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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Eschatology

“The Tribulation – General View”

TRANSCRIPT

Our subject is the tribulation, and we want to take a general view of the subject. Will you turn with me to the ninth chapter of the Book of Daniel? Daniel chapter 9, and we want to read together verses 24 through 27. I think perhaps we'll read verse 20 through 27 for a little bit more of the context. Daniel chapter 9, verse 20 through verse 27. The subject, “The Tribulation: a General View.”

“And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God;

Yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.

At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and 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.

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah, the prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end of it shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations, he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

If the last verse of that prophecy seems very difficult to comprehend, you are not without company. The Authorized Version of this particular passage is not itself an outstanding translation, and the Hebrew text of this 27th verse is not a very easy verse. The general idea, however, is what we want to deal with, and I think that we shall see that it is fairly plain.

The Tribulation: A General View. The tribulation is one of the giant subjects of the Bible. When one deals with the tribulation, he must deal with the Book of Daniel. He must deal with the Book of Revelation. He must deal with great sections in the synoptic gospels. He must deal with all of the eschatological epistles. And so it is, of

course, impossible to cover all of the details of the tribulation in a three-message series on the subject, which is the length of time that we have for it.

There is a country saying which some of you I’m sure are familiar with, “You can’t get all the coons up the same tree.” [Laughter] And therefore it is difficult for us to consider and comprehend and cover all of the details of the Bible that have to do with the tribulation. We shall, however, get a good I hope overview of the subject. So we will not take a microscopic approach but a telescopic approach. The major points of the subject, I think, are fairly easy to comprehend; and so if we want to look at the chronology of the times, then at some general aspects of the times. And in the following studies, we want to relate the tribulation to the Gentiles and then to the Jews.

The ninth chapter of the Book of Daniel is one of the most important prophecies in the Old Testament. I’m sure that if you were to gather together a half a dozen good Bible teachers and ask them what are the most important prophetic chapters in the Old Testament, in the first three of all of the choices would be Daniel chapter 9 verse 24 through 27. Sir Edward Denny, a student of the Bible himself, used to say that this chapter is the backbone of prophecy. It is the backbone of the chronology of the future. It gives us two things, specifically.

It gives us a general outline of God’s plan for Israel from the standpoint of Daniel the Prophet as he lived nearing the end of the Babylonian captivity. And, secondly, it gives us the details on the chronology of the future tribulation. And if we can come to understand what is contained in the seventieth week of the seventy weeks, we shall understand the overall outline of the future tribulation period with the significant events of it.

We want to look now, first of all, at the chronology of the seventy weeks. Let me say a few things about Daniel’s situation, his prayer, and his problem as set forth here in the ninth chapter of the book of Daniel. Daniel was a prophet of the Babylonian

captivity. At the time of the unfolding of this great prophecy to him, he was a part of that captivity. In the very first verse of the ninth chapter we read,

“In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, who was made king over realm of the Chaldeans;

In the first year of his reign, I Daniel understood by books the number of the years concerning which the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the Prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.”

Daniel was a student of the Scriptures, and he had in his hand the scrolls of the prophet Jeremiah. He had studied Jeremiah’s prophecy, and he had studied particularly the prophecy that had to do with the captivity of Israel and Babylon. He had come to understand, he says, that they would be in captivity for seventy years. He knew, however, that that seventy years was drawing nigh to close. In fact, so far as we can tell, about eighteen months only remained of the seventy-year period of captivity.

Daniel knew also that the reason that God had sent Israel into a seventy-year period of captivity was that they had -- because for four hundred and ninety years they had neglected the law of the Sabbath. The law of the Sabbath was that the children of Israel were able to till their ground and reap out of the produce of it for six years but they were commanded by God to not farm in the seventh year. They had violated that command of the Old Testament for seventy times. And as a result of that, God sent them into captivity for the seventy years that they had neglected to follow his commandments.

