

*The Unsearchable Riches of Christ
in the Prophets
The Book of Daniel*

Spring Conference 2010 in Stuttgart

The Book of Daniel consists of two parts. The first part up to chapter 7 speaks of the empires of this earth. Chapter 2 ends with the stone that God has prepared which will destroy the image and sweep everything away. This stone that comes down from heaven is the Lord and His kingdom that will grow and fill the whole earth. Then we saw in chapter 7 the image of the beasts. This vision ends with the beast of beasts being destroyed and the saints receiving the kingdom (7:22). Here we must not only see the beast, but we also need a revelation of the “Ancient of Days” (v. 13, 22) and also of the Son of Man who has received the kingdom and the dominion and is sitting on the throne today. Chapters 4 and 5 of Revelation correspond to what Daniel saw of the “Ancient of Days”. It is not good to see only the prophecies, at the same time we should see our living God, for God is over all; He is the “Ancient”. In Revelation, our Lord is described as the Lion of Judah. He is sitting not on an earthly throne, but on the throne in heaven, at the right hand of the Father, and He will rule till all His enemies are made into His footstool. We see all this in the first part of the book of Daniel, in chapters 1 to 7.

Chapters 8 to 12 form a new section that refers very specifically to God’s people, to Israel, and that is probably why it was written in Hebrew.

At the outset, it speaks about the conflict between the Persian kingdom and Greece which then rose into an empire under Alexander the Great. Later his kingdom was divided into four parts. Chapter 8 mentions the horn that will rule for three and a half years. That is a type of the beast in the person of Antiochus IV. Epiphanes (A.E.). He was on the rampage for 2300 days and committed many abominations in the temple. This horn trampled the host of heaven, the stars and the sanctuary for 2300 days, be-

ginning in 171 BC and ending in 164 BC. Why is this time described here? To show us that it concerns A.E. and not someone else and of course it also concerns Israel.

Whenever Syria and Egypt were at war, Israel stood between the two powers. Hence this conflict between the kings of the North and South is described in such a detailed way. The worst of these kings was A.E.

Chapter 9 – The vision of the seventy weeks

Daniel's prayer should impress us; it is important for us because it shows us a heart that is filled with God's purpose, fully for God's people and fully for Jerusalem. Daniel not only thought of Jerusalem daily, but prayed three times a day with his windows opened toward Jerusalem. Which of us prays three times daily for God's purpose? Do you think of God's people daily? Before the Lord can carry out anything on this earth, He needs our prayer.

The captivity of the people was over after 70 years. Daniel knew this from Jeremiah 25:11, but he did not just accept it just like that and say: "Hallelujah, now we can return". Daniel knew not only of the end of the captivity after 70 years, he also knew from the Scriptures that the people should confess their sins and the sins of their fathers before they returned (Lev. 26). Surely not many of the people thought of that. After 70 years, some had certainly already settled well in Babylon. But for God to be able to carry out His plan, such a prayer was absolutely necessary. Therefore we in the church life today must know the Scriptures well and ponder upon His word in prayer before the Lord. If no one prays: "Lord, bring Your people out of Babylon" (Rev. 18:4), nothing will happen. It is not enough that the word is only there in Revelation 18:4: "*Come out of her, My people.*" Our prayer is still needed in which we bring the Lord's word before Him.

At the beginning of the church life, we prayed daily: "Lord, open the eyes of Your people!" We prayed for the seeking ones every day. After 40 years, we have a comfortable church life and forget that so many are still in Babylon and should come out too. The prayer of Daniel in chapter 9 is very important. Without this prayer, it is hard for the Lord to carry out His purpose. The Lord must wake us up. When we pray, the Lord will carry out His plan against all oppositions. Learn from Daniel – he had the habit of praying three times a day. Take at least five minutes of your lunch time to remind the Lord of the captives in Babylon. Speak with Him about His people, bind the enemy, loose the captives and hasten the Lord's

return by your prayer. As a minister, Daniel certainly did not have much time, but he took time for prayer.

Pray in a persistent way and demand from the Lord that He acts according to His word. Take Daniel as your model: *“O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name”* (Dan. 9:19). Do not give the Lord any possibility to say “No”. Prayer is not some religious prayer but a speaking with the living God. And what we speak must come out of faith. It must be real and must come out of our heart. God knows our heart. “Lord, we pray for Your will and that the gates of Hades will not prevail against the church. We want to see the fulfilment of this word. It is not about us but about Y o u r city and Y o u r people. Lord, if You do not fulfil this prayer, it would not be good for Your name!” We should talk with God in this way.

“Now while I was speaking, 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, yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, ‘O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand’ ” (v. 20-22). We must so pray that God also answers our prayer. God is waiting for us to pray. *“At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved”* (v. 23). Isn’t that wonderful! Daniel was well-pleasing to God and was loved by God – like John was.

