

The book of Revelation

THE FIVE CYCLES OF DISCIPLINE:

Day 2

To recap then, we have seen that the truth about Israel is that the church has not replaced the Jews as God's chosen people, nor does it have a separate covenant with God, apart from Israel. Rather, gentile believers have, in Christ, entered into the covenants and promises God made with Israel forever. All of the promises God made to Israel will be fulfilled and, one day, all Israel will be saved (Romans 11:26). Israel's calling and gifts are irrevocable (Romans 11:29).

Even the stumbling and hardening in part of Israel and the grafting in of the Gentiles through faith were revealed in the Old Testament scriptures. God's master plan was that He might have mercy on all. The church has come to receive mercy through Israel's disobedience, that Israel might receive mercy through the mercy shown to the church (Romans 11:30-32). Paul concludes, *'Oh the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways are past finding out.'*

To understand where Israel is today, and how they came to be out of fellowship with God, we need to look at God's chastening of Israel. Judgement is part of God's dealings with mankind. Those of you who have already sat in on the earlier Passing the Baton teachings will remember when we looked at the universal judgement which God brought on mankind with the flood. The rainbow is His covenant promise that He will never again flood the earth. But He has not promised that He will never again judge the earth. In fact the book of Revelation is the story of God's righteous judgement on unbelieving nations and on the nation of Israel.

But for the moment, I want us to concentrate on the five cycles of discipline and subsequent judgement, which Israel went through in order that we may understand God's immense grace which is always exercised before He brings His judgement. Particularly I am going to look at the fifth cycle of discipline because that will lead us into the book of Daniel, which is actually where I want to go today.

God is a God of principles and the principle is - there is **always** grace before judgement with God. He never sends judgement, or discipline, of any kind without first giving grace and that grace is in the form of increasingly severe warnings to the people concerned.

Another principle which we will see as we study is that He never judges believers and unbelievers together.

That is one of the reasons why I absolutely know that we as believers will be removed before the end time judgement of this earth begins, which is what the book of Revelation is all about.

We will look at this in some detail later in the week, but for now, just think of the flood, Noah and his family are removed and the unrighteous are judged, Sodom and Gomorrah and Abraham and Lot, righteous removed, unrighteous are judged. God is immutable, He never changes. He is also a God of principles and once He has set a principle in place, He always does things that way.

Abraham knew that God would not judge the righteous with the wicked, and if he could find ten righteous people in Sodom, God would not bring judgement, it would be averted by the salt and light that were present. Genesis 18:22-23 *'then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord. And Abraham came near and said, 'Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?'* Abraham knew that Sodom and Gomorrah deserved judgement, but he also knew that if there were believers in that place, God would not judge it. So he gets bold and starts talking to the Lord about this – there are believers there Lord, **I know You**, You wouldn't destroy the righteous with the wicked. That would be contrary to the way you judge.

So the principle is, God never, ever, judges the righteous with the wicked. He removes them first. That makes the rapture of the church very easy to understand doesn't it? There are other reasons, why the church cannot go through the Great Tribulation, and we will look at these later.

God's chastening of Israel:

Two dispersions from the land and two restorations to it have been accomplished, Israel is now in the third dispersion from which she will be restored at the return of the Lord.

Anyone who studies history and the Bible finds that God has a hand in the affairs of one nation in particular – Israel. All other nations fade into the mists of time compared with them. The nations, God says in Isaiah, are as a drop in a bucket. So the other nations, whether the USA, Russia, Britain or anywhere else, are only a backdrop for God's unfolding drama that is outworking around His chosen people, the Jews.

When you look back through history, you can see that the major empires or nations have ended up going either for or against the Jews, and if you follow the study through, you will see that those who were anti-Semitic didn't last very long.

Israel is a very remarkable nation. The Jews have been just a little group of people at times and a vast multitude at other times, but as a nation they stand in a unique position with God.

