

Daniel's Missing Week

by G. Campbell Morgan

The sermon explores the seven-year interval between Christ's coming for His people and His millennial reign, and the events that will take place during this time.

Scripture: Isaiah 42:1-4, Daniel 9:24-27, Matthew 12:18-21, Luke 4:18-19, Revelation 1:3-4

Topics: "Christ's Return", "Prophecy"

Description

G. Campbell Morgan discusses the prophetic significance of the seven-year interval between Christ's return for His people and His millennial reign, emphasizing that this period is crucial for understanding God's plan. He explains that while Christ's first coming was marked by grace and mercy, His second coming will involve judgment and the fulfillment of prophecy against His enemies. Morgan highlights the importance of recognizing the 'missing week' in Daniel's prophecy, which signifies a future time when God's purposes will be fully realized. He encourages believers to study the book of Revelation to grasp the unfolding of these events and the ultimate victory of Christ. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the dual aspects of Christ's mission: grace now and judgment to come.

Transcript

BETWEEN the coming of Christ for His people and His millennial reign there will be a short interval of seven years, full of interest because of the events transpiring upon the earth and in the heavens. On our Chart the interval as depicted does not show the correct proportion of time. The part with which we have been dealing is, as far as dates serve, drawn to scale ; but this seven years' interval, if proportionately marked, would be hardly visible. The coming of Christ for His people concludes a dispensation, but it does not end His activities upon the earth. The period of selection and preparation closes, and the Day of Judgment and national dealing is ushered in.

In Matt. xii. from verse 18, we have a quotation of a prophecy concerning the Messiah:

"Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen; My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased: I will put My Spirit upon Him, And He shall declare judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry aloud; Neither shall any one hear His voice in the streets"

I make a pause there of set purpose. What immediately follows is often quoted as if closely connected with the portion we have read; but it has nothing to do with the dispensation in which we live. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench," is interpreted as if it referred to Christ's

dealings now with men and women whose aspirations after Him are weak but will not be despised. I believe that to be an incorrect interpretation of the words, and ask you to notice particularly what is their real intention. There should be no stop save a comma at the word quench. Mark the construction,

"A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory."

Then, there is to be a day when He will do such things; and in that verse you have another aspect of the work of Jesus Christ revealed. In the present day He does not strive nor cause His voice to be heard in the streets: neither will He break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, till there is an emphasis on that word which we must regard if we are to understand the passage—"till He send forth judgment unto victory."

There is another dispensation of Christ's work in which He will do these very things. Some will say, "Surely there is no time coming when Christ will break and quench in such manner." No; not in the sense in which we have regarded the reed and the flax. We have misunderstood the words, in supposing that they apply to sinners weakly feeling after Him. The bruised reed refers to His enemies; the smoking flax to His opponents. In Isa. xlii. 1-4, you will find the original of the quotation: and the whole context there, as in Matthew, proves that "bruised reed" and "smoking flax" represent Christ's enemies, with magnificent satire in this description of them. What is a reed? Weakness. What is a bruised reed? Weakness weakened. What is flax! That which is easily destroyed. What is smoking flax? That which has within itself the elements of its own destruction. In His day of grace and mercy God will not break a bruised reed; it is bruised, and will be broken in due time. Neither will He, at this time, quench that which is already smouldering unto consuming. The great and beautiful truth which we have so often endeavored to enforce by those words abides; but we must be true to Scripture as it stands, and not attempt to enforce truth by misapplication thereof. In the time yet to come, beyond this day of grace and mercy, Christ will break and quench His enemies; and He will sweep before the majesty of His coming, as chaff of the threshing floor, the evil things which so affright us by their tremendous hold upon our age. In that day, yet to come, He will send forth judgment unto victory.

