Daniel - Commentaries by John Nelson Darby

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Prophetic 4, Are There Two Half-Weeks in the Apocalypse?

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Dear Mr. Editor,

It has long been assumed that two half-weeks are spoken of in the Apocalypse. In this I have for years myself acquiesced, and I think rested on the contrast of the beast's overcoming the saints, and the witnesses destroying their enemies, as confirming this assumption. I hardly know how I was led some time back to call it in question; but I have been: and I should be glad to present the point as a question, in case you or your readers were given of God to throw any light upon it. Though strongly calling in question that two half-weeks are spoken of, my mind is still quite open to conviction; and I have nothing whatever to sustain in it, and desire only to know what the Spirit of God has really meant to teach us in the word as to it. I hardly know whether such a question enters into the object of the " Bible Treasury "; but it may elicit some light from others as to the matter. I shall give a kind of exposition of the subject from Scripture, considered from the point of view I have spoken of.

Seventy weeks are determined on Daniel's people and his holy city, to complete the blessing and close their eventful history-the display of divine government in the earth. After seven and sixty-two weeks Messiah is cut off and has nothing. There are seven and sixty-two till Messiah the Prince. His cutting off is indefinite; only it is after the sixty-two weeks. Then the prince that comes establishes a covenant with the many (that is, the mass of the people). Messiah's relationship, on the contrary, had been with the residue, though presented to all the people. Then, in the dividing of the week, he causes the sacrifice and oblation to cease; and then, because of the protection of abominations (idols), there is a desolator. I give you Daniel as I understand it.

No persecutions are here spoken of in the first half-week, nor indeed is any first half-week spoken of. The prince confirms the covenant one week, and the half-weeks are marked by his change of conduct in the middle of the week. In Dan. 7 we have, without any note of period, the general characteristic of the beast-that he wears out the heavenly saints, and in general makes war with the saints till the Ancient of days comes. But the times and laws (not the saints) are delivered into his hand for half a week, i.e., for a time, times, and half a time. In Matt. 24 there is general testimony, such as there was in Christ's time-only it reaches the Gentiles-till the last half-week, which begins the abomination of desolations. This exclusive allusion to the last half-week in Matt. 24 had often struck me. In Rev. 13 the beast is given power to act forty and two months. He blasphemes God and them that dwell in heaven; and he makes war with the saints (not " those that dwell in heaven, compare chapter 12: 12), and overcomes them. One would surely, at first sight, suppose that power to act forty-two months hardly meant that he does so eighty-four.

Thus far, certainly, the last half-week seems to be noted. The second beast acts in presence of the first, who is the beast with the deadly wound healed. Compare Rev. 17:8. In this last chapter no date or period is given; it is the description of the beast; but his existence is stated, and it is as ascending out of the bottomless pit (he who kills the witnesses in chapter 11) when all worship him save the elect. The Gentiles (chap. 11:2) tread the city under foot forty and two months-one would suppose therefore no longer. It is true the temple and the altar are spared; but I surely think that this applies to the destruction of true condition of worship and true worshippers, not locality, though in Jewish connection.

But if this be true of verse 2, verse 3 applies to the period spoken of in verse 2. This would put the third woe (Rev. 10:7, when he sounds, as he is just about to do, I apprehend is the sense), at the close. The casting down of Satan, the flight of the woman, and the changing of times and laws, would coincide as to epoch with the ascent of the beast out of the bottomless pit. I have thus given a kind of statement of the whole matter, sufficient to present the question, " Are there two half-weeks spoken of in the Apocalypse? " I do not reason on it, nor reply to objections which might suggest themselves. If my question draws out any remarks, that will be the time to inquire into their justice.