If the Jews had remained in fellowship with God they would have been blessed by Him at all times, and Israel would have stood out and represented clearly the blessings of God, as well as the faithful, covenant keeping nature of God to the nations all around. People would always have looked at the Jews and said 'Their God really loves them. Their God really cares for them and looks after them. Who is this God of Israel?' The Jews have always had this unique opportunity of being able to represent their loving, wonderful God and Saviour to the peoples around – as a nation.

So what went wrong? Sadly we know from the bible, time and time again Israel turned away from God and rebelled against Him. The people rejected God, went their own way and even turned to idols. As a Father, God always disciplined Israel just as He disciplines His children who get out of fellowship today; and He continues to discipline Israel today. But whatever the type of judgement, God always gives grace first. Principle, again grace **before** judgement. God is a God of principles.

God has promised Israel a vast area of land that they have never occupied. At times, they have managed to keep some, but because they did not stay in fellowship with God and do as He told them, they lost the land time and time again.

When Joshua went into the land of promise, or the promised land, Canaan, God intended that Israel should take **all** the land He had promised, but they started getting out of fellowship as I said, and rebelling against God, worshipping idols, taking on the false religions of Canaan etc. And so they did not come into everything God had promised them. You can read about the story of Israel and what they did in the book of Judges, how they were in and out of fellowship and God kept raising up deliverers for them from among their own people. Grace.

So sometimes they have been in the land and sometimes they have been out of the land and all the times they were out of the land, which by the way is God's - and He has the right to distribute it to whoever He wishes - they were under God's judgement. Today they are for the most part, out of the land and in the fifth cycle of God's judgement because they stubbornly refused to change their minds, to repent.

Whenever they repented and got back into fellowship with God they came back into the land and the blessing, but remember God always warned them when they were getting out of fellowship and would be disciplined. And this warning time would go on for many, many years. How did he warn the Jews? He sent His prophets. Jeremiah I believe preached for 40 years and no-one took a blind bit of notice of a word he said, but God is faithful, He warned them, grace, before impending judgement.

Prophets were marvellous, obedient men of God, whom God sent into the midst preaching the message 'Repent, God loves you. Remember His promises to us, His people. Turn back to Him and He will forgive your sins!' they warned the Jews that God would judge the nation if they continued going their own way and would not change their behaviour.

They pleaded with the people to be faithful to God, to turn away from their false gods and wrong aims. If the people of Israel repented, then they quickly experienced God's blessing again. But if they refused to repent, they experienced God's hand of discipline and judgement.

The stages of discipline are clearly outlined in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, so the Jews would have known as soon as the first stage came into operation – 'we're under God's judgement better straighten out. Must be out of fellowship, we need to repent.'

The warnings God had given were increasingly severe, and you cannot but wonder why, as a nation, they totally ignored them. So here in Leviticus, we see Him laying it on the line

Leviticus 26:27,29 and 33

'and after all this if you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I will also walk contrary to you in fury; and I, even, I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. You will eat the flesh of your sons and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters. I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste.'

We see the 5th cycle of discipline. This is the most severe, they are dispossessed, cast out of their land.

Deuteronomy 28 lists these five stages of discipline too. God is saying in verse 33 He will remove Israel from their land and there you will live until you repent – until you change your mind and come back to Me.

When we look at the history of Israel we can see three times, which are obvious times, when God warned them they would actually be removed from the land, but He also said three times that they would be restored to the land. Three times they have been dispossessed, cast out, in some versions it says 'the land will vomit you out', very graphic description, and twice they have been restored, and today we are seeing the third time of their restoration.

They are back in the land, and Jews from all over the world are slowly coming back even though the conditions there are very far from favourable.

The 5th cycle of discipline:

Let us briefly look at the removal of Israel from their land, tracing all three incidences where God brought the 5th cycle of discipline, dispossession, carrying away, from their homeland because of their disobedience:

1. The first time was when Abram himself was told of it, do you remember in Genesis 15:12-16 where God put him to sleep and cut the covenant, passing through the pieces Himself - because He knew if Abram was part of the covenant, he would never be able to keep his side of it. So it was an **unconditional covenant** cut by God Himself, whilst Abram was in a deep sleep and great darkness came over him.

