

Lecture 5  
 Daniel's 70th Seven . . . The Tribulation and the Antichrist  
 Carol Martin 2021

For some of you this introduction of prophetic Scripture may be new material. If so, please be encouraged. By the time we get to our December review, it will all begin to make more sense to you.

Just a brief recap of what we're trying to expose you to in a premillennial overview of prophecy. The Old Testament told of a time when God would send a Savior/the Messiah and He would restore Israel to a preeminent position, but before that time, a dreadful "Day of the Lord" would judge those who were against God. The New Testament opens with the birth of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. But instead of receiving Him as Messiah, Jesus was crucified. Jewish disciples in the early church began to evangelize and realized that Gentiles were to be included in the church. We're in that "church age." The next event on the prophetic calendar is the rapture of the church (a catching up to heaven – Dan talked about that last week). He talked about the various views as to the timing of the rapture. The Antichrist will rise as a world leader, then comes a period of terrible tribulation and judgment from God that concludes when Jesus Christ comes again with His saints and destroys the Antichrist. Christ will judge the nations and set up an earthly kingdom in Jerusalem for 1,000 years known as the Millennium. At the end of that time there will be another battle that is culminated with the Great White Throne judgment before establishment of a new heaven and a new earth.

So far, we've looked at the world conditions that will make it ripe for the Antichrist (and didn't we see our generation in those Scriptures), the apostasy in the church, the resurrections and the rapture. This week we turn our attention to the period known as the tribulation and the man of lawlessness in power during that time.

The book of Daniel in the Old Testament has often been called the backbone of biblical prophecy. More often than not it's studied in conjunction with the book of Revelation because they shed light on each other. Graham Scroggie said, "The New is in the Old contained, but the Old is in the New explained."

Since we have our hands full with an overview of prophecy and an in-depth view of Revelation, we're giving you just a brief glimpse of some of the things Daniel wrote about that reflect directly on prophecy.

It's interesting that the book of Daniel is written in Hebrew for chapters 1-2:4a, then switches to Aramaic through chapter 7, and back to Hebrew in chapters 8-13.

In chapters 1-6 of Daniel we find the biographical events of his life that have the stories we're most familiar with – his dream interpretation of four kingdoms for Nebuchadnezzar, which elevated him to an important part of palace life; his three friends in the fiery furnace; his interpretation of God's handwriting on the wall that spelled Belshazzar's doom; and his deliverance from the lion's den.

It's in chapters 7-12 that the focus is on prophecy. Some of it has already been fulfilled so literally that some critics say that Daniel couldn't have written it; it had to have been written hundreds of years later after the events. The authenticity of Daniel's authorship is not my point here . . . the literal fulfillment of prophecy is.

The aspect of Daniel's prophecy we're focusing on in this lesson is about the "seventy sevens" or 70 weeks that we read about in Daniel 9. In the first part of that chapter we have Daniel's lengthy prayer of confession and humiliation for both himself and the people. He knew from the prophet Jeremiah that the nation would serve the king of Babylon seventy years. Jeremiah 29:10 said, "After seventy years in Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good Word toward you, causing you to return to this place." (meaning Jerusalem)

Well, the seventy years were nearly up and Daniel was in deep prayer. The angel, Gabriel, (and we know he was an angel from Luke 1:19) came with a word from God to give him insight - the ability to understand the truth. Daniel had been praying for the restoration of his people to their land of promise, but God had a bigger picture in mind - the promise of the coming Messiah and the ultimate restoration of the Jews.

As Israel's 70-year captivity was coming to an end, God marked out for the Jews another block of time also based on the number 70. We need to remember that this has to do with the Jews, not the church.

In Daniel 9:24 Gabriel spread out the timeline before Daniel, "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city . . ."

In the context, the Hebrew word "shabua," which means seven, means seventy "weeks of years" (a heptad) or  $70 \times 7$  years for a total of 490 years. God had instructed Israel in Exodus 23:10-11, "For six years you are to sow your fields and harvest the crops, but during the seventh year let the land lie unplowed and unused." This was to let the land rest one year out of every seven (termed the sabbatical year), but Israel had violated that instruction for 70 sabbatical years; or a total of 490 years. Their punishment was 70 years of captivity in Babylon.