Daniel, I say, had studied the word. He had discovered that the captivity was about to close, but, unfortunately for Daniel, he had also been given some great prophecies. He had been told, for example, in the seventh chapter that there were going to, as set forth in the seventh chapter, he had been told that there was going to arise --

there were going to arise four great kingdoms, and these four kingdoms were to exist upon the earth until the time of the restoration of all things.

These visions affected Daniel so much that he states at the end of the one in the seventh chapter, “Here is the end of the matter as for me Daniel my cogitations much troubled me and my countenance changed in me, but I kept the matter in my heart.” He was a prophet who entered with all sympathy into the revelation of these great things which he had been given. Then again at the end of the eighth chapter and the unfolding of a similar kind of prophecy of the future, we read, “And I Daniel fainted and was sick certain days. Afterward I rose up and did the king’s business and I was astonished at the vision but none understood it.’

So Daniel has been given these great visions of the future of the world as he knew it. He knew that ultimately things would turn out for the good of the Nation Israel. But he foresaw a great time of trouble preparatory to the consummation. So he was very much troubled over it. And when he discovered that as he studied Jeremiah that there was only about eighteen months before the end of the seventy-year period and Israel would be returning from captivity, he made the simple mistake of assuming that since it was eighteen months before Israel was to go free and return to the land, that that eighteen months-off return was the same as the consummation of the times of the Gentiles on the earth which he had been given information concerning in these great visions.

Now, since he was living during the time of the Babylonian empire and he was told that they would follow the Babylonian, the Medeo-Persian, and the Grecian and this fourth great empire, why naturally he thought well if in eighteen months we’re going to be back in the land, then there must in the next three months -- in the next eighteen months there must arise three great world empires. They must rise and fall and rise and fall and rise and fall in the next eighteen months. He was very much troubled. And so he went to prayer about it, and he makes a great prayer of confession, asking God to give

him information. He confesses the sin of Israel. He asks God to give him enlightenment with regard to the future.

It’s very interesting that Daniel, of course, was a relatively old man at the present time. I’m sure he was past middle age, thirty-five [laughter] and consequently, it reflects the prayer of an old man. George Mueller, the great man of faith, used to say, “O God, keep me from becoming a wicked old man.” So often Christians are like that. You know they live through their lives, and then when they become old they become soured. They become really wicked old men. Daniel was a prophet who did not. For when troubles came to him he takes it to the Lord in prayer. And in answer to the prayer of Daniel he is given this unusual vision of the seventy weeks.

Now, we want to talk for a little while about some of the terms that are here because this is a very important prophecy, and it’s important that we understand what is involved in it. The term “seventy weeks”—we notice the twenty-fourth verse reads, “seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city.” The Hebrew text at this point does not say, seventy weeks. The Hebrew text says, literally, sevens seventy or seventy-seven. Now, whether they are days or whether they are weeks or whether they are years, only the context can tell us. Now, we know in this case that we are talking about weeks of years, seventy sevens of years.

Now, we know this because of the context of Daniel chapter 9. We read in verse 2 again in the first year of his reign, “I Daniel understood by books the number of the years concerning which the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the Prophet that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.” So the context tells us that Daniel has been thinking about years. So we are to think of seventy sevens of years.

Now, seventy sevens of years is four hundred and ninety years. So when we speak of seventy sevens then, we are talking about years. Daniel says, simply, seventy sevens or, as your text says, seventy weeks. But these are years.

So let’s move on and discuss some of the other things. He says seventy weeks—we’ll say seventy sevens of years, four hundred and ninety years—are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city. The word “determined” is a word that means literally severed off, severed off or cut off. Cut off from what? Well, Daniel is a prophecy of the times of the Gentiles.