A collateral subject suggests itself, on which I would say a few words. There are heavenly saints spoken of in Dan. 7 Does this bring the church into the scene? It implies, I think, nothing as to the church; rather, I think, the contrary-makes its distinctive place more clear, though the church be heavenly. We have, in Daniel, the saints of heavenlies, as belonging to, and connected with, these earthly questions, where there is not the smallest allusion to the church, where all is connected with the beasts and the true kingdom over the earth. Abraham was a heavenly saint, though he saw Christ's day and was glad. He looked forward with joy to this, but was himself obliged to take it in another way. Such is the case supposed in the sermon on the mount. " The meek shall inherit the earth "; but the reward of the persecuted will be great in heaven. So in the Psalms, especially book 1 (Psa. 1-41), where even Christ is shown the path of life (Psa. 16), so as to be in God's presence, and the saint (as Christ Himself) is satisfied (Psa. 17), waking up after Jehovah's likeness. Yet the remnant are promised earthly blessings very plainly and clearly. See Psa. 1; 37, whence the expression in Matt. 5 is drawn; so Psa. 34, and others, as Psa. 9; 10, and indeed also Psa. 8, show.

The passages, then, in Daniel, as others, point out clearly a residue, who, connected with earthly things, and passing through them, but purified by trials out of them, and led to look up on high, have finally their portion there where they have been taught to look. But, in general, I apprehend their desire after heavenly things is more connected with weariness of heart in conflict while under the law-for they are under the law-though no doubt they do in spirit thereby dwell in heaven, for the enjoyment of which the new nature renders them capable.

As to the church, remark that in Eph. 1 it is brought out quite apart from the full blessing of individuals, developed with such inexpressible beauty; first, in their calling; then, in the knowledge given them of the purpose of God to gather together all in one, in Christ, and in the inheritance obtained in Him. After that the apostle prays that they may understand these two points of God's calling and inheritance in the saints. But then he adds another demand, brought in addition, that they might know the exceeding greatness of His power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead; and then first brings in the church as His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all; thus giving

the church, which He had not before spoken of, a peculiar place in union with Christ, as raised from the dead (compare Col. 1:18), and sitting at the right hand of God. God gave Him, the raised Jesus, to be Head-over all things-to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who filleth all in all. It has no existence but united to Him, and has its existence consequent on His exaltation. Hence it is said we are "one body in Christ" (Rom. 12:5), and still stronger, " so also is Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12).

And here note that in Eph. 1 Christ is considered as the exalted Man. The chapter speaks of His (God's) mighty power which He wrought in Christ. Christ is looked at as man, and subjected to death, and raised again by another, even God; that is, it is a Christ really living in time. When the forming of the body on earth by the Holy Ghost is spoken of, the word leads us to the same truth: " By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body," 1 Cor. 12:13. There is (Eph. 4) "one body and one Spirit... one Lord, one faith, one baptism." I go on to "one baptism," because it shows that the apostle is speaking of those who are brought in by the known death and resurrection of Christ. The testimony of 1 Corinthians is beyond controversy; and while the Ephesians shows individual privilege, in the highest way, as relationship, position, and character, making the individual the proper object of every ministration of the church, the more the Scriptures are searched into, the more the church-the assembly-will be seen to have a distinct and peculiar position, and to be a special and distinctive body. Heb. 12 shows it very clearly. Thus, in the midst of the general assembly of heaven," to an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly, and to the church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven." It is really forgotten that, unless the question of authorship be raised on the last mentioned passage, in the apostolic writings none ever speaks of" the church" but Paul.

I resume the points as to the half-weeks. Christ's connection with the first half-week is left entirely vague. Seventy weeks are determined on the city and the sanctuary to bring in blessing.

Then there are seven and sixty-two weeks till Messiah the Prince. A week thus remains. But after the sixty-two weeks Messiah is cut off and has nothing-after their fulfillment, but His time passes for nothing; it drops through, as He is rejected. We can say that in His death He laid the foundation of the new covenant, and that, in some sort, during His life, He may be said to have been dealing with the remnant in establishing a covenant associating them on certain principles with Himself. I apprehend what is called " confirming a [not the] covenant " means forming it as on established principles of association. This the prince does with the mass or the many. This prince (not the Messiah) is alone said to do it, and in the dividing of the week, which is referred to in connection with him only, he subverts the whole order of Jewish worship, breaks their apparent link with God, making sacrifice and offering cease. In Dan. 9 we have only the earthly historical view of the matter.

