

Handout Daniel Lesson 6: Chapters 9-10

Yahweh warned the Israelites concerning the covenant judgments for disobedience at the covenant ratification at Mt. Sinai: *“But if you will not listen to me and do not put all these commandments into practice, if you reject my laws and detest my customs, and you break my covenant by not putting all my commandments into practice, this is how I shall treat you ... I shall turn against you and you will be defeated by your enemies. Your foes will have the mastery over you... And if, in spite of this, you will not listen to me, I shall punish you seven times over for your sins... And I shall scatter you among the nations. I shall unsheathe the sword against you, reducing your country to desert and your towns to ruins. Then the country will indeed observe its Sabbath, all the while it lies deserted, while you are in the country of your enemies. Then indeed the country will rest and observe its Sabbaths.”*

Leviticus 26:14-16a, 17-18, 33-34

(also see Jeremiah 25:8-12; 29:10-14 and 2 Chronicles 36:20-21)

The angelic being in Chapter 7 had the role of an interpreter, but in the last two visions, in Chapters 9-10, the angelic being is a spiritual revelator. The purpose of Chapter 9 is to assure the covenant faithful that the intense religious persecution they will suffer in the future will come to an end by the will of their loving God, the Master of history, who has set the duration of the persecution. Historically, there have been many periods of persecution, but three horrific but relatively short periods of persecution for the faithful of the Old and New Covenants stand out in the historical record:

1. The persecution of the Jews by Greek-Syrian King Antiochus IV from 168 to 164 BC.
2. The persecution of Christians by Emperor Nero from the end of summer/early fall in AD 64 to June AD 68.
3. The World War II “final solution” by the Nazis from c. March 1942 to January 1945.*

*The murder of Jews began in 1941, but the intense “final solution” of total extermination was announced in March 1942 and began shortly afterward.

The Reigns of the Kings of Persia from Cyrus the Great to Alexander the Great

(dates may vary according to source):

559-530 BC: Cyrus the Great (son of Cambyses I, King of Anshan and the grandson of Astyages King of the Medes) conquered Babylon in 539 BC

530-522 BC: Cambyses (son of Cyrus the Great)

522 BC: Bardiya (?)

522-486 BC: Darius I, the Great (son of Hystaspes, a Persian satrap of Bactria)

486-465 BC: Xerxes I (son of Darius I)

465-424 BC: Artaxerxes/Xerxes II (son of Xerxes I)

424-423 BC: Soqhdianus (son of Artaxerxes/Xerxes I)

423-404 BC: Darius II (son of Artaxerxes/Xerxes II)

404-358 BC: Artaxerxes II (son of Darius II)

358-338 BC: Artaxerxes III (son Artaxerxes II)

338-336 BC: Artaxerxes IV (son of Artaxerxes III)

336-330 BC: Darius III (great-grandson of Darius II)

330 BC: the conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great of Macedonia

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Chapter 9 is in three parts:

1. Daniel gives the setting of the episode (verses 1-3).
2. Daniel's penitential prayer (verses 4-19).
3. The angel Gabriel explains the prophecy (verses 20-27).

9:1 It was the first year of Darius son of Artaxerxes, a Mede by race who assumed the throne of Chaldea.

This verse cannot refer to Darius II of Persia, the son of Artaxerxes who reigned over the Persian Empire from his ascension year in 423 to 404 BC.¹ Verse 1 is undoubtedly a scribal error in which the scribe substituted Darius/Cyrus (grand)son of Astyages for Darius, son of Artaxerxes, and the error continued. The reference cannot be to Darius II son of Artaxerxes for two reasons: Darius II was not a Mede, and if the person were Darius II, Daniel would have been about 195 years old in the first full year of his reign in 422 BC. Daniel would have been 78 years old the first year Darius/Cyrus conquered Babylon.

Daniel invokes the Divine Name eight times in the Hebrew text in 9:2, 4, 8, 10, 13, 14 twice, and 20. Eight is the number signifying salvation, resurrection, and rebirth.

