off by myself and maybe rightfully so.

Let me just quickly give you option number five, decree number five. Longimanus' decree, either one of them is too late. It pushes you really past the time of Christ in normal years.

And they have to do strange math to get it to happen in the time of the Lord Jesus. And we know when He came. So what other decree does the Bible speak of? What decree has a whole book devoted to it, separate from everything else? Artaxerxes Longimanus is the son and successor of Xerxes I. Xerxes I is the guy who threw over Vashti and, through a convoluted process, ended up taking Esther as his queen.

Let me give you a little bit of information about Xerxes I. And you can get this anywhere. You can get it from, I think they've even got it in Wikipedia. But his date of rule is in the high 400's B.C. What do we need to get in the lifetime of Christ? You need 483 years, right? So he is noted in history for trying to invade Greece.

They've made movies about this. It's a very famous thing because he failed in 480 B.C. He attacked. He was in Greece for a while.

But the famous Battle of Salamis, the Greeks kicked him all the way back to Persia basically. And so his reign was 486 to 465 B.C. 486 to 465. Long story short, if you work out the timing of Haman's plot, Mordecai, Esther coming before the king, the decree of the king that Haman got him to sign where they were going to exterminate the Jews and take all of their stuff, was not possible to reverse.

It was a joke. It could not be countermanded. So a second decree is issued that gives the Jews

the right to defend themselves and their property.

And all of this is in the book of Esther. You can read it. That decree we have an exact date for.

And that is June 25, 474 B.C. Remember he came to the throne. He did the thing in Greece in 480 B.C. So six years after his defeat at Salamis, he's back in there. He got torqued with the original queen.

She's off the scene. Esther is there. Haman does his thing.

Mordecai does his. Esther does hers. And the result is that Xerxes I issues a decree.

And remember now, what is this whole thing about? Gabriel says, it's your people and your holy city. They built cities in China that have got all kinds of walls and facilities, but nobody's living there. A city is only a city when the people are there and they can walk around the streets.

And they can mill about in the square. And they have got some sort of defense. And they have got some sort of external protection.

It may not be great and they may be living in troublous times, but all of those things have to exist. So when is it that there is a word that they are independent and can look out for themselves? Of course they are under dominant authority, but they have some self-determination. It is the decree that Xerxes I issues in 474 B.C. Let me tell you what is attractive about that.

First of all, God has devoted a whole book in the Bible to explaining where that decree came from. And the Jews developed a whole feast to celebrate it. Purim.

So it is commemorated like none of these others are. You can talk about Nehemiah and Ezra going back, but they are either working on the temple or they are building the wall. And by the way, they are working on the wall.

It never says that they got it finished. There was all kinds of internal strife and squabbling and it was not a very glorious undertaking. But here is in a nutshell the point.

Start just right down 474 B.C. Seven sevens and 62 sevens. Guess what happens in the next 49 years beginning with the decree of Xerxes I in the days of Esther. That comprehends all the rest of Xerxes reign and all of the reign of Artaxerxes Longinus, his successor, who has a lengthy reign and he issues the two decrees that we talked about earlier.

Remember his is number three and number four. Financing the operation of the temple and allowing Nehemiah to go back and build. Both of those happen in that 49 year period after the clock starts with the decree of Xerxes I that is at Esther's behest.

That is what happens in those 49 years. And guess what happens if you do the math, 49 years after 474 is what? 425. It is the year 425-424 B.C. Guess what happens in that year at the end of

the 49 years? Artaxerxes Longinus dies.

His long and benevolent reign and attitude and financing and underwriting and undertaking and sponsoring all of that return to the land, rebuilding the temple, setting up the financing to perpetuate the worship, letting Nehemiah go back and do his wall thing. All of that is Longinus. He dies in 425-424 B.C. Right on the mark of those 7-7s.

And that is the end of any protection for the people of God of that benevolent nature. And from God's perspective, He says, I am going to fulfill my promise to you to ensure that your judgment is lifted and you can return to the land. You can walk the streets and stand around in the square.

You will have some external protection. I am not saying you won't have troubled times, but you will be back. All of that happens in the times of and through the sponsorship of Artaxerxes Longinus.

And at the 49th year, he dies. Let me tell you what happens after him. He is, of course, the successor of Esther's husband.

He has a long reign. He is the one that is portrayed throughout the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. He dies and his successor is Xerxes II.

And you think, well, you had a long reign with Xerxes I. You had Artaxerxes Longinus. You have these two long stable regimes. So would that continue? Xerxes II takes his place when he dies.

He is the son and successor of Artaxerxes Longinus, Artaxerxes I. He reigns a grand total of 45 days. He is there a month and a half and he is assassinated by his brother Sogdianus. You know from his name he is not going to be a good guy.