But, at this epoch, Satan is cast down from heaven, the blasphemous beast comes up out of the bottomless pit-he whose deadly wound was healed. Thus, incontrovertibly, the last half-week is the great subject of testimony: it alone is referred to by the Lord; nor indeed is the first referred to as a half week when its existence is proved; Dan. 9:27. Of course, as the prince changes his conduct in the dividing of the week, there must have been a half-week before; but the " confirming " is referred to the week in general. Satan's (to him, probably, unlooked for) rejection from heaven changes the whole scene. He, as to the mass, sets aside the public outward testimony to God. This would account for the witnesses being raised up, as witnesses before the God of the earth; because (Satan being become the Satan of the earth then) God's witness must be there where Satan's power is and refer to it, just as the church's ought to the heavenly now. The particular protection of the witnesses accounts for their subsisting in spite of it. They were as Moses and Elias in reference to the power of evil.

In reply to the questions of your correspondent, " J.M., etc.", in the number for February, I remark: First, if the seven vials are the details of what passes under the seventh trumpet, the question is decided. But where is the proof of this? I have always held chapter is as a distinct vision (" I saw another great sign in heaven "), chapters 12-14 to be continuous, or rather to belong to one subject, giving the origin and different aspects of the same series of events up to the final judgment executed at the coming of the Son of man, and then chapter 15 to give another special course of judicial events up to the destruction of Babylon, before the coming of the Lord, which is only brought in subsequently in chapter 19. This part of the difficulty, therefore, falls to the ground, for chapters 15-18 precede the last event of chapter 14. The question whether chapters 15-18 are included in the last trumpet remains untouched, but at any rate to be proved, and not, as yet, a proof of anything.

Next, it is assumed that chapter II: 7, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit means " who then ascends out of the bottomless pit "; but of this there is no proof. It is a characteristic, and not a date. Is it not rather to be believed that he takes this character when Satan is cast down from heaven, and has great rage, and that the dragon then gives him his throne and great authority?

Further, your correspondent assumes too much when he says on chapter 12: to, that heavenly celebration long precedes earthly accomplishment, if he would use it as proving that the announcement that the worldly kingdom is come, may precede by three years and a half its coming. The cause of the celebration in chapter 12: 1 o, which does anticipate, I do not doubt, ulterior results, is given, and is a present thing, and it is not said " the kingdom of the world," etc. as in chapter 11: 15-a very notable difference. The cause is that after open war, Satan or the dragon is cast down, and though there is an application to the state of certain suffering saints, the heavens only and their inhabitants are called on to rejoice. To the earth and its inhabitants woe is announced from the power of Satan. Surely this is a different thing from Christ's kingdom of this world is come; though they might well say, " Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ; for the accuser is cast down." For in truth the whole state of things was changed, and the heavenly saints delivered, and power established in heaven, in contrast with the meeting accusations.

There remains only one difficulty, that three days and a half occur before God interposes in deliverance. The same difficulty presented itself to me long ago, on the other scheme. For if the seventh trumpet be the beginning of the last half-week, as it is alleged to be by the connection of chapter 12: 10 with chapter 6: 15, then we have at least three days and a half and something more from chapter 11: 14 (cometh quickly) intercalated between the end of the first half week and the beginning of the second. I hardly think the fact that a short interval elapsed between the last act of the beast and the public execution of judgment upon him can make a substantial difficulty. It may be the time of the gathering of the armies when Christ is coming as a thief, or the reaping of the earth before the vintage, neither of which could be called the practicing of the beast. The difficulty seems to me to be less than intercalating something more than three days and a half between the half-weeks. If the three days and a half be put into the last half-week, which would not be, in itself, I apprehend, a difficulty, the whole connection of chapter 11 with chapter 12 and the explanation of chapter 12:10 and following verses falls to the ground. Yet that we have, certainly, some definite half-week in chapter 12 seems clear. I think the subject requires a fuller investigation. I can only here answer the difficulties presented by " J.M.", which do not seem to me to result, as yet, in the rejection of the thought that there is only one half-week spoken of in the Apocalypse. The removal of an objection is not a proof necessarily of the thing objected to. For that I still wait with my mind

entirely free.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

J.N.D.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Prophetic 2, Daniel 9:20-27, Studies on