The same truth is taught in Luke iv. 18,19. At the beginning of His ministry, in the Synagogue at Nazareth, our Lord read from the book of the prophet Isaiah words which revealed the scope and character of the dispensation that His first advent inaugurated:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,

Because He anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor:

He hath sent Me to proclaim release to the captives

And recovering of sight to the blind,

To set at liberty them that are bruised,

To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

Turn to the place from which the quotation comes, Isaiah lxi. 1, 2, and you find that the words, "And the day of vengeance of our God," were omitted from Christ's reading as recorded in Luke. Our translators have confined their punctuation to a comma at the end of the words, "the acceptable year of the Lord,"

and of course there was no stop corresponding to ours in the roll from which Jesus read; but at the point indicated, He ceased reading and closed the book. In publicly reading the words of a Hebrew prophet who hundreds of years before had foretold the coming of Christ, no one else would have ended there, for Messiah's work includes proclamation of God's day of vengeance. Christ's immediate purpose, however, was to indicate the first aspect of His mission, "the acceptable year of the Lord," as then beginning in Himself.

With equal certainty shall the Messiah once more take up that old-time prophecy, and fulfill it to the letter as regards "the day of vengeance of our God." The scriptures with which we have dealt reveal two aspects of Christ's work. "He shall not strive nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets"-the story of His work to-day: "Till He send forth judgment unto victory"-the story of His work to-morrow. "The acceptable year of the Lord"- His work to-day; "The day of vengeance of our God"-His work to-morrow-beyond His coming to gather out His Church.

In popular conception the Day of Judgment is a period of twenty-four hours, in which men are gathered together to hear sentence pronounced upon them; but it is really as much a dispensation as is this day of grace. There is no reason to regard the one "day" as limited to the ordinary acceptance of the term any more than the other; indeed, such an interpretation robs the phrase of its majesty and beauty. What, think you, does the world wait for today? God's day of judgment. What do the oppressed masses need most? God's day of judgment. What is the groaning, sorrowing population of our earth asking for to-day? God's day of judgment. We shall deal more fully with the subject when we speak of the golden age in which the King Himself shall rule. This is the day of grace, and, at its close, the day of judgment will dawn, and will be characterized by the direct, positive government of the King Himself; but prior to His appearing with his people to enter upon that day, there will be the interval of which we must now more particularly speak.

Some of us still keep the book of Daniel in our Bibles, esteeming it as equal in Divine authority and profitable teaching with every other Scripture. Turn to chapter ix. The first two verses are introductory:

"In the 5th year of Dariue the son of Ahasuerna, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; in the first year of his reign, Daniel understood by the books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, for the accomplishing of the desolation of Jerusalem, even seventy years."

Verses 8 to 19 record Daniel's prayer of contrition and penitence concerning the sin of his people. In verses 20 to 23 we have an account of the appearance of the angel Gabriel to Daniel, bringing words from God regarding the future. Verse 24 contains a general statement:

"Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy."

The Divine programme thus given to Daniel, as a representative of the Jewish nation, has a very obvious bearing upon our subject. We are familiar with the prophetic "week" as a period of seven years; therefore 490 years was the time assigned for the accomplishment of the prophecy. To say nothing of the interval between the delivery of this message and the crucifixion of our Lord, 1897 years have passed, and yet that programme is evidently not completed. But I ask you to consider a very remarkable set of figures in connection with this prophecy:

Verse 25.- "Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the anointed One, the Prince, shall be seven weeks: and three-score and two weeks."

Now, what really happened? Exactly forty nine years elapsed between the command to rebuild and the completion of the work by Nehemiah. There we have the seven 64weeks." From the time when Nehemiah completed his commission to the death of Christ was exactly 434 years, or sixty-two weeks. Thus we have, in fulfillment of that prophecy, from the command for rebuilding Jerusalem to the Cross, exactly 483 years, as history testifies. What is left, as compared with verse 241 One week: that is to say, I have the account of sixty-nine "weeks" (the 483 years just mentioned), but the seventieth week is missing. Where is it?

My purpose is to show that the missing week comes at the end of the present age, an age which is an unmeasured interpolation upon God's times and seasons. As I have said before, prophetic truth has been much discredited by presumptuous attempts to fix a date for our Lord's return. Both Christ Himself (Acts i. 7) and His servant Paul (1 Thess. v. 1) have declared that it is not for us to know measurements which, in the wisdom of God, are not revealed. God will, in His renewed dealings with His earthly people, resume the "times and seasons" which were broken in upon when man rejected Christ.

