

The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks – 10

The prophet Daniel prayed for God to forgive his nation's past waywardness. In response, God sent Gabriel to inform him that there would be a decree to restore Jerusalem in preparation for the coming of *"Messiah the prince"*.

- He would be the one *"to make reconciliation for iniquity"*- **Daniel 9**. The matter was not revealed in clear, easy to read terms. The *"seventy weeks"*, understood in the day-for-a-year mode of the prophecy in **Ezekiel's 4:6**, represented $70 \times 7 = 490$ years.

It would begin at the decree to restore Jerusalem, which occurred in 457 BC. That restoration would not be merely the physical rebuilding of the city. It would be the restoration of a separate Jewish polity, having the Law of Moses as its constitution, and its observance centred in a rebuilt temple. Only this would make possible the fulfilment of **Malachi 3:1**, *"...the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple"*.

- In the first half of the final *"week"* of seven years, during the $3\frac{1}{2}$ years of his mortal ministry, Jesus *"confirmed the covenant"* - **Daniel 9:27** with his nation, after which he was crucified, raised from the dead and taken into heaven. Afterwards, Jesus worked with the apostles through angelic agency, e.g., **Acts 8:26; 9:10**, guiding them in their preaching. During the final $3\frac{1}{2}$ years until AD 34 their preaching continued to be directed towards *"the lost sheep of the house of Israel"*.

But in that final year, AD 34, the effort began to turn towards the Gentiles, when the Lord sent Peter to use his second *"key"* - **Matthew 16:19** - to unlock the doorway to everlasting life to a Roman centurion - **Acts 10**. About the same time the Lord Jesus appeared to Saul of Tarsus, who he appointed *"apostle of the Gentiles"* - **Acts 22;21; Romans 11:13**.

- It was this man, now called Paul, who explained to those Jews who rejected Jesus, *"It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For so the Lord has commanded us"* - **Acts 13:46**.

Nehemiah 2:1-8 records how the same Artaxerxes in his 20th year, 444 BC, sent a letter with Nehemiah, authorizing him to purchase material for restoration of the city walls of Jerusalem and to proceed with the work of restoration. 490 years afterwards was 47 AD when the preaching of the gospel began to expand in a new direction. This was when Paul and Barnabas were sent on the First Missionary Journey, which set the preaching of the gospel into a new and expanding mode.

- **Daniel 9:25** begins to trace events as they would unfold *"...From the going forth of the command - by Artaxerxes Longimanus - to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times."*

The first part of the *"seven weeks"* was when *"The people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah. They troubled them in building, 5 and hired counsellors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia"* - **Ezra 4:4-5**.

- After that, progress was made in rebuilding the temple and city under Ezra and Nehemiah who with divine help, managed to work around the obstructions thrown in the way by the neighbouring adversaries, viz., **Ezra 5-6; Nehemiah 4**, for the next 45 years. More next time, God willing.