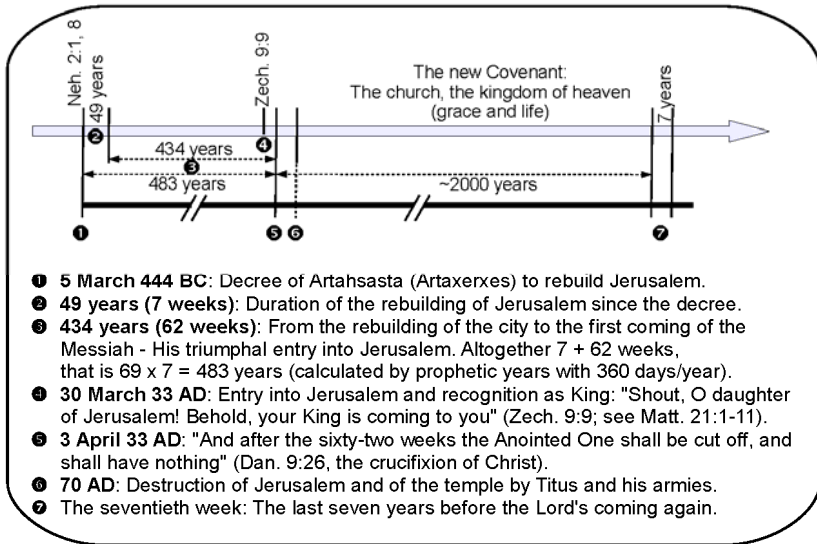
The revelation of the seventy weeks by Gabriel

Chapter 9 shows us an important vision. *“Seventy weeks are determined¹ for your people and for your holy city ...”* (v. 24). Here God said y o u r people and y o u r holy city, for Daniel was so one with God. He knew God’s heart and loved His people and even more, the holy city and the temple, God’s dwelling place for which he had prayed.

A week here means seven years (in Hebrew the word for week has the same root as seven, it means “sevened” and can refer to seven days or, as here, seven years); seventy weeks are therefore 490 years. God

¹ Or cut out

separated these seventy weeks for His people and His city, with a special burden for His people: "... To finish¹ the transgression, to make an end of sins², to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint a Most Holy" (v. 24). God has sent His Son to accomplish all these, to redeem us and to become our righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30). "Seal up" here means "fulfil". It is the same word as "make an end of sins". In the end, a Most Holy shall be anointed. That refers to Christ, the Anointed One.



"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Anointed One, the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in times of distress" (v. 25). Nehemiah received the command to rebuild Jerusalem on 5 March 444 BC from King Artahsasta (Artaxerxes Longimanus, Neh. 2:1-8).

This time is divided into two parts. First 7 by 7, that is 49 years; then 62 by 7, that is 434 years. Together, that is 483 years. At the end of the

¹ Or shut up

² Or to seal up sins

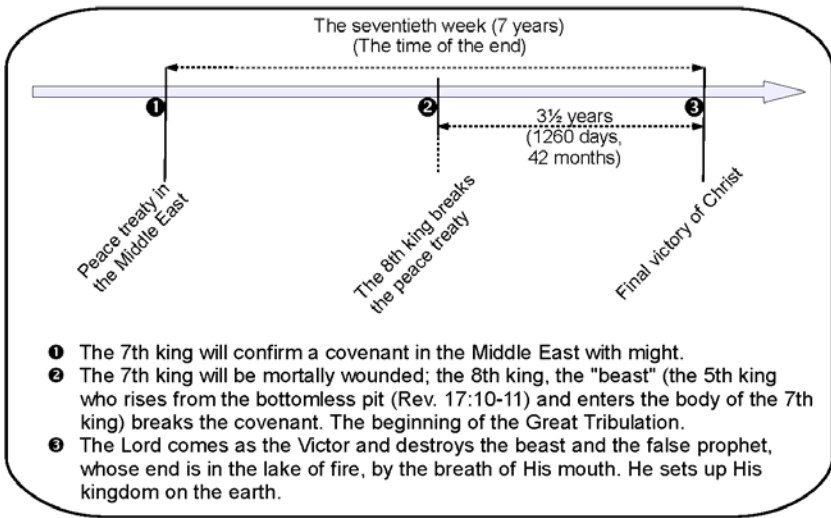
69th week the Anointed One comes, that is the Messiah, the King. This point in time is equivalent to the Lord's entry into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:5, 9; John 12:13-15). This entry was the only time that the Jews acknowledged Him as their King. That is the fulfilment of Zechariah 9:9: "*Rejoice greatly, O 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.*" This verse has been fulfilled literally. On this day, the Lord came to Jerusalem riding on a young donkey. The date was 30 March 33 AD. On this day, the 69 weeks were fulfilled (calculated according to prophetic years with 360 days per year). Daniel received this revelation of the Lord's first coming. The Lord revealed even the time to him. This vision has to do with the people of Israel, with the building of Jerusalem. Before the Lord came, the people had to return to Jerusalem, and the temple and the city had to be rebuilt. If the Jews in those days had read the book of Daniel diligently, they would have known when the Messiah would come. 49 years (7 weeks) were necessary to build up the city. Following that, there were still 434 years (62 weeks) before the Messiah was to enter Jerusalem.