LECTURE 6

CHAPTER 9: 20-27

These verses relate the answer to the confession and prayer of Daniel. The faithfulness of God is in full action, exactly as promised in Leviticus, Deuteronomy, and in the answer to the prayer of Solomon. He had promised that if they were led into captivity, and should, in the midst of their enemies, turn to Him with all their heart (He never said, if they kept the law to the letter, for this would not have been possible to them) He would bring them back.

Verse 21. " Whiles 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." He repeats twice, " whiles I was speaking "; he had not finished before Gabriel appeared and arrested it by the delivery of the prophecy following.

It is not, we may say in passing, always so. On another occasion, Daniel spent three weeks in fasting and prayer, for God was trying his faith. The angel was to accomplish the purpose of God before communicating it; the Lord permitted that the prince of Persia should hinder its accomplishment for three weeks. It was a question of deciding something at the court of Persia, and those there, who were opposed to an edict for favoring the Jews, could put obstacles to its promulgation. When the angel of God had prevailed in these counsels, he came and said so. This is very instructive to us, for God always governs the world. Whilst the throne of God was at Jerusalem, He governed the world immediately (not only Israel but the world, and this according to the good or bad conduct of Israel); whilst after that, although He did not cease to govern everywhere, already (even in this book-Israel being in captivity) He is seen acting by the secret springs of His providence, and not by the immediate action of the revealed rule of His law, as in the midst of His people.

Although the child of God is able to confide entirely in Him, for " the very hairs of our head are numbered," it is happy to see the government of God manifested openly in the world. It will be the case in the millennium; the government will be immediate and direct, so that the justice of God will be seen by men, whilst now, all goes on secretly. His ways are often a labyrinth to us now, for our normal position, as being saints, is quite different. God is perfecting us for heaven, and has no object in manifesting in us His righteousness upon earth. The heavenly thing is much better and more precious. He makes us pass through all kinds of earthly trial with this object in view. A Christian is often astonished at what he suffers individually for righteousness' sake-it is a general case. But for the Jews God will appear, according to His promise, the moment they turn with humility and confession to Him. Thus does He answer Daniel. We have already observed, that faith never forgets that Jerusalem is the city of God's holiness, and that His eyes are there continually. Even when the Israelites have failed, and when God is obliged to abandon them for the time, to faith it ceases not to be the holy city of God.

Verse 21. " About the time of the evening oblation." This expression makes us feel the Jewish atmosphere we are in, for of course there was no evening sacrifice at Babylon. Jerusalem was burnt, but faith remained. It was the time of the evening sacrifice-the Jewish scene fills his thoughts.

Verse 22. " And he informed me and talked with me and said, 0 Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding." Verses 23, 24. " 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 "-observe how the angel accredits the faith of Daniel, making him the representative both of Jerusalem and the people-" 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 holy of holies."

Many Christians find great difficulty in this entire passage, from their not seeing that whilst it has already had an accomplishment (as far as is needed for the establishment of its truth), on the other hand, it has not been fulfilled at all. If we do not see this, it is impossible to understand the events that are still future. All that was necessary on the part of God, in order that the events announced in the verse we have been reading should take place, has been accomplished, and even proposed to the Jewish people; but still nothing has taken place as to the actual accomplishment of them, the train of circumstances having been interrupted, and the church (the heavenly people) having been introduced in the interval, until the time decreed of God, when these events shall be taken up again with the Jewish people, when the due time comes, whether by the apostasy which exists in Christendom or by the ripe state of the Jewish people in a bad sense and in a good one.