Have you ever wondered why God said know of a certainty that your people will be cast from their land – Genesis 15:12-16 *'Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, a horror and great darkness fell upon him. Then He said to Abram: **'know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Now, as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.'***

Abraham's descendants were removed from the land because they became corrupt spiritually. There was a tremendous decline as far as spirituality was concerned. Now Abraham wanted to keep family unity, you can see that in his dealings with Lot, but Abraham's great grandsons did not bother about it. We know they tried to murder Joseph and they nearly succeeded. Onan (Genesis 38) refused to obey the customary law as far as his sister in law was concerned, and Judah refused deceitfully, to give his son to Tamar.

Abraham kept himself from the Canaanite religion. Four generations on they did not care about keeping themselves from false gods. Judah went and had sexual relations with one of the sacred prostitutes from the Canaanite temple and he didn't even think about it – what he didn't know was that it was his daughter in law. But that is another story altogether. So you see there was a moral and spiritual decline.

Abraham built altars to God and worshipped God and Jesus appeared to him. But by the time four generations had gone by that was not true anymore and as a result of this decline, they were taken away into the land of **Egypt**, just as the Lord had said they would be and there for another four generations, they lived in slavery until finally, under Moses, God led them out. So that was the first dispossession from their own land into slavery in another land.

2. Then there was the Babylonian captivity. This is a very interesting one, because in Jeremiah's day, Israel began to decline again, and Jeremiah warned Israel that if they continued to decline, the 5th stage of discipline would come and they would be taken out of the land, but they did not believe him and sure enough discipline began in 606 BC when the first people were removed from the land – this was the time when Daniel, whose writings we will shortly be studying, was deported at the age of 16 to **Babylon**, in the year that Nebuchadnezzar subdued Jerusalem.

By 586 BC all the people were removed from the land, but because of God's grace, Jeremiah, in chapter 29, prophesied something else, that the exile would only last 70 years. (We will come back to this in the next study, as Daniel refers to this in his book). Jeremiah 29:10,11 *'For thus says the Lord: after seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, says the Lord, thought of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.'* Now if you add on 70 years to 606 BC you come to 536 BC – remember you count backwards before Jesus, forwards after Jesus. In 536 BC the first people of the nation of Israel came back into the land of Israel.

The people left Israel over a 20 year period and they returned over a 20 year period. So that was the second time.

3. What about the third time? The third time of being removed from the land of Israel was prophesied by Jesus Himself. Luke 21:20-25 -

*'But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. **For these are the days of vengeance that all things which are written may be fulfilled.** But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive **into all nations.** And Jerusalem will be trampled by gentiles until the times of the gentiles are fulfilled'*

Jesus said that in about AD33. When the prophecy was fulfilled 40 years later, 1million Jews were killed. The believers listened to Jesus and fled to the hills. The captivity spoken of in verse 24 still largely applies. Some Jews are in Russia, some in England, France, Canada, America and China. They are scattered all around the world. But there will come a time of restoration, which the remainder of verse 25-27 speaks of and we will see this later on.

Israel were warned about this coming stage of discipline for 7 years. In AD26 John the Baptist began preaching the kingdom of God is at hand, the baptism of fire is coming upon you, repent. In about AD30 Jesus began His ministry and in AD33 Jesus was murdered, the Jews and the Gentiles murdered Jesus.

In AD33 because the Jews had rejected the Son of God they were cut off as far as God was concerned and they went into the 5th cycle of discipline again. But here is the grace of God, He allowed them 40 years of repentance before finally removing them from the land. If you add 40 years on to AD26 you come to AD66. What happened in AD66? The Romans invaded

Palestine – the beginning of the Jewish war. Now, if you add 40 years on to AD30, you come to AD73, what happened then? It was the end of the Jewish wars. The only reason I am making the point about this is that the war ended when the last of the Jews who were hidden away up in a hill top refuge called Masada committed suicide. Not one person remained alive – it was exactly 40 years to the day that Judas Iscariot committed suicide. It was that 40 years that God gave the Jews time to repent, and during this time Israel could have repented at any time, but they never did and the scattering of most of the nation occurred over a 7 year period AD66 – AD73. Today, we can see that the restoration of Israel as a nation has begun.