In Herod's time, there was a sect among the Pharisees who, on account of the word, had calculated the time and preached the coming of the Messiah. These men were killed by Herod. The wise men from the East also knew of the birth of the King. To them, He was not the Saviour who was to come but the King. It is written in Micah 5:2 that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem.

"The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in times of distress" (v. 25). From history, we know how tough this building up was and what difficulties there were – the builders held weapons in one hand and tools in the other hand (Neh. 4:17).

"And after the sixty-two weeks the Anointed One shall be cut off, and shall have nothing" (Dan. 9:26). On 3 April 33 AD, on the day before the Passover, the Lord was crucified. Although He was the King, He had nothing in the end. No one had acknowledged Him. Four days after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the people cried: "Crucify Him! We have no king but Caesar!" How deeply that must have offended God! The result was His judgement. *"And the people of a prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood. And to the end there shall be war, and desolations are deter-*

mined” (v. 26). In 70 AD, Titus and his army destroyed the whole city and the temple. The end was desolation.



“And with might he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week ...” (v. 27). At this point the Bible takes a leap, it speaks about another king who comes to power in the 70th week (the last seven years). Between the 69th week and the 70th week is a period which up to now has lasted almost 2000 years. We must see, with the crucifixion a new covenant began, the age of grace, the age of life and of the building up of the church, of the kingdom of heaven. From this point, the invisible rule of the Lord in us begins. This rule takes place inwardly in us. When He rules, then you see the building up of the church. This period was hidden from Daniel; the angel Gabriel did not show these 2000 years to Daniel. It was hidden in God. Gabriel showed Daniel the 70 weeks in a sequence. But there is a long break between the 69th and 70th weeks.

In the beginning, the earthly Israel was God’s kingdom. Then God gave up the earthly Israel, and the times of the nations and the age of grace and of the building up of the heavenly kingdom, the church, came. But instead of accepting this grace and passing over from the earthly kingdom to the heavenly kingdom, the people of Israel rejected the Lord and chose Caesar. And God gave him to them.

The great question today is: When do the last seven years begin – the so-called end? In other words, when does God end the age of grace?

The covenant in verse 27 is confirmed in the last seven years. This concerns the peace treaty in the Middle East. We are all waiting for this covenant, for it is the last sign that the end, the last seven years, has come. The seventh king (Rev. 17:10-11) will confirm this treaty with might, for without a great might it will not take place. When this covenant is confirmed, the last seven years of this age will begin.

“... But in the middle of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and offering to cease, and upon the holy place there shall be the abomination of desolation, until the final destruction which is determined is poured out on the desolator” (v. 27). In this time, in the middle of the seven years, Revelation 6:12-17 will be fulfilled: *“I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?’ ”* All men will now know that the day of God’s wrath has come.

In Revelation 12:1-6, we see that at the same time, in the middle of the seven years, the resurrection of the dead believers, of the Old Covenant as well as the New Covenant, will take place: *“Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labour and in pain to give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her child as soon as it was born. She bore a male child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her child was caught up to God and His throne. Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.”* (1260 days = 42 months or 3½ years) The woman represents the totality of God’s people. All dead believers of the Old as well

as the New Covenant belong to it: The twelve stars represent the time of the fathers, the moon represents the time of the Old Covenant, the sun represents the time of the New Covenant. This woman is weak, but in her was a male child (something strong). The child is raptured to the throne, but the woman is sent to a place in the wilderness. That will certainly be a place on the earth, for when the dragon tries to attack the woman, the earth helps her. The woman must remain in this place for 42 months. As the woman is in resurrection, the dragon has no power over her.

After the male child is raptured to God and His throne in the heavens, there is a battle in heaven between the angel Michael and Satan, who is cast to the earth with his fallen angels (which are a third of the angels). In Revelation 9:1-3, we read what then happens on the earth: *“Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star (the devil, the dragon) fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.”* It will be terrible, when all these demons are freed to torture men. Even when men seek death in this time, death will flee from them (Rev. 9:6).