Now, the times of the Gentiles are the times from the destruction of Jerusalem in roughly 605 or 6 B.C. to the time of the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus. What’s the end of -- exact end of the times of the Gentiles? We do not know. We know that it began in 605 or 606 B.C. It will extend to the time of the Second Advent. So we know that it has covered six hundred and five or six years, plus nineteen hundred and seventy-five years to the present time. Plus we know that there are seven years roughly in the tribulation period, and we just have to say plus or a question mark thereafter.

So the term “determined” means severed off from the times of the Gentiles, seventy weeks of years. Four hundred and ninety years are determined, or decreed as some texts read, upon thy people and upon thy holy city.

Now, you’ll notice that these four hundred and ninety years have to do with Israel and with the city of Jerusalem. Seventy weeks of years are determined—decreed—upon thy people and upon thy holy city.

Now, at the conclusion of this four-hundred-and-ninety-year period of time, these six things will have come to pass. He says, “To finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring an everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.” So in other words, thinking of the design of the seventy weeks, the general view is that after four hundred and ninety years, six items -- these six items will have come to pass. And the last of them is the preparation of the temple for millennial worship. So what Daniel has said now in the first verse is simply, “At the end of a four-hundred-and-ninety-year period of time

which pertains to Israel and to Jerusalem, six things will have come to pass. They begin with the finishing of the transgression. They end with the anointing of the most holy.”

Have you ever seen a salesman sell an automobile? Usually a salesman who is anxious to sell an automobile – well, first of all, asks you to take a general look at the automobile. Now, for example, if you were going in to buy a Cadillac Seville—probably many of you in this audience will, of course.

Now, you will go in. The first thing that you will do will probably be to walk around that automobile two or three times. And if he’s a good salesman, I’m sure he’ll just let you do it, just look at those beautiful lines in that automobile. And he’ll let you take the good general look.

Then, of course, he will be anxious to show you all of the details of it. He’ll probably open up a door. He’ll try to show you the inside of the automobile, to show you the expensive and luxurious-looking inner makeup of that automobile. He’ll probably ultimately pull up the trunk. He’ll let you look at the motor underneath the hood, and he’ll probably want you to play the stereo and a few other things. In other words, he’ll give you all the details.

Now this twenty-fourth verse is the general view. The prophet has simply said four hundred and ninety years pertaining to Israel and Jerusalem will conclude with the consummation of these six items.

Now, we want to look at the details of the fulfillment and specifically, first of all, the time details. What Daniel is saying is that here we have -- I have separated these seven weeks from sixty-two because in verse 25 he will say, “know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks.” Now, seven weeks of years.

Now, since a week of years is seven years, seven weeks is forty-nine years. And threescore and two. Now, threescore and two is three times twenty, plus two is sixty-two. I’m doing all this for you because I know that you’re mathematics is weak. [Laughter]

And threescore and two weeks the street shall be built again and the wall even in troublous times. So you can see that what he is saying at the end is at the end of a forty-nine-year period of time, seven weeks of years and at the end of a sixty-two-week period of time -- well I should have said -- shall be seven weeks and three score and two weeks, the street shall be built again and the wall even in troublous times.

Now, what he is saying is that after, beginning here at this period of time, at the conclusion of the sixty-nine weeks, the Messiah shall come. Notice the twenty-sixth verse and after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off but not for himself and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary and the end of it shall be with a flood and under the end of the war desolations are determined.

Let me go back in verse 25 because I think I confused you a little. “Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandments to restore and to build Jerusalem,” from the study of the Old Testament we learn in Nehemiah chapter 2 that the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem is David at four hundred and forty-five B.C. So from the time of the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince, to Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks and three score and two weeks—shall be seven plus sixty-two weeks. So that from the time of the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem, there will be forty-nine years, seven weeks of years, plus four hundred and thirty-four years, which is, of course, sixty-two weeks of years. Seven times two is fourteen. Seven times six is forty-two plus one, forty-three, four hundred and thirty-four years to Messiah the Prince.