We have not yet seen the full restoration, but the fig tree is putting forth her leaves – the fig tree is always synonymous with Israel – Jesus said didn't He in Matthew 24:32-35, Mark 13:28-31 and Luke 21:29-32 *'when you see the fig tree putting forth her leaves you know that summer is near...'*

The time is very late and it is time we realised how late the day is. One thing is sure, Jesus is coming and coming soon. Remember, Jesus said, do not be foolish, read the signs.

Now with Israel putting forth her leaves, Jesus is coming, the time is fast drawing to a close. Israel is going to be restored fully into her land – all of it. We don't have time to explore what the extent of Israel's territory given to them by God, is, but I can say it is much, much bigger than that which they occupy today.

As we go on in this study, we will see that it is by no means going to be plain sailing for the Jews, even if every one of them came back into the land today – they still have the seven years of the Great Tribulation to come which will be a terrible time both for the Jews and for the nations of the world.

Israel does have a future as far as God is concerned He has not cut them off forever, they are coming back and they will inherit all the land that God promised them.

As we saw in our previous study, we as the church are precious to God, but we are not Israel, Israel still has a future and a very bright one. But there is yet more to come...

Two nations, two destinies:

Before jumping into the book of Daniel and his prophecy of the 70 weeks, and getting some understanding about 'the times of the Gentiles', we need to do a little infill detail about where we, as the church, fit.

Israel and the church have two different destinies. It is most important that we separate out the destinies of the two, or we shall mix and match to our possible destruction!

Israel is the wife of Jehovah – and as I said earlier, this description is one of relationship and intimacy of God with His people, God is not literally Israel's husband, but in terms of her 'adultery' with other gods or idols, that is the way He describes His pain at her spurning Him and trusting in gods who are not gods at all.

Israel's 'marriage contract' is the whole book of Deuteronomy. It is in the form of both an ancient treaty and an ancient marriage contract. Deuteronomy 5:1-3 Moses speaking *'Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgements which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful*

to observe them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who are here today, all of us who are alive.'

The Jewish prophets always viewed this covenant as a marriage contract, but, adultery was committed by Israel, and the original contract was broken. Jeremiah shows that the problem is not with the 'husband' – God - but the wife, who persisted in going after other gods and so became guilty of the great adultery. Jeremiah 31:32b *'...My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord.'*

We, the church, are His bride. We are yet in the betrothal stage. Though in ancient Israel the betrothal was as binding as the marriage itself, as we can see from Joseph's reaction when he finds that Mary is pregnant Matthew 1:19 *'Now Joseph, her husband (they were not yet actually married), being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly'*. In other words, he was thinking about divorce before they had even consummated the marriage.

So as the betrothed, we are set apart for Him and Him only, just as Israel was, as His wife. When the union comes, we will be presented as a pure virgin. We are espoused and are being prepared and adorned for our marriage which we see takes place in Revelation 19:7 *'Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His wife has made herself ready'*. Notice we are referred to as His wife, before the marriage, same principle, betrothal is binding.

The times of the Gentiles:

Luke 21:24 *'and they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled'*.

The times of the Gentiles can best be defined as that long period of time from the Babylonian Empire to the second coming of Jesus Christ, during which time the Gentile nations have maintained more dominance and occupation of the city of Jerusalem than the Jews.

I am not talking about temporary Jewish control and/or occupation of the city, but it can only be temporary until Jesus comes at the Second Advent. Because as the book of Daniel tells us, the Gentiles will yet 'tread down' Jerusalem for at least a final three and a half years.

Daniel's Prophecy of the 70 weeks:

Please don't get impatient and think that these 'information gathering' exercises are wasting valuable time, when we could be looking at the book of Revelation!