The fifth king from Revelation 17:10-11 will also ascend from this pit and enter the body of the seventh king who will be killed in this time, and having revived him he so becomes the eighth king. This is the beast that breaks the covenant in the middle of the seven years, causes the sacrifice and offering to cease, and makes the holy place desolate (Dan. 9:27). He will do that which A.E. also did, as described in Daniel 7 and 8.

Normally, the spirit and soul of all people who die go into Hades. But the fifth king went to a special place, to the bottomless pit, which we read in Revelation 17:8: *“The beast that you saw was, and is not (in John’s time), and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition.”* This “beast” is “trained” in the bottomless pit until it comes up again. It even has a position in the bottomless pit – he is called king of the demons, Apollyon, which means desolator: *“And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon”* (Rev. 9:11).

This desolator will make the holy place desolate: *“But in the middle of the week he (the eighth king) shall cause the sacrifice and offering to*

cease, and upon the holy place there shall be the abomination of desolation, until the final destruction which is determined is poured out on the desolator” (Dan. 9:27). The Lord refers to this verse in Matthew 24:15: “Therefore when you see the “abomination of desolation,” spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place’ (whoever reads, let him understand)”.

“... Until the final destruction which is determined is poured out on the desolator.” This devastation will have an end when the desolator is removed. In Revelation 19:11-21, we see how the Lamb with His army will come and the beast and the false prophet will be cast into the lake of fire. With that, the vision of the 70 weeks is brought to an end. The Lord has shown us very much – from His first coming right up to His second coming. Isn’t that wonderful! We need such a vision.

Chapter 10 – The revelation of the glorious Son of God

“In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message was true, but the appointed time was long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision. In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled. Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that is, the Tigris, I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz!” (v. 1-5) Here the Lord appears to Daniel – and that is very important. We can have much knowledge and many visions, but the most important is the Lord’s appearance and His personal speaking to us.

“His body was like beryl, His face like the appearance of lightning, His eyes like torches of fire, His arms and feet like burnished bronze in colour, and the sound of His words like the voice of a multitude. And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigour was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength” (v. 6-8). When we see the Lord as the living Christ, we are no longer proud. Mere knowledge makes us proud. When we have a meeting with the Lord, we humble ourselves before our God.

“Yet I heard the sound of His words; and while I heard the sound of His words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.

Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands. And he said to me, ‘O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you.’ While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling. Then he said to me, ‘Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come’ ” (v. 9-14).

When Daniel started to pray, God had already decided to answer him and to send the angel Gabriel, who touched him and raised him up again and told him of his battle against the prince of Persia. When it concerns the kingdom, many battles also take place in the heavenly realm.

Chapter 11 – The writings in the Book of Truth

“But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince” (Dan. 10:21). Here is the transition to chapter 11. All these events that were to take place up till the time of the Lord’s first coming are written in detail in the Book of Truth (chapter 11) (see supplement: “The Writings in the Book of Truth”). After the Lord’s ascension, the second part of the scroll is then opened and what shall happen further is shown. In Revelation 5, we read what John saw: “And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the scroll and to lose its seals?’ ” (v. 1-2).

“But one of the elders said to me, ‘Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to lose its seven seals.’ ... Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne” (Rev. 5:5, 7).

In Daniel 11 we see many details of history. In verses 21-32, we see a description of A.E.; verses 32-35 describe the successful Maccabean revolt. And after that, from verses 36 to 39, we see King Herod. Then, in verses 40 to 43, there is again a conflict between the king of the South (Cleopatra) and the king of the North (Octavian). It is wonderful to see

that history ends here, at the point in time when the Messiah came to the earth for the first time. Everything had to happen as it was prophesied in the Book of Truth. God arranged everything wonderfully. Even the census through Augustus had to take place.

Daniel chapter 12 – The conclusion

Before the millennial kingdom comes, there will be times of affliction over and over again. Be it wars or earthquakes. Where in this world is there peace? The people of Israel have experienced so many difficulties – so much persecution. The Christians have also experienced much affliction. The worst time of persecution will be the coming three and a half years of the Great Tribulation.

In chapter 12, we also see the reward of the faithful believers who are written in the Book of Life. That is a promise of the Lord. If we are faithful, we will be saved from the hour of temptation. *“Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial ...”* (Rev. 3:10). We will attain to the best resurrection from the dead. The living ones at that time will be the wise and understanding that shine like the brightness of the firmament (Dan. 12:3). And those who have turned many to righteousness will shine like the stars forever and ever. Then the angel said: The words of the visions will be kept closed up and sealed because before that, many things will still happen. Many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall increase.

The length of this end time is also determined: time, times and half a time. The 1290 days till 1335 days refer to the days of A.E.; from the day that all sacrifices were stopped and the abominable image was set up to the time of purification (1290 days) and of his death (1335 days).