Now, the coming of Messiah the Prince is by figuring the times, the four hundred and eighty-three years—for four hundred and thirty-four years plus forty-nine years equals four hundred and eighty-three years—that period of time is roughly the period of time from the rebuilding -- the commandment to rebuild the city until the triumphal entry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I’m sure that many of you have heard that Sir Robert Anderson, a great student of prophecy and at one time the head of Scotland Yard, has done some extensive research on the chronology of Daniel chapter 9. Sir Robert Anderson determined that there were a hundred and seventy-three thousand eight hundred and eighty days between the period of time, 445 B.C. until the time of Messiah the Prince, and actually determined that the time for the commandment was March the 14th, 445 B.C. And that the four hundred and eighty-three years came out precisely at the time of our Lord Jesus Christ’s triumphal entry which Sir Robert Anderson dated as April 6th, 32 A.D.

Now, this is a remarkable thing, of course, and it indicates that if Sir Robert Anderson is anywhere near the chronology of the Holy Spirit through Daniel, that we have a remarkable prophecy of our Lord Jesus Christ’s First Coming.

I want you to turn with me over to Luke chapter 19, verse 28, and I want you to listen as I read the account in Luke of the triumphal entry. Luke chapter 19, verse 28 through verse 44:

“And when he had thus spoken, he went ahead, ascending up to Jerusalem.

And it came to pass, when he was come near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples

Saying, Go into the village opposite you; in which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, on which yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him here.”

By the way the interesting fact about that verse is this, that it was customary you may remember for kings when they entered a village or a city on a visit, for the villagers and the inhabitants to do something extra special for the king and, ordinarily it involved

something new. Frequently they would construct a new road into the city so that the king traveled upon a road that no one else had traveled upon. If, of course, he was coming into the city and he were to ride upon an animal, to ride upon a new animal would be a sign of honor or homage done to the king. So here when the Lord Jesus directs the men to go and get a colt tied on which never man sat, we are to understand by this one of the many indications that he conceives of himself as being the king coming to the Nation Israel. Verse 31,

“And if any man asks you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him.

And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them.

And as they were loosing the colt, its owner said unto them, Why loose ye the colt?

And they said the Lord hath need of him.

And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they sat Jesus upon it.

And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way. And when he was come near, even at 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 that they have seen;

Saying, Blessed be the King who cometh in the name of the Lord: Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.”

Now, you can see that our Lord has prepared all of these little details as to indicate that he is fulfilling the prophecies of the Old Testament, which have to do with his presentation of himself as King to Israel and Jerusalem. And here the people are

saying prophecies, speaking out prophecies, for these words come from the Old Testament that have to do with the King. “Blessed be the King who cometh in the name of the Lord.” Verse 39,

“And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

And He answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out, Blessed be the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

And when he would come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying” – now, notice these words very carefully – “Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day” -- in this thy day, (in other words, the Lord indicates by this that what he is doing is the fulfillment of prophecy that relates to them, and he is even suggesting that this very day is the subject of the prophetic word. This is your day and), “the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hidden from thine eyes.

For the day shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee on every side,

And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.”

Now, notice those last words, “the time of thy visitation.” What our Lord Jesus is saying is that I am coming on the -- at this triumphal entry in fulfillment of the prophetic Scriptures, fulfillment to the very day of those prophecies. This is the time of your visitation and to put it in the language that we might want to put it in, he could have said if you had studied the prophecy of Daniel chapter 9, verse 24 through verse 27, you would have known that this is the precise day of my coming to Israel and to Jerusalem.

Sir Robert Anderson’s computations may or may not be precisely accurate. They are obviously very close. And whether they are precisely accurate or not is largely beside the point. It is evident that the four hundred and eighty-three years from the time of Nehemiah chapter 2 would have come so close to the events of our Lord’s ministry that there could be no possible way for any Israelite who had studied the Scriptures openly, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to fail to realize that he was fulfilling the prophecy to the day of -- to the precise days of his supposed coming to the Nation Israel.