We are spending a lot of time on this in order that when we do look at the book of Revelation, it will be easy. We will see how Old Testament prophecies, which we may never have understood, and things which Jesus said, which we may have misinterpreted, really fit. Where we fit and where Israel fits, and our understanding of God's eternal plan and what the bible and specifically the book of Revelation, is all about will have grown enormously.

So, having set the scene, we are now ready to take a look at the book of Daniel. Keep in mind what we have looked at is the history of **one** nation, the nation of Israel. Keep your (spiritual) finger in the place

of their cutting off in the 5th cycle of discipline as prophesied by Jesus whilst we look at what Daniel sees and prophecies concerning their return to the land and the circumstances that will bring Israel back into fellowship with God in the end times.

The book of Daniel is probably one of the most contested in the Bible because of the accuracy of the prophecies it contains. People have tried to say that it was written retrospectively because of its accuracy. This is simply not true.

The seventy weeks, or seventy sevens, refers to the prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27 which pinpoints the time when the Messiah shall appear.

“A proper understanding of the seventy weeks of Daniel not only safeguards the Christian against the elaborate guess work of those who persist in setting dates for the Lord’s return, but also furnishes the infallible key to the real chronology of all New Testament prophecy”.

That was a quote from a little book which was first published in 1940 by a man called Dr Alva McClain. He explains in easily understood, succinct language, a very difficult passage in the book of Daniel, which is key to the understanding of the book of Revelation and the end times specifically.

This entire prophecy has to do with Daniel’s people, the Jews, which is why we have taken so much time to painstakingly understand that everything in the Bible is about the history of this one nation.

We stand, if you will, in the parenthesis of time between the cutting off of the Jewish nation because of unbelief in Jesus as their Messiah, and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Or put another way, we stand between the 69th and the 70th weeks of Daniel’s prophecy. If you like the tape recorder has had the pause button pushed and will not be released to ‘play’ again until the church is taken out of the way, and Israel's history resumes. They are ‘freeze framed’ at the moment.

Daniel's 70 weeks is the most crucial passage of prophecy and the most misunderstood. It is crucial to understanding end time events and the book of Revelation in particular.

Daniel and his people had been taken into Babylonian captivity in the 5th cycle of discipline and Jerusalem had been desecrated and sacked. (Leviticus 26:14-46 and 2 Chronicles 36:17-21) when he arrives in Babylon he is a youth of 16 years, by the time of the prophecy in Daniel 9, he is an elderly man, having been in captivity for almost 70 years.

So Daniel 9 opens with the Jewish people under the fifth cycle of discipline, scattered among the nations and living in captivity in the land of Babylon.

In 606 king Nebuchadnezzar had overrun the land of Israel and taken the city of Jerusalem. He then took some of the Jewish people, including Daniel, into captivity in Babylon. In Daniel 9 we have Daniel living in Babylon among the Jewish people and something dramatic has happened. Overnight the Medes and the Persians have overthrown the Babylonian Empire, which had controlled the Jewish people for sixty years. The man who overthrew the Babylonian Empire was the king of the Medo/Persian Empire, a man called Cyrus the Great. Cyrus had an uncle who was a very trustworthy man called Darius the Mede, and we find reference to him in Daniel 5:31 *‘and Darius the Mede received the kingdom that very night, being about 62 years old.’*

Daniel 9 tells us that it is Darius' first year of rulership and the date, which is very important to us, is 537 BC. At this time, as I said, Daniel was a fairly old man, a highly placed political leader in Babylon and he turns to the book of Jeremiah and starts reading through his prophecies. Jeremiah lived before the Jewish people went into captivity in Babylon. Year after year Jeremiah had faithfully preached to the Jewish people that if they continued in their ways, God would remove them from the land. When it occurred Jeremiah wrote about the history of king Nebuchadnezzar taking the land, and taking over Jerusalem, but he didn't stop there, and in a remarkable passage in Jeremiah 29:1-15, he gives the people of Israel hope assuring them that their captivity will only last 70 years. Verse 10 *'for thus says the Lord: After 70 years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you and cause you to return to this place.'*

The 'Seventy Weeks' of Daniel, or the Seventy Weeks for Israel:

So Daniel is reading Jeremiah and he knows the captivity will last 70 years and it began in 606 BC. If you add 70 years to 606 BC you come to 536 BC, so Daniel knows that in the next year Israel will be free. Their captivity will come to an end. So Daniel starts praying and in Daniel 9:3-20 we have his prayers. Basically Daniel is saying to God, please tell me when the date of the release will be and when Israel will be free. God sends a surprising answer. A visit from the Archangel Gabriel.

