

Saul of Tarsus – 2 This man, who was a member of the Pharisees, the strictest sect of Judaism, knew the Scriptures which foretold the sacrificial death of God's Servant for the forgiveness of sins.

- Saul, who like other Jews, did not understand those prophecies, explained that while he was still trying to stamp out belief that Jesus was God's promised "*righteous servant*" - **Isaiah 53:11** - Jesus showed himself alive to the shocked and amazed Saul - **Acts 9**.
- The temporarily blinded Saul learned that "*God ... has chosen you that you should ... see the **JUST ONE**, and hear the voice of His mouth. 15 For you will be His witness to all men of what you have **seen and heard***" - **Acts 22:14-15** .

Like the twelve apostles, Saul having also seen and heard the risen Jesus, was now convinced that he was alive again. He could see that Jesus was indeed God's promised Servant who would be able to bring forgiveness of sin because of his own unblemished character.

- Jesus was the only one who could say, "*Which of you convicts me of sin?*" - **John 8:46**. He was therefore called "*my righteous Servant*", that "*Just One*" who would "*justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities.*"
- God had decreed death to all sinners, and since Jesus did not sin, God raised him back to life, "*having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it*" - **Acts 2:24**.

These matters were also foretold in another Messianic passage, in the book of Daniel, which Saul would be well aware of - and not only Saul, because Luke reports that when John the Baptist began his preaching, there was an expectancy that the Messiah was soon to appear -

- *Now as **the people were in expectation**, and all reasoned in their hearts about John, **whether he was the Christ or not...***" - **Luke 3:15**.
- They were mistaken in thinking that John could be the Messiah, and so were the religious authorities who were also aware of **Deuteronomy 18:18**, "*I will raise up for them a **Prophet like you** [Moses] **from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him,***" and asked John whether he claimed to be "*that prophet*" - **John 1:21**.
- F. F. Bruce in *New Testament History*, mentions another mistaken expectation by the leaders of the Jewish revolt against Rome, based on **Daniel 9**, referred to by the Jewish historian Josephus. These expected that "at that very time' a man or men from Judea would gain supreme world dominion" - p.380.
- This expectation was based on the same erroneous idea of the Jews, including the twelve apostles, and Saul of Tarsus, that Messiah (Christ) would sit on his throne at his first coming, to "*restore the kingdom to Israel*" - **Acts 1:6**.

THE PROPHECY OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS in **Daniel 9** did in fact predict the coming of the Messiah at the time when Jesus came, but that he would be a suffering Messiah. The gospel accounts recorded how his enemies made him suffer according to the Divine plan at **just the time predicted**. The facts in this prophecy which they all failed to comprehend, were that -

- "*reconciliation for iniquity*" - **Daniel 9:24** would be brought in at the predicted time, and
- that could only occur when "*Messiah shall be cut off*" - **v.26**. The term "*cut off*" in **Daniel 9:26** means to be killed judicially, as in **Leviticus 17:4**.
- Nor did they appreciate that Messiah's sacrifice would also make animal sacrifice obsolete and - "*bring an end to sacrifice and offering*" - **v.27**.

More about the remarkable fulfilment of this prophecy next time, God willing.