This is the climactic prophecy of the Old Testament. There are many prophecies that tell us he shall be of the tribe of David or of the tribe of Judah or of the family of David. He shall be born in Bethlehem. He shall be born of a virgin and so forth, but this is the climactic one that even points to the precise time that he is to come.

Now, we have another seven-year period of time. He has said sixty-nine weeks from the time of the commandment to build a city to the time of Messiah the Prince. But now we also read in the prophecy of Daniel verse 26, “and after three score and two years shall Messiah be cut off,” verse 26. After the four hundred and eighty-three years Messiah shall be cut off. That of course is a reference to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Messiah having come at the end of the four hundred and eighty-three-year period of time shall then be cut off, but not for himself, or shall have nothing. And the people of the prince that shall come – now, notice the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.

Almost all the students of the prophetic word -- I don’t know of any who disagree -- say, that the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city is obviously a reference to the Romans, who in 70 A.D., after the time of the cross, destroyed the city of Jerusalem. Notice the expression, “the people of the prince that shall come.”

Now, the prince that shall come is not the same as Messiah the Prince. We have two princes in this particular passage. Messiah the Prince is our Lord Jesus. The people who destroy the city are Romans. So we are told here that the prince who shall come is a

Roman prince. The people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary and the end of it shall be with a flood and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

Then in the 27th verse we read of that final missing week of years. And he shall confirm the covenant -- now, what is the *he*? Well, the *he* refers back to the last named prince. The last named prince is the prince that shall come, not the Messiah, but one who stands over against the Messiah, or the antichrist. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease and then the prophecy concludes with wars and desolations poured out upon the desolate.

Now, let’s look at our diagram again. What then Daniel’s prophecy says is that from the time of the commandment to build the city of Jerusalem there is to be a forty-nine-year period of time plus a four-hundred-and-thirty-four-year period of time or four hundred and eighty-three years until the time that Messiah the Prince comes. Then Messiah the Prince shall be cut off, and he shall have nothing. There shall be the destruction of the city of Jerusalem destroyed by the people of the prince who shall come. We know from history it was the Romans who did that. Then we are told that there is going to be one final week of years, seven years, at the conclusion of which there shall come the end. Other prophecies tell us that the kingdom shall follow that particular age.

Now, we are also taught in verse 24 that at the end of these seventy weeks of years, seven plus sixty-two plus one, we shall have these things come to pass. The transgression shall be finished and end of sins shall have been made, reconciliation shall have been made for iniquity, everlasting righteousness shall be brought in, the vision in prophecy shall be sealed up, the most holy place shall be anointed.

Now, what these things mean, we don’t have time in our study to deal with these in detail. To finish these transgressions has to do, of course, with the transgression that Israel has accomplished against our Lord Jesus Christ. So Israel’s rebellion and rejection

of the Messiah shall end at the period of that time. An end of sins shall be made. A judgment shall be made upon sins, is probably the force of it. Reconciliation for inequity, Israel’s sins shall be forgiven.

Now, of course, that was made at the cross, but it shall be applied to them at that time. Everlasting righteousness shall be brought in for the kingdom shall begin. Vision and prophecy shall be sealed up. There should be no more need for any special revelations through word and through prophet, for the King himself shall be present.

And finally to anoint a most holy place. This always in Scriptures [is] a reference to the kingdom and so what he is saying is that the kingdom, which shall be the place where millennial worship shall take place, shall be anointed and the worship of the millennial age shall be instituted. For he must reign—these are prophecies that pertain then to the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is one thing that we have not talked about here, and that is what about the time gap of the church age?

Now, we are living in a time after the sixty-nine weeks and yet the seventieth week has not yet transpired, because these things have not taken place. So what we have here is a kind of unexplained time gap between the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the beginning of the 70th week. Is there anything in the Bible that suggests a time gap in the Old Testament between the time of the First Coming and the second coming? Or to put it this way: Are there prophecies in the Bible that prophesy the first coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and the second coming in the same context in which the time gap, which we know about, is not mentioned? Let’s look at a couple of them.

