

BLESSED HOPE BIBLE PROPHECY STUDY

“Sign, Sin, Everywhere a Sign”

Daniel 9:24-27

Turn with me in your Bibles to Daniel Chapter 9. We are going to talk about the 70th Week of Daniel.

The last two times we met we learned about a couple of important doctrines when it comes to the study of the last days.

Two months ago we saw that Jesus is going to return in power and glory right at the end of the Tribulation but before the Millennium. At that time He is going to set up a literal 1,000-year kingdom where He will rule and reign from Jerusalem. We will be there to minister alongside of Him, by the way. After the 1,000 years, He will fight one last battle against Satan and his followers, who will then be cast into the Lake of Fire. Last of all the Lord will cleanse the Earth by fire and then create a new Heaven and Earth. There we will dwell with Him forever. This is called pre-Millennialism.

Last month we saw that there are two appearances of Jesus when it comes to the end times. First, He is going to come and snatch His church out of the world before the Tribulation. This is called the pre-Trib Rapture, and it is our **“Blessed Hope”** as Christians. Then, as we just said, He is going to come back and set up His kingdom. This is called the Second Coming.

But this begs the question, “What is the Tribulation?”

How long is it, and what is its purpose?

That is what we are going to look at for a short time now, and then we will tie some current events together that point to this time of trouble. You see, that is what we are supposed to be looking toward. We are not looking for the Antichrist to come. As we learned last time, the church will be taken out of the world before Antichrist comes on the scene (2 Thessalonians 2:7). And although we are called to look for the Blessed Hope of the Rapture of the church...

The Bible clearly tells us that no man can know the day or the hour that this will take place. So we look for the signs of the times that point us toward what the Bible says will happen during the Tribulation. We looked at some of these signs the first time we met as we studied the Olivet Discourse in Matthew Chapter 24.

How long a time period is the Tribulation?

It is seven years—but how do we know for sure?

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That is where Daniel 9 comes into play.

Daniel the prophet was praying through Jeremiah's prophecy, and he saw that the dispersion of his people, the Jews, was about to end. They had been exiled by God into Babylon for 70 years, just as Jeremiah said. Daniel prayed for the Lord to show him what this means as far as Israel is concerned. He was hoping to find out when the Jews would be returned home. Instead, the Lord, in an exceedingly abundant fashion, gives Daniel a view of the history of his people—in advance.

What He does is send the angel Gabriel with the most incredible prophecy known to man. Let's read it and then we'll point out some aspects of it that are important to our study. Daniel 9, beginning at verse 24:

**²⁴“Seventy weeks are determined
For your people and for your holy city,
To finish the transgression,
To make an end of sins,
To make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness,
To seal up vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.**

**²⁵“Know therefore and understand,
That from the going forth of the command
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.**

**²⁶“And after the sixty-two weeks
Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;
And the people of the prince who is to come
Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.
The end of it *shall be* with a flood,
And till the end of the war desolations are determined.**

**²⁷Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;
But in the middle of the week
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,**

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**Even until the consummation, which is determined,
Is poured out on the desolate.”**

Throughout the Scriptures, what we know as the Tribulation is associated with what the Bible calls the “**day of the Lord.**” During this time, God is going to personally intervene in history to accomplish His plan. It is also referred to as a “**day of wrath**” (Zephaniah 1:15-16); “**a time of distress**” (Daniel 12:1); “**the Great Tribulation,**” which refers to the more intense second half according to Matthew 24:21; and the “**time of Jacob’s trouble**” (Jeremiah 30:7).

Who is Jacob?

Not the church.

The Tribulation will be marked by three sets of seven judgments represented by seals, trumpets and bowls. They will encompass various divine judgments, celestial disturbances, natural disasters, and terrible plagues.

But God...

He sets a time limit on the duration of this time of intense trouble in the world.

The passage we just read in Daniel 9 reveals the purpose and time of the Tribulation. It speaks of 70 weeks of years that have been “**determined**” by God for Daniel’s people.

Who are Daniel’s people?

The Jews—not the church.

This prophecy, for the most part, is about the nation of Israel. And God has a list of things He is going to accomplish in this time period. His purpose is to do this (verse 24):

**To finish the transgression,
To make an end of sins,
To make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness,
To seal up vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.**

God declares that “**seventy sevens**” will fulfill all these things. Most prophecy teachers agree that this speaks of 70 weeks of years, so 70 sevens speaks of 490 years. Here is where the prophecy gets a little tricky.

Verses 25 and 26 tells us that the Messiah will be “**cut off**” after seven sevens and 62 sevens, beginning with the decree to rebuild Jerusalem. In other words, after 483 years,

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Messiah will die ($69 \times 7 = 483$). This prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus was nailed to the Cross. But here is the kicker:

As far as Israel is concerned, the time clock for this prophecy stopped. This leaves one seven-year period left to finish the work God started. We call this time period the Tribulation.