Let us consider, for example, the new covenant. It will be established with Israel and Judah; Jer. 31. This is not yet accomplished. The Jews are dispersed towards the four winds of heaven. Now a covenant must be established by the blood of a victim; and so the blood of the new covenant has been shed, and therefore all that is necessary for the bringing in of this covenant with the Jews has been done on the part of God. But actually nothing as to this nation receiving it has taken place; for they rejected the Messiah both personally and under the preaching of the apostles. Meanwhile the counsels of God as to the church have occupied and do occupy the interval, this heavenly people having nothing in common, as to their position, with that which God did and will do for the Jews.

This point being ascertained, beloved friends, the verse becomes comparatively easy; indeed, we may say, that the special difficulty disappears, for we perceive that as to fact God has completed everything. He has sent the Messiah, He has presented Him to the people, the blood of the covenant has been shed, and propitiation made. But if it be asked, whether these blessings have been efficacious with regard to the Jews as a nation, it must be answered, that nothing has been done; and this is our present question. We must not here, then, consider a satisfaction apart from its application, but rather its efficacy as regards the Jewish nation; and thus we shall be led to consider whether the nation is in those circumstances which should precede the time when the application of this blood shall be made to them. " He [Christ] died

not for that nation only, but that he should gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad," John 11:51, 52. Now in Daniel we have to consider the application of this blood to the Jewish people, and in the explanation of all the prophecies, we must take this fact into consideration. It is clear that the death of the Messiah is, in a certain sense, a fulfillment of this prophecy, for His death is a propitiation made for sin. But what is here said of it, taking into account the object of the passage, is in nowise accomplished. Having prefaced with these remarks, let us examine what is the result of all this for the people.

" Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people." There is no reference here to us Christians; the verse refers to the people of Daniel, and to the holy city of Daniel. The seventy weeks are only applicable to them. There may be, in this portion, many events which will also affect us, the Antichrist for example, for both Jews and Gentiles have had to do with that wicked one and still more have they to do with the cutting off of the Messiah. But the aim of the prophecy is "thy people and thy holy city " (that is, the Jews and Jerusalem). Once put aside this people and city as objects of the thoughts of God here below, and there is no longer applicability in the prophecy; so that we must set aside Christianity for the moment, as not being the object here. And why? Because Christianity has, in its position before God, nothing to do with either Jew or Gentile. London has as much to do with Christianity as Jerusalem. Jerusalem is, to a Christian, no more holy than any other city. There may be deeply interesting associations connected with it; but it is in no sense whatever our " holy city." " Seventy weeks," then, " are determined upon thy [Daniel's] people."

Now for the details. Verse 25, " 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." In the first period, the space of seven weeks, Jerusalem was to be rebuilt, and that, in troublous times. This has been accomplished, as we find from Ezra and Nehemiah.

Verse 26. " And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself." We know that this has likewise been accomplished. As the Head of the Jewish people, He has been on earth, and been rejected. As to His inheritance, as to the holy city, particularly as Messiah, He has had nothing at all. He was cut off; He has had nothing as the Messiah except spittings and death. And as the Son of David, He has had absolutely nothing. He is now at the right hand of the Father, but in His title of King of the Jews, He has not yet been owned. He entered Jerusalem as king, riding upon an ass, and was rejected.

Verse 26. " And the people of the prince that shall come." This is some new person, not the Messiah; otherwise how could it be said of this person, " he shall come? " According to this prophecy, Messiah had already come, and had been cut off. Besides, it is not the people of Christ who is cut off, that " shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." This happened according to the saying of the chief priests and Pharisees; John 11:48. " The Romans will come and take away both our place and nation." Neither is it the prince himself who thus acts. It is the people of the future prince who do this- of the prince that shall come-the chief of the empire (Roman), of the last beast. The fourth monarchy, viz., the Roman, destroyed the city and the sanctuary, as it is the body of which he, as prince, will be the head:

Verse 26. " And the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined." Verse 27. " And he shall confirm the [" a," margin] covenant." If it had been said the covenant, one might suppose it of some covenant already existing, whereas there is no such thought in the expression. " He shall confirm covenant "-that is, establish it, not with many, but with " the " many, or the mass. As Christ had but a very small remnant, whilst the mass of the Jews rejected Him, the prince who shall come shall establish a covenant with the mass. A remnant will undoubtedly escape, but the covenant which this prince shall confirm will be with the mass of the people.