Turn with me to Isaiah chapter 9. Isaiah chapter 9. There is a very interesting prophecy and one with which you are all acquainted, I know. In Isaiah chapter 9 in verse 6 we read, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his

government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with justice and righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform it.”

Well, you notice the first part of this prophecy: For unto us a child is born, unto to us a son is given. When did that take place? At the first coming of our Lord Jesus. But now we read in the 7th verse of the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. When shall our Lord reign in righteousness? Well, not until his Second Advent. So here we have in this one text Isaiah chapter 9 verses 6 and 7 prophecies that relate to the first coming – prophecies or statements that relate to the second coming and the gap of the present age is passed over.

Will you turn with me to the sixty-first chapter of the Prophecy of Isaiah? I think we looked at this briefly. Isaiah chapter 61, verse 1 and 2. We read, “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the mee; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

You’ll remember that when the Lord Jesus was in the synagogue in Nazareth, he read this passage as he began his Messianic ministry. And as he was reading it, he stopped in the middle of the second verse after saying, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. He stopped at that point and said, this day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.

Now, he did not say anything about the day of vengeance of our God to comfort all that mourn, because that particular line is fulfilled only at the time of the Second Advent of our Lord. And so we have right here in one verse statements that pertain to the first coming and statements that pertain to the second coming, and there is a time gap of

approximately nineteen hundred years which we know now by virtue of the history of Revelation and its relationship to the church.

Turn finally to the last passage in the Book of Zechariah. Zechariah chapter 9, verses 9 and 10. Zechariah verses -- chapter 9, verses 9 and 10. The prophet Zechariah writes, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.”

Now this text, as you know, was fulfilled in the first coming of our Lord Jesus at the triumphal entry. This text is actually repeated and cited in the New Testament account. But then we read in verse 10, “And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the nations: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.”

So in the 9th verse, we have a prophecy that pertains to the first coming. In the tenth verse, we have a prophecy that pertains to the second coming. So what Daniel, you see, has done is to speak of the four hundred and eighty-three years, which conclude with the first coming of Messiah the Prince. He has made reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, and then he has leapt over the present church age to the last of the weeks, the seventieth week, the seven-year period of time in order to give specific information concerning that.

Now, let’s look at that last verse of Daniel chapter 9 in the light of that. He says, “And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week.” So we have moved now to the last week of the four hundred and ninety years. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week. We said the *he* is a reference to the prince that shall come or the messiah -- the anti-messiah, the antichrist. He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week. That is for seven years. So evidently here it is stated that the antichrist will enter into an arrangement with the children of Israel for a seven-year period of time. But

in the midst of the week, in the middle of this last period of time, he shall cause sacrifice and oblation to cease.

Now, evidently in this arrangement that is entered into between the antichrist or the Beast and the children of Israel, arrangement is made for the restoration of the ancient worship, the sacrifices and the offerings. But in the midst of the seven-year period of time, the Beast breaks his agreement with the Nation Israel and the result is, according to Daniel, great troubles and desolations until the time of the end. Now, he doesn’t give us great details here, so we will leave it at that.

One question that comes before us is this: Is this 70th week really a future week? Now, I’ve said it is, and I’ve tried to show you that this gapped period finds analogy in the Old Testament prophecies. Is there -- Are there other things that indicate that the 70th week is future? Well, we read in verse 26 at the end of the verse, and unto to the end of the war, desolations are determined. And then we read about the last week in verse 27 that would seem to indicate that this week is future.