Right now we are living in a time where God has chosen to reach out to the whole world. That is why He sent Messiah. Jesus did not come the first time to save the Jews from their Roman occupation. **God so loved the world that** He sent Him to save the world (John 3:16). He died so that whosoever believes that Jesus died on the Cross for them would be saved. This time period is known as the *church age*. But Jesus will return one day (soon) and take the church out of the world in the Rapture. When He does, God will begin accomplishing the work He started in Daniel's time. A little side note is necessary here:

We often sing Psalm 118:24, **“This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.”** We think of this as saying we need to be thankful for the day the Lord has given us. And we should. But that is NOT what the psalmist was talking about.

The **“day that the Lord has made”** is a specific time stamp. It is the very day that Messiah would come the first time. Jesus fulfilled this prophecy when He rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. In fact, many believe that this Psalm predicts the very day Jesus did this. This is important for us prophecy students to note, because Jesus held the nation of Israel accountable to know that. Listen to what happened as He rode in (Luke 19:41-45):

⁴¹Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, ⁴²saying, **“If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, ⁴⁴and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”**

The Jews of Jesus' day were looking for the wrong Messiah. They did not know the day that He came; even the Bible gave them more than enough information to know who He was.

Will we know the time of our visitation?

We can—if we rightly divide the Word of God.

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That brings us to the current events portion of our study. Remember I said that we are looking for things that are happening that point to the Tribulation period. Let's read Daniel 9 verses 26 and 27, and we'll see some things that are pertinent to our time. Daniel writes:

**²⁶“And after the sixty-two weeks
Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;
And the people of the prince who is to come
Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.
The end of it *shall be* with a flood,
And till the end of the war desolations are determined.
²⁷Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;
But in the middle of the week
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,
Even until the consummation, which is determined,
Is poured out on the desolate.”**

The people of the prince who is to come were the Romans. In 70 AD the Roman army, led by Titus Vespasian, destroyed Jerusalem and razed the Temple to the ground. The **“prince who is to come”** is a title for the Antichrist. That is why many believe he will come from a revived Roman Empire. This prince, Daniel predicts, is going to **“confirm”** a covenant with the **“many”**—for how long?

One week. I believe this means seven years—the seven years of the Tribulation.

The **“many”** are the Jews, and most likely the Muslims, who they have been at enmity with since the time of Sarah and Hagar. If you attended (or read) my study through Ezekiel, you might remember this. Ever since Sarah threw Hagar and her son Ishmael out in favor of Isaac, there has been an *olam ebah*—“ancient hatred”—between the two peoples. For thousands of years they have fought against one another. And this is still true in our time. In fact, this ancient war is quite often in the headlines as the peoples that surround Israel fight with her.

Does anyone know what has happened there in the past week?

Let's listen to a video from Eric Staclebeck from the *Watchman Newscast*.

Would you say there is a need for some kind of peace agreement in the Middle East?

At this time Israel is preparing for war on three fronts.

Why three?

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Because as bad as it is now with over 900 rockets being fired at them, it was worse last month during Ramadan. At that time, not only were rockets fired by the Palestinians in the Gaza strip, they were also fired from Lebanon and Syria. This had never happened before, at least at the same time. So this makes my prophecy ears perk up.

Because we are looking for events that point to the Tribulation, we want to know what is going to be the catalyst for this peace treaty to be confirmed. I believe that the Bible gives us three possibilities—and none of them are the “Abraham Accords” (more on that disaster later).

The **first** of these possibilities is found in Psalm 83. Turn there for a moment. Beginning at verse 1 Asaph writes:

¹Do not keep silent, O God!

Do not hold Your peace,

And do not be still, O God!

²For behold, Your enemies make a tumult;

And those who hate You have lifted up their head.

³They have taken crafty counsel against Your people,

And consulted together against Your sheltered ones.

⁴They have said, “Come, and let us cut them off from *being* a nation,

That the name of Israel may be remembered no more.”

⁵For they have consulted together with one consent;

They form a confederacy against You:

⁶The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites;

Moab and the Hagrites;

⁷Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek;

Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre;

⁸Assyria also has joined with them;

They have helped the children of Lot. *Selah*

Bible prophecy teachers are split on whether or not this Psalm is a prophecy. Some say it is just an imprecatory prayer (Asaph is asking God to step out against these people in his time). Others (Amir) say that the prophecy was fulfilled already in the wars the Jews have fought against their enemies since their return to the land. But still others think it may come to play in the last days. Here is why:

If you look at this map, the countries that are included in the Psalm all directly surround Israel. They are their closest neighbors, and they include the places where the rockets flew out of both this week and during Ramadan.

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Does the Lord have Israel take these countries out, causing a peace treaty to be needed?

That is what many believe. In fact, prophecy teacher Bill Salus has written many books on the subject. So this scenario is possible; and because of what we have seen in recent times, it could happen at any moment. In fact, Netanyahu and Israel are preparing for exactly that possibility. And that is important to understand because of what we are going to talk about next—Gog and Magog. Look at verses 9-12 in Psalm 83. (I want to point out something important.)

