

“The Skill to Understand” 5

Daniel 9:20-27

Hello friend and welcome to *Hope for Today*. My name is J. Mark Horst; I’m your friend and Bible teacher. The program you’re listening to is produced by Heralds of Hope, an international Gospel radio and literature ministry.

Each week the Bible teaching broadcasts of *Heralds of Hope* circle the globe in English and 16 other major languages. And our Bible teaching programs in several languages are available all the time and any time at the website, *twr360.org*. That’s *twr360.org*. Thousands are logging on to the site for spiritual nourishment and blessing. You can join them and be blessed too!

In a few short weeks we will begin broadcasting our Bible teaching programs in 3 additional languages to the region of Central Asia. One of those languages is Kazakh and Christians who live there suffer persecution.

I recently read about a Kazakh Christ-follower who was put in prison for 15 days because he told a young man about Jesus. After his release he said, “They might be able to shut my mouth, but the voice of [radio] will not be silenced.” I tell you, in countries where Christians are persecuted for their faith, radio becomes a spiritual lifeline.

For the past few weeks on *Hope for Today* we’ve been studying from the closing verses of Daniel chapter nine. Our study is titled “The Skill to Understand.” As I’ve said before, probably, the most critical information in this section has to do with the meaning and timing of the *seventy weeks* or literally, *the seventy sevens*.

Today, as we resume our study, we’ll learn that prophetic Scriptures often contain gaps of time. That is, you have two distinct events noted, but what isn’t noted is that there can be many years between the fulfilments of those events. Stay tuned to learn more.

Right now, I will read our text, Daniel 9:20 to 27.

Scripture

As I’ve noted numerous times already in our study of Daniel, these gaps in the prophetic Scriptures are not unusual. Allow me just a few well-known examples. This one, directly from the lips of Jesus as he read in the synagogue at Nazareth. He was reading from Isaiah 61, verses one and two. “*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach*

good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD...” And then He closed the book and sat down. But he had stopped reading right in the middle of the sentence. Why did He do that?

The next phrase is “*...and the day of vengeance of our God.*” Jesus’ first advent was not about judgment, it was about bringing the Good News of the Gospel of peace! Nearly 2,000 years later we are still waiting for that day of vengeance. So, Jesus Himself, God in the flesh, by His own reading of His inspired Word, shows us He understood this gap interpretation.

I believe the apostle Peter also puts this in perspective in the first chapter of his first letter. Let’s look at First Peter 1:10 and 11. “*Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.*”

Notice, the prophets were looking carefully for Christ’s coming. And they got the sequence right, first the sufferings and THEN the glory. But one thing they were perplexed about was the *TIMELINE!* They inquired and searched carefully, but they weren’t given the answer. Peter says their prophecies were for our benefit.

Daniel clearly saw the sufferings of Christ – “Messiah would be cut off and have nothing,” Remember the soldiers gambled for Jesus’ only possession, his clothing. I believe, contrary to our artwork, that Jesus hung naked on the cross, fully exposed to humiliation and shame. He literally had nothing! Daniel also saw the coming glory of Christ to be ushered in at the end of the final, seventieth week. What he didn’t see was the intervening centuries between the two.

There is yet a final argument in the gap interpretation, and this one comes from our Lord Himself. In verse 27 Gabriel refers to this coming prince of the people, “*He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate...*” The original language is difficult. Martin Luther rendered it this way, “Upon the wings stands the abomination of desolation.” Regardless of the exact meaning of the phrase, note that Daniel connects this *abomination* with the ending of the daily sacrifice.

Jesus, in Matthew 24:15 refers specifically to this text. “*Therefore, when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place*” (whoever reads, let him understand) ...” The reason for this warning is given in Matthew 24:21. *For then*

there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.” So, whatever is meant by the abomination of desolation, Daniel places it at the exact midpoint of the final, seventieth week, while our Lord placed it “at the end” just prior to His second coming in glory. Therefore, quoting Alva McClain, “the seventieth week must also come at the end of the present age just prior to Christ’s coming in glory.”

This acceptance of the gap interpretation also saves us from the view espoused by some that “God is through with the Jew.” Gabriel told Daniel that “*seventy weeks are determined for YOUR people.*” And since we have concluded that this seventieth week is yet in the future, we also conclude that God has a place for His ancient, chosen, earthly people in that plan! Gabriel’s message implies that plan will be brought to fruition in that final, seventieth week.

One more thing; because the gap between the sixty-ninth and seventieth week is of undetermined length, it eliminates all date-setting schemes for our Lord’s return. However, the prophecy does reveal two things specifically about this time period. First, “*Unto the end there shall be war.*” Jesus confirmed that in Matthew 24 as “*wars and rumors of war.*”

Second, “*...desolations are determined.*” Think of all the desolation caused by wars from the first century A.D. until now. Millions upon millions have died from wars and their impact. Almost always, war affects a far greater number of people in the civilian population than the actual soldiers fighting the battles. And yet, we can also see in history how, God uses these wars to accomplish His ultimate plans for human history. He is in control; let’s never forget that!

We now move to the final verses of our text that spell out some of the details of the seventieth week. In verse 26 we note that two princes are mentioned. We have Messiah and we have “*the prince that shall come.*” The people of this coming prince are the ones who will destroy Jerusalem AFTER Messiah is cut off. We know that was the Roman army under Titus in 70 A.D. We also learned in Daniel seven about this “little horn” who arises out of a revised Roman empire at the end of the age and is given almost absolute power over the nations for a brief period of time.

Turning to verse 27, our first challenge is to identify the antecedent of the pronoun *he*. This person is the chief actor and the subject of this verse. So, who is he? Grammatically, it could be either. Most logically, because the prince to come is mentioned after Messiah, it seems to be this coming prince. But let’s look at some other factors in making this determination.

My friend, I hate to interrupt, but we're almost out of time for today's broadcast. Lord willing, we'll be back in one week to continue this study. If you'd like an audio CD or a printed copy of this complete teaching, just request it by its title, "The Skill to Understand."

The quickest way for you to contact me is to send an e-mail to mail@heraldsofhope.org. That e-mail address is mail@heraldsofhope.org. Or you may write to *Hope for Today*, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. Remember, you can request a printed manuscript or an audio CD of this teaching, "The Skill to Understand." I'd be happy to send one to you.

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Now friend, I urge you to tune in next week as we continue our study, "The Skill to Understand" from closing verses of Daniel chapter nine. And until then, keep looking for that blessed HOPE.