We also could argue that the events of verse 24 -- the facts of verse 24, which are supposed to be accomplished at the end of the four hundred and ninety-year period of time -- have not come to pass at the end of the four hundred and eighty-three period, and they haven’t come to pass even yet. These things are not true yet, so, therefore, that week must be a future week. And we also could turn to the New Testament where the Lord Jesus in his own ministry refers to the abomination of desolation and warns his listeners that the time will come when the abomination of desolation will be set up in the Holy Place and the Great Tribulation shall come to pass. And he looks at it as if it is future. So I think we can argue from the study of Scripture that this is a future week.

So then Daniel has told us that four hundred and ninety years have been severed off from the times of the Gentiles. They pertain to Israel. Four hundred and eighty-three years of them will bring the coming of the Messiah at his first coming. There will be a time gap which Daniel does not know about and does not write about. We know that.

Then there will follow one more week, which is characterized by the antichrist making a covenant with Israel which shall be broken and desolations and destruction and tribulation shall take place upon the earth, at the conclusion of which will come all of these things and the entrance into the kingdom.

Now, let me say a few words about the characteristics of this 70th week, which is the period of the tribulation. There are four outstanding things that characterize this last week of Daniel’s prophecy or the time of the tribulation period. First of all is an ecclesiastical thing or an ecclesiastical fact, the rise of the beast. That period of seven years will be characterized by the rise of a world leader. This world leader is related to the Roman Empire. For remember Daniel said, “The people of the prince that shall come.” And since the Romans destroyed the city, we know from that passage that the antichrist can be called a Roman prince. So he shall be related to the revived Roman Empire. That also gives us the Scriptural authorization for believing that there shall be a revival of the Roman Empire. This period shall be characterized then by the rise of the beast. And as a result of the rise of the beast, there shall not only be a world empire, which shall encompass all of the nations of the earth, but also a world religion.

Now, I am sure from the description of the word of God that the antichrist is such a vile character that Hitler and Mussolini and Stalin and Khadaffi and all of the other rulers whom we think of as evil men are going to be choir boys in comparison with the antichrist. He is going to be responsible for one great world religious system opposed to God, counterfeiting the trinity. Dominated by Satan, the anti-God, he himself shall be the antichrist, and he shall also minister in the power of the false prophet, who is the unholy spirit.

Some prophetic teachers are having some doubts about whether there is going to be a world religion. There was a great deal of interest in the past twenty-five years, fifty years perhaps, over the ecumenical movement. And many have thought that the ecumenical movement is indicative of a trend that shall lead ultimately to the religion of

the Beast, which shall be a worldwide religion. Some Bible teachers are now having second thoughts about that, for the simple reason that the ecumenical movement is largely dead at the present time.

And as a matter of fact, as far as I can tell from looking at the things that are happening in the religious world, the ecumenical movement is having a great deal of difficulty. One well-known Bible teacher, because of this, has suggested that perhaps the religion that is going to cover the whole of the earth is going to be something related to astrology and demonism and the occult, and has suggested that perhaps what we are seeing today is part of the construction of just such a system.

It’s interesting, of course, for Bible teachers to change their interpretations depending upon the events of the present time. But at any rate we do know that there is a great deal of interest in astrology and the occult and the demonic. One wonders why people are interested in astrology, but astrology does offer a religion without moral responsibility, and people are interested in religious things that do not involve any kind of moral responsibility; however, astrology offers us revelation without the disconcerting doctrines of the Bible which point to our sin and the need of the new birth. And astrology also offers us a kind of salvation without a real savior, so you can see some of the appeal of it. But it’s very doubtful that this is the thing that the Bible refers to when it refers to the fact that all shall worship the Beast in a kind of world religion.

The second thing that shall characterize that period of time is political. There will be the rise of national disturbances. Kingdom against kingdom. World government will be the aim of the great kingdoms of the earth. And that period of time shall be characterized as a period of national disturbance. We’ll deal with the details of these in the succeeding studies.