Now God decreed 70 "weeks of years" during which He would accomplish 6 objectives:

- 1) finish the transgression
- 2) make an end of sin
- 3) make atonement for iniquity
- 4) bring in everlasting righteousness
- 5) seal up vision and prophecy
- 6) anoint the most holy place. (Daniel 9:24)

With the first three, God offered permanent pardon for sins. Those were fulfilled in Jesus Christ's coming, death and resurrection. The last three are waiting to be fulfilled at His return.

Then Gabriel sliced the block of time into three sections: seven weeks (49 yrs); sixty-two weeks (434) yrs; and one week (7 yrs). The timing of fulfillment of this prophecy is a whole study in itself and there are many books explaining it in detail based on the Jewish year of 360 days, but the astounding fact is **accuracy to the day.**

The first seven weeks (49 years) brings us to 397 B.C. and the book of Malachi that ends the Old Testament. During the period of 62 weeks, or 434 years, we know that God was silent for 400 years of those years between the Old and New Testament until His Son, Jesus Christ, came. Jesus was 30 years old when He began His ministry that lasted about 3 years.

The 490 year countdown began in the month of Nisan (March 14), 445 B.C. when Artaxerxes gave the command to rebuild Jerusalem. Adding 49 years and 434 years (a total of 483 yrs. based on 360 days) there were 173,880 days which takes us to April 6, 32 A.D. The exact day Jesus entered Jerusalem as Messiah and Prince.

**Amazing!** Five centuries before the event, God drew an X on the exact date Jesus would appear as the long awaited Son of David. It was Jerusalem's golden day, but they rejected Him and crucified Him and He was cut off. 69 of the 70 weeks had been literally fulfilled. But what about the last period of 7 years? The 70th week of Daniel?

God spoke to Daniel about the Jews and Jerusalem. He didn't reveal the church. Daniel was not shown the time gap we know today as the church age; in fact, Paul tells us that it was a mystery not revealed in the Old Testament. What was revealed was the Day of the Lord described in the Scriptures we looked at . . . Joel, Amos, Zephaniah, Malachi . . . the sun turns dark, the moon turns to blood, wrath, distress, anguish, fire. Did it send a chill up your spine? There will be even more graphic descriptive details in Revelation.

This is heavy stuff, but it's not all doom and gloom. We recognize that man's moral development has by no means kept pace with his technological advances. In fact, people are just as immoral, selfish and cruel as ever. The human race with its nuclear weapons resembles a child playing with a loaded gun. Sometime or another it could go off, bringing worldwide disaster.

For the Christian we have hope, not only in the prospect of escape in the rapture, but in the fact that God may respond to the prayers of His people and bring about a great spiritual awakening among believers that could really impact the moral climate all over the world. Wonderful as that would be, whether things get better or worse, a period of terrible tribulation is inevitable because God's Word says so.

The word "tribulation" means to press (as grapes). We've read about the winepress of God's judgment. Some things we know about the tribulation from Scripture are:

1. It's a definite period of time immediately preceding the Lord's return to earth. (Matt. 24:29-35)
2. Many people will be saved during it. (Rev. 7:14)

3. It will be of such severity that no period in history past or future will equal it. (Matt. 24:21)

4. It will be shortened for the elect's sake else no flesh could stand it. (Matt. 24:22)

5. It's also referred to in Scripture as Jacob's trouble, a judgment upon God-rejecting nations and upon Messiah-rejecting Israel. (Jer. 30:7, Dan 12:1-4, Matt. 24:15)

6. It's a time of judgment upon the nations for their sin and rejection of Christ (Rev. 6:15-17).

7. It's of 7 years duration, the length of Daniel's 70th week.

Another very significant event related to that last seven-year period is foretold in Daniel 9:27. Of the prince that will come, the Antichrist, we learn:

"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 set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him." (NIV)

Simply said, the Antichrist will make a covenant with the people of Israel in which he will promise to be their protector. After three and a half years, he will break this covenant with very serious results for Israel and for himself, because his power will eventually be broken. A period of unparalleled suffering and judgment will come on the earth so that the purposes God has already determined may be fully completed.