" And he shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week." This is the week which still remains, for Christ was cut off, it is said, after the sixty-nine weeks. After this period, we are told of " the people of the prince " (the Romans under Titus), who destroy the city, and then we have the prince himself confirming a covenant for one week, which is the last or seventieth week. We are to leave off counting from the time the Messiah was cut off, viz., at the end of the sixty-nine weeks. After this period, time, so to speak, does not go on: God does not take count of it; it is indefinite. But the seventieth week still remains to be fulfilled. [See footnote page 32.]

" And in the midst of the week, he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease " (v. 27). It is evident that at this time the Jews are re-established with their sacrifices and oblations. The " prince that shall come " will establish an alliance with the Jews during one week. But at the expiration of the half; he will completely change his conduct, and will cause their sacrifices to cease. He thinks, as before explained, to change the times (Jewish festal days) and the laws; they are delivered into his hands, and he effaces them. This is the history as far as facts go.

We, as believers, comprehend that the Lord Jesus made the (Jewish) sacrifice cease to those who believed on Him, just as to them, that is, to faith, John the baptist was Elias, according to those words, " If ye can receive it, this is Elias which was to come." In like manner to faith, Christ was the Messiah, the Son of man, to His disciples looked at as believing Jews. Nevertheless, He adds, " ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, before the Son of man shall come." But as to the Jewish people itself, the Spirit omits entirely all that we Christians enjoy, because in fact they rejected Jesus.

If interpreters insist that Jesus Himself labored during the first half of the seventieth week, and that account is taken of it (the half week), for those who believed, but that as to the nation this half week has been lost, on account of their unbelief; and that they will receive the Antichrist, who will present himself in a like manner, I am far from objecting. He certainly did establish divine relationships with the little remnant of His disciples, whether one hundred and twenty, or five hundred, and in consequence, as to their labors, He speaks but of the last half of the seventieth or last week. At the beginning of this last half their labors are interrupted; the other half is lost in the general history of their previous labors. For the Jews the whole week is yet to come, because they have not received Christ at all. All that can be said as concerning them is, that the Messiah has been cut off and has had nothing. For (whatever computation we may incline to, as to the disciples), it is said, there shall be sixty and two weeks (besides the previous seven), unto Messiah the prince, and after sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off. The Holy Spirit leaves the matter in the shade, because He counts with reference to the nation, for whom the last week has been null and void, and it is the false prince (Antichrist), in whom the thread of the narrative is resumed, as if it were at the end of the sixty-ninth week; although, as we know, the church, the heavenly people, have meanwhile been introduced and already occupied a period, considered as to earth, of more than eighteen hundred years. Thus a place is left for faith, whilst as to the history, it is one of unbelief. (Compare Isa. 61 I-3, Luke 4:19.) Christ the Prince has never yet been Prince, nevertheless He was so to faith in His disciples. A question for the consideration of those who examine this most interesting detail of prophecy, is, whether the Lord presented Himself officially to the Jews as Prince or King, before His entry into Jerusalem, according to Zech. 9:9. Upon that, we know, He was cut off.

The seventieth week is, then, still to have its accomplishment under Antichrist. The Jews at first, with fair appearances before them, acknowledge him as their chief; as Jesus Christ said, John 5:43, " If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." Thus Antichrist offers himself, and the Jews receive him. For the first half of the week all goes on well, but then he turns in anger against them, destroys their system, and exalts himself against God.

That which Jesus did on the part of God, Antichrist counterfeits, according to the word just quoted: " I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come," etc. Therefore I allow, in a certain sense, that to faith this cessation of sacrifice (alluded to previously, " he shall cause the sacrifice to cease ") has taken place. For the little remnant did own Christ to be there; but for the entire nation there has been as yet no accomplishment of any part of the week.

Scripture is not silent concerning this covenant of the Jews with Antichrist, and their consequent judgment., In Isa. 28:14, we read, " Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. •.." " Your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it " (v. 18). These are the threats, as to the moral position in which they shall be found in that day.

