

“The Skill to Understand” 4

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.

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*.

In our last time together, we were looking at the prophecy that was given to Daniel about the precise timing in which Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the donkey colt. We call this event the Triumphal Entry and its recorded in Luke chapter 19. This event was prophesied in Zechariah 9:9.

Now, as we resume our study for today, I will read the text, Daniel 9:20 to 27.

Scripture

The final statement of the first three (v. 24), *make reconciliation for iniquity*, seems to clearly refer to the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. Here is how Paul describes this reconciliation in Second Corinthians 5:18 and 19. “*Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*”

The Hebrew word, *kipper*, when used in relation to sin, is understood by theologians and scholars to mean “to cover, wipe out, to make inoperative, and to annul.” On the positive side it includes the reinstating of God’s favor, freedom from sin, and a restoration to holiness. This provision was foreshadowed in the Old Testament but revealed more fully at the cross. However, Israel, as a nation, rejected Jesus and will only experience this reconciliation, nationally, at His second coming.

The next purpose of the seventy weeks will be to *bring in the righteousness of the ages* (or everlasting righteousness). The goal of everlasting righteousness was God’s intention from the creation of the world. If Adam and Eve wouldn’t have listened to Satan’s lies, we’d be

experiencing that righteous rule of God now. Daniel saw that righteous rule of God in the dreams of chapters two and seven.

Another purpose of the seventy weeks will be to *seal up the vision and prophecy*. In other words, once the prophecy is fulfilled, it can be sealed up or laid aside. *To seal up* is the same word translated earlier as *to make an end*, as in “to make an end of sins.” There seems to be an intentional connection between these two purposes. At the time of the end, when Israel ceases her sinning and truly turns to God, the prophecies concerning her chastisement will be sealed up. They will no longer be needed because she will never again forsake the Lord.

The final purpose Gabriel establishes for the seventy weeks is *to anoint the Most Holy or the Most Holy place*. The most literal translation of this is *to anoint a holy of holies*. When the expression *holy of holies* was not prefaced by the word, *the*, it usually referred to the articles of the Temple or to the whole Temple complex. Ezekiel chapters 40 to 48 indicate that there will be a Temple built for the service of God during Messiah’s millennial reign. Surely, that Temple will be built, and the surrounding area will be anointed in consecration for God’s service.

As I observe what Gabriel said and compare it with history, none of these things have yet been completely fulfilled. Yes, it’s true that Jesus did come to provide reconciliation, but in the context of the Jewish nation, they rejected Him. So, all of this seems to be yet in the future.

Notice, in verse 26, that after Messiah is *cut off*, literally “suffers the death penalty,” there is reference made to a “prince who is to come.” His followers will destroy the city and the sanctuary, his end shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined. One might initially think of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. That is certainly a partial fulfillment, but there are some details given to Daniel that don’t fit that explanation.

So, here’s an important question in our study. If Messiah is cut off at the end of the sixty-nine weeks of years, when does the seventieth week begin?

There are two main interpretations about this final week of years. First, is the *continuous* view. In other words, some scholars say the seventieth week follows immediately after the sixty-ninth week. Other scholars see a gap (of unspecified length) between the sixty-ninth and seventieth week. This interpretation is called the *gap* view.

If the continuous view is correct, then the seventieth week ended sometime after the death of Christ, early in the book of Acts, but before the destruction of Jerusalem. Furthermore, it means

that everything in the prophecy has been fulfilled and there is no prophetic significance remaining. Given the language of the text and the details provided, that seems hard to accept.

The gap interpretation allows for a literal interpretation of the text, something we should always assume unless it is stated otherwise; and that's why I believe it makes the most sense.

Immediately some will ask, how can you justify reading a gap into the text that is not specifically stated? Good question! First, I believe this is the most natural reading of the text. Remember, the Hebrew way of thinking is not as fixated on continuous chronology as our western way of thinking. Verse 24 speaks about the seventy weeks, and we immediately assume they be are in unbroken succession. But if you set verse 24 aside for the moment, and note the order of events, it becomes clear that the first sixty-nine weeks end with a clear historical event – Messiah is revealed.

There are two more events that follow: Messiah is cut off and the city is destroyed. Then, after those events we come to the final week in verse 27. If we follow the chronology closely, both the death of Messiah and the destruction of the Temple occur BETWEEN the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks.

Remember, we're dealing with weeks of years in this passage of Scripture. Since the sixty-nine weeks ended with the Triumphal Entry, and Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus in 70 A.D., that's forty years after the end of the sixty-ninth week! But the text says the city is destroyed before the final week. Therefore, there must be an unspecified gap of years between these two weeks.

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.