

Message Four

**The Vision of the Seventy Weeks
and the Age of Mystery**

Scripture Reading: Dan. 9:24-27; Rev. 10:7

- I. Daniel 9:24-27 is the most precious portion in the book of Daniel; the seventy weeks in these verses are the key to understanding all the prophecies in the Bible—Dan. 7:7, 23-25; 12:7; Rev. 12:14; 13:1; 17:12:**
- A. In his desperate prayer Daniel requested that God recover the Holy Land, send His people back, and rebuild the holy city; God answered him by giving him a vision of the seventy weeks—Dan. 9:2, 15-19, 24.
 - B. The purpose of the seventy weeks is “to close the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make propitiation for iniquity, and to bring in the righteousness of the ages, and to seal up vision and prophet, and to anoint the Holy of Holies”—v. 24:
 - 1. When Christ comes at the time appointed to crush human government, the righteousness of the ages, the eternal righteousness, will be brought in; the coming kingdom age will be an age of righteousness, and in the new heaven and new earth righteousness will dwell—Isa. 32:1; 2 Pet. 3:13.
 - 2. The sealing up of vision and prophet indicates that after the seventy weeks everything will be accomplished and fulfilled—Dan. 9:24c.
 - 3. At the time of Daniel’s prayer, the Holy of Holies was contaminated, defiled, and devastated, but when the apportioned time comes, the Holy of Holies will be properly anointed; this means that the service to God will be recovered—v. 24c.
 - C. The seventy weeks are divided into three parts, each week being seven years in length—vv. 25-27:
 - 1. First, seven weeks (forty-nine years) were apportioned from the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem to the completion of the rebuilding—v. 25; Neh. 2:1-8.
 - 2. Second, sixty-two weeks (434 years) were apportioned from the completion of the rebuilding of Jerusalem to the cutting off (crucifixion) of the Messiah—Dan. 9:26.
 - 3. Third, the last week of seven years is for Antichrist to make a firm covenant with the people of Israel—v. 27.
 - D. *Messiah will be cut off and will have nothing* refers to the crucifixion of Christ, which was the termination of the old

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creation, with the human government in the old creation, and the germination of God's new creation through the resurrection of Christ, with God's eternal kingdom as the divine administration in God's new creation; thus, the cross of Christ is the centrality and universality of God's work—v. 26; Mark 9:12; 1 Pet. 1:3; 2 Cor. 5:17; Matt. 16:19, 28.

- E. There is a gap of unknown duration between the first sixty-nine weeks and the last week of the seventy weeks:
 1. This gap is the age of the church, the age of mystery, the age of grace—Eph. 3:3-11; 5:32; Col. 1:27.
 2. During this gap, the age of the church, Christ is secretly and mysteriously building up the church in the new creation to be His Body and His bride—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 5:25-32.
- F. *He will make a firm covenant with the many for one week* (Dan. 9:27) refers to Antichrist, typified here by Titus, the prince mentioned in verse 26:
 1. In the middle of that week Antichrist will break the covenant and will cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease; this will be the beginning of the great tribulation, which will last for three and a half years—7:25; 12:7, 11a; Matt. 24:21; Rev. 11:2-3; 12:6, 14; 13:5.
 2. The fact that the temple will be devastated and contaminated by Antichrist strongly indicates that the temple will be rebuilt by the Jews before the completion of the seventy weeks; this will be one of the final signs that will take place before Christ's return—2 Thes. 2:3-4.

II. “To seal up vision and prophet” (Dan. 9:24c) is to close the age of mystery, that is, to finish the mystery of God—Rev. 10:7; 1 Tim. 3:9:

- A. In the dispensation from the incarnation of Christ to the millennial kingdom—the church age, the age of grace—everything is a mystery:
 1. The incarnation of Christ, as the beginning of the age of mystery, is a mystery; through the incarnation of Christ, the infinite God was brought into the finite man—v. 16.
 2. Christ is the mystery of God—Col. 2:2:
 - a. God is a mystery, and Christ, as the embodiment of God to express Him, is the mystery of God.

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- b. As the mystery of God, Christ is the embodiment of God; all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ bodily—v. 9.
- 3. The church is the mystery of Christ—Eph. 3:4-6:
 - a. Christ is a mystery, and the church, as the Body of Christ to express Him, is the mystery of Christ.
 - b. Christ and the church as one spirit are the great mystery—5:32; 1 Cor. 6:17.
 - c. During the church age, the age of mystery, Christ is building up the church to be His bride—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:16; Rev. 19:7-9.
- 4. The kingdom of the heavens, the indwelling of Christ, and the resurrection and transfiguration of the saints are all mysteries—Matt. 13:11; Col. 1:27; 1 Cor. 15:51-53.
- B. The age of mystery is the age of faith—Heb. 11:1, 6; Rev. 10:7; 1 Tim. 3:9:
 - 1. God's mysteries are known by faith; for this reason the age of mystery is also the age of faith—Rev. 10:7:
 - a. Without faith we cannot realize God's economy, for God's economy is in faith—1 Tim. 1:4.
 - b. God's requirement for us related to everything in the New Testament is faith—Rom. 1:16-17; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17; Mark 11:22; Luke 18:8.
 - 2. Faith is a substantiating ability, by which we substantiate, give substance to, the things not seen, or hoped for—Heb. 11:1:
 - a. Faith assures us of the things not seen, convincing us of what we do not see; therefore, it is the evidence, the proof, of things not seen—v. 1.
 - b. We do not regard, or look at, the things which are seen but the things which are not seen—2 Cor. 4:18.
 - c. The Christian life is a life of things unseen, and the Lord's recovery is to recover His church from things seen to things unseen—Rom. 8:24-25; Heb. 11:27; 1 Pet. 1:8; Gal. 6:10.
- C. In this age we preach the mystery of the gospel, "the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery"—Eph. 6:19; Rom. 16:25:

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1. The gospel includes all the divine mysteries; therefore, *the mystery of the gospel* refers to the entire New Testament economy—Eph. 6:19; 1 Tim. 1:4.
2. In particular, the mystery of the gospel is Christ and the church for the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose—Eph. 5:32; 3:11.

III. By studying the vision of the seventy weeks in relation to God's economy, we may experience the shining of the prophetic word as a lamp conveying spiritual light in darkness, and under this shining we may receive the Lord's warning and have the proper attitude toward His coming—2 Pet. 1:19:

- A. The Lord warned us to watch and take heed to ourselves lest our hearts be weighed down with debauchery, drunkenness, and the anxieties of life, and that day come upon us suddenly as a snare—Matt. 24:42; Luke 21:34.
- B. We need to be watchful at every time, beseeching that we would prevail to escape all the things which are about to happen and stand before the Son of Man—v. 36.
- C. We need to keep the word of Christ's endurance and keep the Lord's works until the end—Rev. 3:10; 2:26.
- D. We should not love the present age—we should love the Lord's appearing—2 Tim. 4:10a, 8:
 1. In the Bible the appearing of the Lord is typified by the morning star and by the sun—Rev. 2:28; 22:16b; Mal. 4:2:
 - a. His appearing as the sun is to the world; His appearing as the morning star is to the believers.
 - b. Before our Lord Jesus appears to the people in the world, He will first appear to those who love His appearing—2 Tim. 4:8.
 2. The appearing of Christ must be a basic factor in our daily living; we must live today in the light of the Lord's appearing—Matt. 24:45-51; 25:14-30.
 3. The Lord's appearing, His coming back, is a warning, an encouragement, and an incentive to us; we should love His appearing and look forward to it with earnest expectation and joy—2 Tim. 4:1-8.