⁹**Deal with them as *with* Midian,
As *with* Sisera,
As *with* Jabin at the Brook Kishon,
¹⁰**Who perished at En Dor,
Who became as refuse on the earth.
¹¹Make their nobles like Oreb and like Zeeb,
Yes, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna,
¹²Who said, “Let us take for ourselves
The pastures of God for a possession.”****

If I remember my Bible correctly, the Lord used the armies of Israel to take out Midian, Sisera and Jabin. So it follows that He will use Israel as His weapon again if Psalm 83 is a prophecy.

In Ezekiel Chapter 37, the Lord gives us a wonderful look at the return of His people to Israel. It is called the “dry bones” prophecy. You can read it on your own if you like. But the interesting thing is Ezekiel says that when they come back, the people of Israel will be this (Ezekiel 37:10):

So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.

Israel, at the present, has the eighth most powerful army in the world. That is how they have been able to keep their enemies at bay—even though they are surrounded by them.

Will God use this army as He did Gideon’s and Deborah’s?

I believe it is possible.

The **second** event we need to talk about as a catalyst for the peace treaty is found in Ezekiel 38 and 39. This prophecy, given to Ezekiel, is not in dispute as far as it being something that will happen in the future. But when it will happen is up for debate. We don’t have time to look at the whole passage, so I am going to summarize.

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In what Ezekiel calls the “**latter years**,” the Lord is going to bring a coalition of nations from the “**far north**” against Israel. Most Bible prophecy people agree that this list of nations includes Russia, Iran and Turkey. It will be led by a man the prophet calls “**Gog**” who is from the land of Magog. Most likely this will be a leader from Russia.

Did you know that these countries have never been aligned before?

In fact, Turkey is a member of NATO, and up until the past few years was a friend of Israel. But not now.

Just as the Bible says, these three countries are coming closer together in our time. And they all have armies strategically placed in Syria, just to the north of Israel. Keep that in mind. The interesting thing about this coalition is not who is involved in it. It is who is not.

As you can see from the map I have here, none of the nations that directly surround Israel are involved.

Why not?

I believe that verses 8-9 gives us a clue. Ezekiel writes:

⁸After many days you will be visited. In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword *and* gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely.

⁹You will ascend, coming like a storm, covering the land like a cloud, you and all your troops and many peoples with you.”

Does Israel **dwell safely** in our time?

No.

Later in the chapter it says that Gog will come against **a land of unwalled villages**. Israel has a long wall built to keep terrorists from coming into the land from Gaza. So Israel does not have peace in our time. But they will one day—right after that covenant we have been talking about is confirmed. Then they will have 3½ years of relative peace. That is when I believe Gog will strike—during the first half of the Tribulation.

And here is the last reason I don’t think the covenant is signed because of the Gog/Magog war. Listen to Who wins the battle and why (verses 18-23):

¹⁸“And it will come to pass at the same time, when Gog comes against the land of Israel,” says the Lord GOD, “that My fury will show in My face. ¹⁹For in My jealousy *and* in the fire of My wrath I have

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spoken: ‘Surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel,²⁰ so that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all men who *are* on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.’²¹ I will call for a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains,” says the Lord GOD. “Every man’s sword will be against his brother.²² And I will bring him to judgment with pestilence and bloodshed; I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on the many peoples who *are* with him, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.²³ Thus I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations. Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD.” ’

It is the Lord, and not Israel, who takes out the nations aligned with Gog. He does it to sanctify Himself before a world that hates Him. That *could* be true now, but it *will* be true in the Tribulation. Very good people look for this prophecy as an important sign of the times, and they should. I just don’t see it happening before the Rapture of the church.

There is **one more possible prophetic event** that could be the catalyst for the covenant in Daniel 9 to be confirmed. This prophecy is known as the “**Burden of (or on) Damascus.**”

Damascus is the capital of Syria and ranks among the oldest cities in the world. It has a long history of violence, upheaval and bloodshed. And this is true, especially when it comes to Israel. Look how the Lord is going to deal with this city that has historically been a burden to Him (Isaiah 17:1):

The burden against Damascus.

**“Behold, Damascus will cease from *being* a city,
And it will be a ruinous heap.**

In Jeremiah 49 the prophet predicts the same thing. One day in the future, God is going to judge the City of Damascus.

Could this be the reason a peace treaty is negotiated?

Maybe.

But I still believe it will be the Psalm 83 war that will bring peace to the region, at least for a short period of time. And in the past few months, Israel has been pounding the nations in this coalition, without mercy.

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Is it enough for me to tell you to *look up* for your redemption draws near?

No.

One last caveat before we close for this session.

In verse 13 of Ezekiel 38 it tells us that “**Sheba and Dedan**” are going to watch from the sidelines as Gog attacks Israel. They are joined by the “**Merchants of Tarshish and their young lions.**” Sheba and Dedan are the Saudis and other Arab states. They sit this one out.

Why?

Many of them are part of the Abraham Accords, and Israel is feverishly trying to get Saudi Arabia to join. Watch for this in the news. And know this:

The “**Merchants of Tarshish**” are believed to be either Spain or Great Britain. If that is true, the U.S. may be one of the young lions. For sure, whoever these people are, they sit on the sidelines and watch as Gog tries to take a spoil in Israel. I don't think that the Lord likes that.