We're going to read in Revelation chapters 6-19 about "time, times and half a time" (that is 3 1/2 years, or 42 months or 1,260 days.) So, can we locate the beginning and the end of this 70th week of Daniel in the book of Revelation?

Since we know from Revelation 6 that the 70<sup>th</sup> week begins with the revelation of the false christ (the rider on the white horse bent on conquest), it's clear the period ends with the appearing of the true Christ from heaven in Revelation 19:11-21. Borne along by the same spirit of prophecy, Daniel furnishes the chronological time frame and John fills in the details.

Scripture allows us to think of antichrist at three levels. There is: 1) First, the spirit of antichrist that is found abroad in the world. Here we have the temper or disposition of the world that John mentions prominently. It's in a world, a nation, an individual that opposes Jesus Christ.

2) Second, we have prominent mention - in both Scripture and history - of the many antichrists, or false messiahs, that were present from earliest times. In our lifetime some of you probably remember the claims of Jim Jones, David Koresh, or Marshall Applewhite of the Heaven's Gate cult who all claimed to be Jesus.

3) And then finally, the whole prophecy of the evil opposition to Christ comes to rest in references to one individual whose sacrilege and cruelty ultimately become the

focus of end-time expectations. It may be easier to accept that the spirit of antichrist exists than it is to expect one man to fulfill this terrible prophecy. Yet we can't fully understand Scripture unless we realize there will be a concrete, personal, individual Antichrist.

You've heard mentioned about the law of double fulfillment in the Scripture. The test of a prophet is 100% accuracy. Very often a fulfillment takes place in the immediate future to substantiate the prophet's words and then, at a later time, a more complete fulfillment takes place. Many see the near-term fulfillment in Antiochus Epiphanies in 170 B.C. (before Christ) when he captured Jerusalem and defiled the temple by offering a pig on the altar and tried to set himself up as God. His power lasted about 3 1/2 years. The amillennial position sees him as fulfilling all the Scripture and believes there will be no other end-time antichrist. He does have much in common.

But after Antiochus Epiphanies, the Lord Jesus spoke about the signs of the end of the age in Matthew 24. He said to flee when you see "the abomination that causes desolation spoken of through the prophet Daniel" set up in the temple – a future event.

Again, Scriptures tell us this about the Antichrist:

1. He'll appear at a time of great social crisis.
2. He'll deceive many, and many will be willing to be deceived.
3. He'll attempt to take the place of God, reflecting the human tendency toward self-deification.

We had you look up some Scriptures in question 7 showing some of the things the Antichrist would try to do. Remember? Change laws and times, deceive with miracles, signs and wonders, force people to take his mark. As we study, we'll get into more and more of his agenda. But what will he be like? Scripture doesn't give us any information about his physical appearance (short/tall, dark-skinned/white, bald or curls) or his nationality. So let's look at some of his personality traits. Remember, he'll receive his power and authority from Satan, so we can expect a sharp contrast between him and our Lord Jesus. I'd like to suggest three traits that will characterize the Antichrist: A – B – C.

### **1) A - Aggressiveness**

As he rises to a place of international power, he will demonstrate how aggressive and resourceful he is. He'll be the kind of self-confident leader that people turn to in times of crisis. Humans are always impressed by capable and aggressive men like Alexander the Great, Caesar, Napoleon, Hitler, etc. People in general are afraid of nuclear war and worsening economic conditions. They are afraid to die because they have departed from a moral lifestyle. But when Antichrist comes apparently bringing them peace and prosperity and tolerance, he will be the hope of the world. Only after he has forged his way to the top will he show his true colors.

In contrast, not aggressiveness, but humility and a living example of the beatitudes characterize Jesus. He did not push His way around. . . in fact, He won't even push His way into your life. You need to invite Him in. Jesus described himself as

"meek." That means "strength under control." He has a plan too . . . it's to work His own peace into your heart and to free you from the penalty of sin.