There will also be the rise of natural disturbances. For example, in Matthew chapter 24 in verse 7 when the Lord Jesus speaks of this period of time, he says nations shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines and

pestilences and earthquakes in various places. There shall be rise -- there shall rise up natural disturbances which are beyond the ordinary.

And, finally, that period of time will be characterized by a great period of spiritual salvation through the preaching of the evangelists of that period. This is probably the greatest period of judgment and the greatest period of justification ever in the history of the earth. The Jews accomplish in a seven-year-period of time what they could not do in four hundred and eighty-three years and a great multitude, which no man can number, comes out of that Great Tribulation period believing in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Roman III: the causes of the 70th week. What are the causes of the 70th week? Why is it necessary for us to have a period of Great Tribulation? There are three of them. First, there is need for the judgment of the Apostate church. I made reference a few weeks ago to H.A. Ironside who used to like to say that he was very delighted to participate in the rapture, of course, but he did have a kind of secret desire to stay here for just a few days after the rapture in order to attend a liberal church the next Sunday morning [laughter].

Now, he, of course, was only being facetious and smiling over the probable attempt to explain the departure of the church in the rapture. When we think of the apostate church and the judgment that faces it, it’s not a matter for humor because the judgment of the apostate church is going to be a terrible thing. And the judgment of the apostate church is one of the reasons for the coming of the Great Tribulation. It is true that a part of the church shall enter the great tribulation and that apostate church shall.

McCheyne and Horatius Bonar, who were friends in Scotland -- we were once discussing their messages of the last Sunday and Mr. Bonar told Mr. McCheyne that he had preached on judgment, and as a matter of fact had used the text “the wicked shall be turned into hell.” And Robert Murray McCheyne asked Mr. Bonar, who is Andrew Bonar—not Horatius—Andrew Bonar, were you able to preach it with tenderness? And of

course all preaching of judgment should be characterized by tenderness. And the judgment of the apostate church is a horrible judgment.

That is one of the reasons for the great tribulation period. The second reason is the judgment of Israel, and we shall talk about that in one of our two remaining studies. And the third is the judgment of the Gentiles. These are the three great causes for the tribulation period. And so judgment is the characteristic of that period.

Let me conclude by saying that the blessing of the tribulation lies in the great numbers that are saved in and out of it. But the bane of it lies in the fact that it closes the door of opportunity for those who have heard the gospel in the present age. But there are going to be many, many people who enter into that period of time and enter into the judgments of it. We need not fear because of course we have believed in our Lord Jesus Christ. And in having believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, we are subject to those statements of Scripture which say that we shall escape the time of Great Tribulation.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the encouragement that is given to us for the significant ministry of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who gave himself a satisfaction for sin, shedding his blood for sinners, that we might have life. We thank Thee for the encouragement and for the truth. And we pray that we may never, as we meet Sunday after Sunday, forget that we are celebrating the fact that he is alive. At one time dead, but now alive forevermore.

We thank Thee for the whole church of Jesus Christ. We pray Thy blessing upon the entire body and for all of the members of that true body of believers over the face of this globe. We thank Thee for the universal outreach of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in gathering his own people in from so many places so that some from every tribe, kindred tongue, and nation shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the Glory of God the Father.

We thank Thee Lord for the privilege of proclaiming him in the city of Dallas and to people who live in other places through the ministry of this little church. We pray Thy blessing upon its outreach over the radio, over the tapes, and on the written page. And

for other churches that name our Lord as Savior and Lord, we pray for each one of them as well. Bless them richly this day. We look forward to the day when we shall meet in heaven around the throne of the triune God.

We pray Lord for those who’ve requested our prayers, for those who are sick, some bereaved who need ministry from Thee. O God, minister to them through the Holy Spirit. Accomplish Thy will in their lives. Give healing where healing is desired. And we pray also that by Thy grace those who minister to them may minister effectively, the physicians, the families, the friends. We commit them all to thee.

We pray now thou blessing upon us in this meeting. We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.