Sogdianus assassinates his own brother and so he takes the throne. Well, he reigns for a few weeks and his reign because he got there by murder was only recognized in a part of the empire. He rules for about 6 months and 15 days and then he is captured by his half-brother Ochus and was executed by being suffocated in ash because his half-brother promised that he wouldn't die by the sword.

So he mashed his face down in a pile of ashes and he choked to death. He promised him he wouldn't poison him, he wouldn't starve him and he wouldn't execute him with a sword so he suffocated him. Good brother.

So then Ochus takes over but you can see that suddenly there is a lot of instability and murder and infighting and there is no security for the Jews after the death of Artaxerxes Longinus. Seven weeks, seven sevens and God lifts his hand of protection and his working beneficially through the Persian empire at that exact moment. That's what happens after the seven sevens.

And in the next 62 weeks, it's all troublous times. You're in the square, you're in the street,

you've got some external protection but it's troubled times until the coming of Messiah the Prince. And if you work out the math from 474 and you do the 483 years, the short answer is, if the Lord Jesus was born in 3-4 BC, that 62 weeks, that total of 69 weeks from the going forth of Xerxes I decree with Esther comes out to the year that the Lord Jesus at the age of 12 went to the temple and hit the public scene for the first time.

He is at the temple. He is at the place where there is a Most Holy. He is the Most Holy at the sight of the Most Holy.

He is confounding the doctors of the law as it used to say in the old King James. That happens in 9 AD, if you do the math. And there are no convolutions.

Those are years. Those are years defined by Passover and by Pentecost and by Rosh Hashanah and by Days of Atonement and by Feasts of Booths. That's 483 annual feast cycles.

And that's exactly from when we know Xerxes issued his decree that gave the Jews rights over their own stuff and the ability to defend themselves and live in their own city with their own protection through Longinus who extends support and encouragement and sends them back and gives them the means to do those things and fulfill those earlier decrees. In the first 49 years, Longinus dies and they are on their own and here is the Lord Jesus at the temple at age 12 exactly 483 years after that decree. So that's my suggestion.

And it just tells you how sure and certain the plans and purposes of God are when He issues a word and He ordains a thing such as our salvation, such as our protection and provision, such as our position in Christ and the future return of the Lord Jesus to take us to Himself having prepared a place for us in the future to be potentially able to participate in God's future plans and purposes when we grow and equip ourselves and train ourselves and are fit for service. We're faithful servants. We're faithful in a few things here.

We'll be faithful in many things later on. All of that is in the larger 77's of God's plan. We're granted 70 years and by reason of strength we might make it to 80.

That's the 7 that Daniel was praying over. But God has 77's in view and He sees the future for us and He works things into our present life anticipating that larger and greater manifold fulfillment of purpose and it all centers in the Lord Jesus Christ. So He is in view from beginning to end in this 77's.

Those 6 purposes are fulfilled in His first and second comings and the space of time between the protection provision and the circumstance for God's people in that intervening 69's is in the counsels of God. It has been ordained. The word has gone forth and nothing is going to contravene it.

Nothing is going to countermand it. Nothing is going to prevent it from taking place and we have that security plus. We have that security exponentially because we are in Christ.

Remember those 7 great things that we saw? The 7's that belong to us in the first chapter of Ephesians. In Him we have, in Him we are, in Him we will have, in Him, in Him, in Him. That beautiful, compared to a menorah, a 7 branched candlestick in Ephesians.

The things we have in Christ. God's plan is perfect. It all revolves around 7's.

So that's an overview of what's delivered here in the first part of the message to Daniel. This last part of course deals with the 70th week when Messiah is cut off and notice it said until the coming of Messiah the Prince. And that's the Lord Jesus who is both the anointed of God and the Prince of God's people.

But then it says the Messiah will be cut off and the people of the Prince who will come. And now you have a division because there is a fake Prince, there is a substitute Prince, there is a false Prince who has people. And He is going to come when Messiah is cut off, not by Himself or for Himself.

And He does not continue into His princely role as becoming King and taking over the Kingdom. A different Prince is going to be taking control for a brief time. And everything that God decreed, there is a word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, that is going to be undone when this other Prince comes.

See it in verse 26, this Prince, the people of the Prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary, the security and the place where people have any measure of freedom and peace. That will be destroyed by the Prince who is to come. The end of it is going to be like a flood.

Until the end of the war, desolations are determined and Jerusalem is going to return to desolation under this coming Prince, lowercase p. So we will look at that in a bit more detail and move forward into chapter 10 with the vision of the glorious man, because that is where this all is heading. And we will see that in two weeks. But let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You for the wonderful assurance and basis for faith and obedience that You give to us in it. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will minister to each of our hearts, that we can be an encouragement to one another and a light to the world.

And a credit to our Savior, the Lord Jesus. We ask it in His name. Amen.