Gabriel begins Daniel 9:24 *'seventy weeks - or sevens - are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy and to anoint the most Holy'.* KJV.

'Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city'. Notice, there are two concerns, the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem. This locates us totally to the fact that whatever this passage is about, it relates solely to the nation of Israel and no-one else. It gives time frames by the things that are going to happen and there are six fulfilments that are going to take place, according to this passage. These seventy 'sevens' are going to 'finish transgression, put an end to sin, atone for wickedness and bring in everlasting righteousness, seal up vision and prophecy, and anoint the most holy.

Daniel gives us the timeframe. *'Know and understand this; from the **issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens'(years), and sixty two 'sevens (years)'**.* That makes 69 'sevens' in total. *'it will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble'.*

Daniel 9:26 says *'After the sixty two 'sevens' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood; war will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven'. In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will setup an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.'*

Again, two primary concerns, the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem. But there are two princes. The Messiah and the prince of the people who are to come. We can walk through the basic structure

of this period of seventy weeks. There are seven weeks that begin with the commandment to go forth and rebuild the city (verse 25). There are sixty two more weeks until the Messiah and the prince come.

For mathematics that trace these sixty-nine weeks to a very particular day in the life of Jesus, the Triumphal Entry – I recommend Alva McClean's Daniel's Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks; he sets this out to bring the prophecy to the very day April 6 AD32, the end of the first 69 weeks, when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, signifying that He was indeed the Messiah and that this was His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. He did this in fulfilment of Messianic prophecy He rode up to Jerusalem and offered Himself as the Prince and King of Israel.

That He understood perfectly well the critical nature of what He was doing is unmistakably clear from Luke 19:28-44. It is worth a detour here for a moment.

'When He had said this, He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. And it came to pass when He came near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mountain called Olivet, that He sent two of His disciples saying 'Go into the village opposite you, where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose him and bring him here. And if anyone asks you, 'Why are you loosing him?' Thus you shall say to him, 'Because the Lord has need of him'. So those who were sent departed and found it just as He had said to them. But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them 'Why are you loosing the colt?' and they said, 'The Lord has need of him'. Then they brought him to Jesus and they threw their own garments on the colt, and they set Jesus on him. And as He went, they spread their clothes on the road.

Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen saying: 'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!' Peace in heaven and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd 'Teacher, rebuke your disciples.' But He answered and said to them 'I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out'. Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying '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. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and 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.'

First, realizing that the day had arrived for Him to ride up to Jerusalem in fulfilment of Zechariah 9:9, *'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.'* He sends His disciples to procure the 'colt', upon which as the King, He must appear (30-34).

Next, the whole multitude of the disciples, clearly understanding the meaning of His act, remember these are all Jews, they know the Old Testament scriptures about the signs accompanying the coming of the Messiah, begin to shout a well-known quotation from a Messianic Psalm – Psalm 118:22-26 *'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Save now, I pray, O Lord, O Lord, I pray send now prosperity. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We have blessed you from the house of the Lord.'* Blessed is he that comes in the name of the

Lord (vv37-38) in the Hebrew, 'Baruch ha ba bashem Adonai'. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. They are hailing and recognising Jesus as the Messiah and He allows it.

Though Jesus had previously expressly forbidden the disciples to make Him known as the Messiah, **now** He rebukes the Pharisees protests, and commends the disciples shouts saying '*if they hold their peace the stones would cry out*'.