## **2) B - Blasphemy**

As soon as the Antichrist feels secure in his position of leadership, he will boldly and arrogantly express his disdain for God. He will let the Jews build a temple in Jerusalem and institute a system of sacrifices and offerings to gain their trust. But suddenly he'll turn against them and force them to stop and taunt them by placing an image in the temple that he'll demand they worship. This bold act will set off the unparalleled great tribulation. He will not regard any god, but exalt himself above them all.

Daniel 11:37 says of him, "He will show no regard for the god of his fathers or for the one desired by women, nor will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above them all." Some have interpreted that verse to mean the Antichrist will be a homosexual. Others take the phrase "the one desired by women" to mean he'll have no respect for Jesus or the Messiah that Jewish women hoped would be born to them.

Certainly, the Antichrist will be the most brazen blasphemer of all history. The passion of his life will be his desire to insult Almighty God by word and deed. Dr. David Reagan writes, "Over and over, emphasis is given to the Antichrist's mouth. He will boast non-stop about himself (Daniel 7:8). He will 'speak monstrous things against the God of gods' (Daniel 11:36). He will be 'given a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies' (Rev. 13:5). First and foremost, he is going to be a braggart and a blasphemer." [*God's Plan for the Ages*, p. 143]

In sharp contrast, the Lord Jesus showed the utmost respect and reverence for the Father. Bringing glory to Him was the passion of His life and the ultimate submission by laying down His life to bring us to the Father.

## **3) C - Cruelty**

Although Antichrist will apparently receive the worship of the majority of the people, he will still find a great number who refuse to bow down to him. This will arouse his wrath, leading him to do his utmost to hunt down and kill every one of them. Aided and abetted by the false prophet we'll study in Revelation, he'll succeed in killing hundreds of thousands. The martyrs portrayed in Revelation 6 and 7 are the people he will kill.

What a contrast between the Antichrist and the Lord Jesus Christ! Jesus is the life-giver, not the life-taker; compassionate not cruel. He has done everything He can to save each one of us from this coming time of tribulation and persecution by the Antichrist.

I read a quip saying "We sit in Bible Study and soak up the word of God like a sponge. But a sponge is most useful when it's squeezed." Christians can expect trials in this life. God expects us to use His Word as our guide and to help us through the

messes of life. But what we face in our own personal struggles will be nothing compared to what is yet to come in Daniel's 70th week.

I told you in the first week that I've peeked . . . God wins. The Antichrist will be thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur (Rev. 19:20). For the godly, weeping may last for a night, but joy comes in the morning when God triumphs.

So what application can we find in this lesson about the coming tribulation and Antichrist that we can apply to ourselves today? I can think of three:

**1) Not now, but later. We must wait.**

2 Peter 3:8 says, "But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day." God said there's yet a seven-year period (Daniel's 70th week) to be fulfilled as He deals with the Jews. However long the parentheses of time may be for us in the church age, it is determined to happen on God's timetable. While we wait, we work . . . spreading the gospel, sharing God's love.

**2) Not around, but through. We must prepare.**

Romans 5:9 "Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him!" There will be no way around the suffering of the tribulation period for those who reject Jesus Christ. Salvation and safety come only through Him. We must prepare now for that great escape and take just as many with us as we can.

**3) Not true, but false. We must decide.**

I told you in the beginning that our focus is not to be looking for the Antichrist but for Jesus Christ. Antichrist is a liar and Satan's false hope for the world. Jesus Christ is truth and the only hope for the world. We need to decide as it says in Joshua 24:15, "But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Not now, but later . . . we must wait.

Not around, but through . . . we must prepare.

Not true, but false . . . we must decide.

It would be remiss of me not to ask you directly if you've accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. No one comes to the Father but through Him. Let's bow our heads and examine our hearts – we are sinners, we need a Savior, and we must decide before it's too late.

Heavenly Father, let the Holy Spirit stir in this room and touch every heart. If you've never openly invited Jesus into your heart, do it now with a simple prayer. "Lord Jesus, I confess I am a sinner and I want to accept your offer of grace and forgiveness and take You as my personal Lord and Savior. Come into my life, fill me with the Holy

Spirit. I give you my life to use in Your service. I pray in the power of Your Holy Name.” Amen.

If you've prayed that prayer and made that commitment tell someone today. We'll rejoice with you!