It is the last half of the week which occupies the mind of the Spirit of God as to these terrible events at the end. Thus the little horn is to continue " a time, times, and half a time " (viz., three years and a half, or the half of a week). Power is given to him for this time. So in Rev. 13:5, " There was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies, and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months."

I do not cite here the similar period of the two witnesses, because I believe that their time of prophesying is during the first half week. It is a time of testimony in order that the remnant may withdraw themselves from the influence of Antichrist; and during that time God preserves those who bear testimony, as well as the sanctuary and the altar, and those who worship there.

I have said that the sacrifice and oblation would be restored. This is noticed in prophecy, although at the same time their re-establishment will be utterly rejected by God. It is written in Isa. 66, " The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made "-an intimation of the restoration of the temple, but then-" to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word " (viz., the remnant).

The sacrifices are offered but rejected: read Isa. 66:3-6. Again, Dan. 1 I: 31, " And [they] shall take away the daily sacrifice," etc. Again, in Dan. 12, " And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days." This is thirty days over. It will take thirty days more for purification, and yet forty-five more for complete peace; verse 12, " Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." This latter half week is still referred to, in which, the daily sacrifice being taken away, Antichrist will be there, and the abomination of desolation set up in the holy place. (Compare chap. 8: II.)

In Matt. 24 we find this same circumstance exactly. The Lord, having alluded to wars and rumors of wars, becomes more precise. He had spoken until verse 14 in quite a general way, and, like Daniel, declared that the city and temple should be destroyed, and also the people. But as He goes on to speak of the labors of His disciples, He enters more fully into the general history. " Many shall be offended," etc.; and He counsels His disciples as to their conduct, as witnesses of the truth, and tells them that before the end came " this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness."

All this was to happen, not at a given time during the seventy weeks, but, generally speaking, before the end, but of course after the discourse and departure (death) of Jesus. Afterward He says, " When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand) " (v. 15). Here is the abomination of desolation placed at Jerusalem, the testimony is over, and the disciples have only to flee: " then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains." Jerusalem is then delivered over to the judgment which awaits it.

There is yet another important and interesting circumstance, as to this last half week. We find it in Rev. 12 We shall see that this date of the abomination fits in exactly with the time of Satan being driven out of heaven. The woman flees into the wilderness (v. 6), where she is fed one thousand two hundred and sixty days. Verse 7. " There was war in heaven, Michael and his angels fought against the dragon "; read to the end of verse 12, " knowing that he [Satan] hath but a short time." Now it is exactly during this half week that the abomination of desolation is set up in the holy place. This is given more in detail in chapter 11.

Further, " 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." That is, by means (or on account) of the abominable wings, or literally, " on account of the wing of abominations." The word " abomination " is always in the Old Testament simply " an idol." For example: the abomination of the Moabites was the idol of the Moabites. Solomon put the abomination of the Ammonites upon the mount of Olives, that is, the idol. The word " wing " always gives the idea of " protection." " Under his wings shalt thou trust," Psa. 91:4.

" On account of the wing of abominations," means as it appears to me, on account of the protection of idols. They take refuge in idolatry for a protection; and this is the finishing stroke of their wickedness, and the consequence is, the desolation which descends upon the desolated one, until the end of these seventy weeks-a desolation always increasing, for it is not alone the destruction of the city, but also Antichrist who deceives the people, who makes a covenant with them, and, as it were, holds them in his grip. God is set aside and denied; Antichrist even makes himself God; the sanctuary, if not destroyed, is at least profaned, and degraded in every way. The abomination is put into the holy place, and thus idolatry is introduced. At last Antichrist sits there as God, he allows or confesses nothing at all but himself, until God is no longer able to endure him, or those who are subject to him.