He then weeps over the city, knowing full well the timing of his entry and the certainty of His rejection by saying '*Jerusalem, Jerusalem if you had known this day the things that belong to your peace...but now they are hid from your eyes*'. What things? The things prophesied in the book of Daniel 500 years before.

This day belonged to Israel it was the day their King was made manifest to them and they rejected Him. Now in this present age, for a time all these things are hidden from their eyes, their enemies will prevail over them and their city will be destroyed – because they didn't know the time of their visitation and the 5th cycle of discipline began. They had missed the day of their visitation.

The exact fulfilment of this prophecy is sufficient to demonstrate the accuracy of Daniel, the inspiration of the Bible and the truth of Christianity.

Only God can declare the end from the beginning and forecast to the very day the things that are not yet. Isaiah 46:10. '*I am God and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure*'

Let's look at the time periods and the details again:

- ❖ The entire prophecy has to do with Daniel's 'people' and Daniel's 'city', that is the nation of Israel and Jerusalem. (24)
- ❖ Two different 'princes' are mentioned , who should not be confused: the first is named Messiah the Prince, (25) and the second is referred to as the prince that shall come (26).
- ❖ The entire time period involved is specified as exactly 70 weeks (verse 24); and these seventy weeks are further divided into three lesser periods: first a period of 7 weeks: after that a period of 62 weeks, and finally a period of one week (25,27).
- ❖ The beginning of the whole period of the 70 weeks is **definitely fixed** at 'the going forth of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, so we should be able to locate this.
- ❖ The end of the 7 weeks and 62 weeks (69 weeks) will be marked by the appearance of the Messiah as the Prince of Israel (25) Luke 19:28-44.
- ❖ At a later time, 'after the 62 weeks which follow the first 7 weeks' – that is after 69 weeks – Messiah the Prince will be 'cut off' and Jerusalem will again be destroyed by the people of another 'prince' or ruler, who is yet to come (26).
- ❖ After these two important events, we come to the last or 70th week, the beginning which will be clearly marked by the establishment of a covenant or treaty between the coming prince and the Jewish nation for a period of 'one week' or seven years (27).

- ❖ In the midst of this 70th week – i.e. halfway through the time period of 7 years, or three and a half years in, evidently breaking this treating, the coming prince will cause the Jewish sacrifice to cease and will precipitate upon this people a time of wrath and desolation lasting to the end of the week (27) – or the second advent of Jesus Christ.
- ❖ With the full completion of this period of Israel's history, there will be ushered in a time of great and unparalleled blessings for the nation.

After the 69 weeks, there are two events that are talked about. You see them in verse 26. The Messiah will be cut off, and the city of Jerusalem will be destroyed. Now if that was all we had, we would understand that when Messiah the Prince shows up, there is the death of the Messiah, and then there is the destruction of Jerusalem. That would bring us to Jesus death and resurrection and the destruction of Jerusalem. But there is a gap between the 69 weeks and the 70th week. So what is happening there?

Gaps of many years occur in other verses of scripture, Isaiah 61 is a classic. Jesus stands up in the Temple Luke 4:18,19 and reads, but He stops half way in verse 19 to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. Notice that verse 20 says that '*the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him*'. And He began to say to them '*Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing*'.

But He misses out the last part of the verse, which is quoting Isaiah 61:1,2 which ends '*and the day of vengeance of our God*' – He misses out. Why, because there is a gap here which has not yet been fulfilled, '*the day of vengeance*' is the time of the Great Tribulation, when God's wrath will be poured out on mankind generally and Israel in particular.

These few verses in Daniel 9 are the key to the great prophetic discourse recorded in Mathew 24:15-22 and Mark 13:14-20. And the greater part of the book of Revelation is simply an expansion of Daniel's prophecy within the chronological framework outlined in the 70th week which is divided into two equal periods, each extending for 1,260 days, or 42 months or three and a half years. Revelation 11:2,3; 12:6,14; 13:5. Therefore, apart from an understanding of the details of the 70 weeks of Daniel, all attempts to interpret New Testament prophecy must fail in large measure.