Reverting to Dan. ix., let us look at verse 26.

"After the three-score and two weeks"-see verse 25

-"shall the anointed One be cut off: "

The Authorized Version adds "and not for Himself," a mistranslation which is corrected in the Revised, all Hebrew scholars agreeing that it should read, "and shall have nothing": that is, He shall not then possess the kingdom or be the acknowledged King, but shall be cast out. At that point in the verse comes a colon, and then we read,

"And the people of the Prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and his end shall be with a flood, and even unto the end shall be war; desolations are determined. And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week."

From that colon to the first semicolon are words prophetic of the destruction of Jerusalem soon after the death of Messiah, not by the Prince, but by the people of the Prince. Then the prophecy passes on to events at the close of this age, when the Prince himself shall be manifested. The semicolon of Daniel is the comma which follows Isaiah's "acceptable year of the Lord." Here is the division between the dispensations; and at the close of the present age, when Jesus takes His Church to be with Himself, then times and seasons" shall be resumed, Daniel's week (delayed, in the eternal counsels of God) shall run its course upon the earth, God shall accomplish His ancient purposes, and the prophecies spoken to His people in other dispensations shall be fulfilled to the letter. Signs of the times show that our unmeasured age is nearing its completion by the coming of the Master; but He teaches us to name no date.

Many among the people of God shrink from any reference to the book of Revelation; but therein we shall find Daniel's interval between the coming of Christ and the reign of Christ viewed from a, new standpoint. When this neglected book is approached, the purpose seems too often to be that men may explain it away by reading into it metaphor, figure, and allegory;

Rev. 1 3: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things which are written therein."

The only book in the Bible that opens with distinct blessing pronounced upon those who read its pages ; and yet what part of the canon of Scripture is so neglected? Shall we not be among those who diligently, prayerfully, and humbly search what God would teach us in that last book of His Word? There is a key which must be used before we can understand what seems to be a labyrinth.

Rev. i 19: "Write therefore the things which thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter"-

the commission directly given to John, by Jesus Christ.

How shall the things mentioned be divided? "The things which thou sawest" are the visions of Jesus (chapter i.) ; and the things which are " relate to visions of the churches (ii., iii.). Those letters of John were written to churches actually existing at the time, and the first application is to such communities; but the epistles reveal a sevenfold condition of Church life which is repeated with varying emphasis at one time or another in every successive age of the Church until to-day. They reveal progress, good or bad, in Church life and movement. We may find both Laodicean and Philadelphian churches now. "The things which are" exist in the present dispensation; but from chapter iv. to the end of the book, we have "the things which shall come to pass hereafter." It is to me, personally, a matter of surprise that the revisers have retained the word hereafter in i. 19, because the Greek words are "meta tauta." The very first words of chapter iv. are "after these things," a phrase which excites little critical attention until it is compared with the Greek of i. 19. In both instances the words are meta tauta," meaning "after these things "; and, as I have already intimated, the last section of the book extends from the beginning of chapter iv., where the door is opened in heaven, "after these things."

What, then, are "these things?" The dispensation of the Church upon earth, in its varied aspects. "After these things I saw, and behold a door opened in Heaven." From the beginning of iv. to the end of xix. a remarkable series of events follows on the earth. The Church of Jesus Christ is then in the heavens. She is seen ever and anon in some place of heavenly glory; while upon the earth vials are being poured, trumpets are sounding.

Chapter xix. verses 11-15, give an account of the end of the interval with which this chapter deals:

"And I saw the haven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He that sat thereon, called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadem; and He hath a name written, which no one knoweth but He Himself. And He is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood: and His name is called the Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure. And out of His mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron; and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God."

He came to Bethlehem's manger to preach "the acceptable year of the Lord" ; He will come with the armies of heaven, to proclaim the day of vengeance of our God." He came long years ago, a lonely Man, our brother man; He did not cry nor lift up His voice in the streets; He will come again to break the bruised reed of iniquity, to quench the smoking flax of opposition. Another dispensation in the great plan of our King and Master will open when He comes to the earth with His gathered people.

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