Daniel's petition in Chapter 9 includes:

1. His plea for God not to forget His covenant promises to His people or His faithful covenant love (*hesed*) for them (verse 4).
2. The confession of his sins (verse 20) and the covenant people's communal sins against God that include not listening to God's prophets and not obeying God's commandments (verses 5-11).
3. He admits that because of the covenant people and their rulers' acts of disobedience and disloyalty that they deserve God's harsh judgments (verses 12-15).
4. He appeals to God's mercy to forgive and restore His covenant people (16-19).

The seventy years are probably a symbolic number reflecting God's perfect plan, but for those looking for a literal fulfillment of the seventy-year period, the time can be calculated in two different ways:

1. From the first captivity in 605 BC (2 Kng 24:1) until the rebuilding of the altar by the returned exiles 70 years later in 536/5 BC (Ezra 3:1-6), or
2. From the destruction of the Temple in 587/6 BC until the exiles finished rebuilding the Temple 70 years later in 517/6 BC.

Most Biblical scholars prefer the second calculation because the Temple in Jerusalem was the heart of the nation of Israel. Without the Temple, the covenant people did not consider themselves a reestablished nation.

The 70 weeks and 62 weeks of 9:24-26 are probably symbolic time periods, but some interpret the passage as a literal 70 weeks of years or 490 years, and 62 weeks of years or 434 years (verses 25-26). In the curse judgments for disobedience to the covenant, Yahweh warned He would punish the covenant people 7 times for their sins if they remained unrepentant, which could account for the 7 times the 70 years of apostasy (Lev 26:18).

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St. Bede notes that after 62 weeks 9 weeks remain, the number symbolizing judgment, to make up the 70 weeks (as the ancients counted). He sees the killing of Christ fulfilled at the end of the 70 weeks and the Romans, led by General Titus, destroying the Temple and fulfilling the prophecy of the appalling abomination in the Temple 40 years later (*The Reckoning of Time*, 9). St. Jerome wrote that the times given to Daniel were a mystery that he could not unravel.

10:5 ~ *I raised my eyes to look about me, and this is what I saw: A man dressed in linen, with a belt of pure gold round his waist: his body was like beryl, his face looked like lightning, his eyes were like fiery torches, his arms and his face had the gleam of burnished bronze, the sound of his voice was like the roar of a multitude.*

| Daniel's Vision in Daniel 10:5-6 | John's Vision in Revelation 1:13-15 |
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| <i>A man dressed in linen, with a belt of pure gold round his waist</i> | <i>one like a Son of man, dressed in a long robe tied at the waist with a belt of gold.</i> |
| <i>his body was like beryl, his face looked like lightning, his eyes were like fiery torches, his arms and his face had the gleam of burnished bronze</i> | <i>his body was like beryl, his face looked like lightning, his eyes were like fiery torches, his arms and his face had the gleam of burnished bronze</i> |
| <i>the sound of his voice was like the roar of a multitude.</i> | <i>and his voice like the sound of the ocean [many waters]</i> |

The being dressed in a white linen tunic takes three actions concerning Daniel:

1. He assures Daniel that God chose him to receive the vision.
2. He calms Daniel's fears.
3. He tells Daniel he has come because God heard his prayers.

Concerning angels, the Catechism tells us: "As purely spiritual creatures angels have intelligence and will; they are personal and immortal creatures, surpassing in perfection all visible creatures, as the splendor of their glory bears witness" (CCC 330). The word "angel" means "messenger" (*angelos* in Greek and *malak* in Hebrew). St Augustine wrote: "'Angel' is the name of their office, not of their nature. If you seek the name of their nature, it is 'spirit' if you seek the name of their office, it is 'angel': from what they are, 'spirit,' from what they do, 'angel'" (Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 103.1.15). CCC 329: "With their whole beings the angels are servants and messengers of God. Because they 'always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven' they are the 'mighty ones who do his word, hearkening to the voice of his word'" (quoting Mt 18L10; Ps 103:20). St. Michael the Archangel is the protector of Israel who led God's army of angels against Satan and his demon angels in Revelation 12:7-9.

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