There is no account of this in our present chapter. But there is in Dan. 7; and in the New Testament the Lord thus speaks of the Jewish generation, " When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places," etc. (Matt. 12:43). Consult the whole passage. They enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. " Even so shall it be also with this wicked generation." This is the history of the Jews. I do not say there may not be other applications of the passage. What was this wicked spirit? It was idolatry. After the Babylonish captivity there had been no more idol worship; the unclean spirit had gone out, and the house was empty, though there was

every kind of profession. Then the spirit of idolatry which found no rest returns to the house at the end. It will be the case with the Jews, and then there will be an open rebellion against God; they will be joined with Antichrist, who makes war upon their Messiah. And it will be then on account of the protection of these abominations, that " the desolation shall be poured out upon the desolate one." See Isa. 54:1; Lam. 1:13 and 3:11.

Compare Dan. 10, 11 and 12. In the last chapter we have the complete deliverance, and he adds in this last, thirty days, and forty-five days, to the half week. Then all will be happy and blessed. There will be a certain time necessary after the destruction of Antichrist to re-establish everything in order. The whole of this chapter is in affinity with the end of Dan. 7, and with Rev. 13 and 17. We shall have to consider it again in connection with chapter 11.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Prophetic 2, Daniel 9:1-19, Studies on

LECTURE 5

CHAPTER 9: 1-19

In chapter 7 we traced the history of the four beasts in general, specially of the little horn who spoke great things, who blasphemed against God, who was the enemy of the saints, who represented the beast-that is, who acted as he chose, according to the power of this beast; and in chapter 8 we have the history of the horn who will be raised up from one of the four Greek monarchies, and who at the end will lift himself up against the Lord of lords, and will be destroyed without hand. The prophet now directs his thoughts and heart towards a subject, different from that in the midst of which he stood, namely, to the desolations of Jerusalem. Such is the theme of this chapter. And how was he led into this train of thought? Simply because those words were on his heart; How long, O Lord! It is a mark of faith thus to cry, when judgments are weighing heavily upon the people of God: for faith views the people according to the promises which God has made to them. A person who has laid hold of the mind of God, whose faith is in exercise, and whose heart responds, however imperfectly, to the heart of God, must desire that they should enjoy their proper blessings-the blessed consequences of their relationship with God, as it is said, " Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation," Isa. 33:20.

Thus when affliction weighs heavily upon the people of God, and they are not enjoying all the privileges which faith realizes as belonging to them, faith says, " How long, O Lord! " On the one hand, such a one cannot rest satisfied with the misfortunes under which the people of God are laboring; and upon the other, he knows that it is impossible for God to abandon His people. Faith says, This state of suffering will have an end; the wicked, it is true, will not be relieved, but the people of God must be. Hence the frequency of such expressions in the Psalms and Prophets as " How long, O Lord! " and " There is none to say, How long! "-there is no one who knows how to count on the faithfulness of God. When under chastening, there is no faith to use this expression, a worse one is used, " I have loved strangers, and after them will I go "; and the people abandon themselves to wickedness; Jer. 2:25.

Now Daniel is here acting in faith. He had, moreover, the consolation of knowing, that when God pronounced the judgment of captivity upon His people, He had also declared its limit. Jeremiah had predicted that it should last seventy years, and that afterward God would judge Babylon by the hand of Cyrus. Hereupon, wrapped up in the interests of the people of God, his thoughts are occupied with this promised deliverance.

But the faith which comprehends the goodness of God, and sighs for the time when the people shall enjoy their privileges, always confesses the sin which has obliged God to deprive His people for a time of these privileges. Faith never becomes discouraged, as if God were unfaithful; on the contrary, it insists upon the blame being with the people, and that God has only acted faithfully in thus dealing with them. Our chapter begins in this way. The interest which Daniel felt in his people led him to the consideration of the prophet Jeremiah, and then he entreats the Lord to confirm this blessing which He had promised by Jeremiah, that is, that He would accomplish the deliverance of His people from captivity.

Another important fact which we remark here, and which was manifested in the Lord Jesus in perfection, is, that faith always thoroughly identifies itself with the affliction in which the people are found; and more even, with all the sins of the people of God. This is the distinguishing mark of the Spirit of Christ. Christ, indeed, went much further, inasmuch as He was able to make atonement for those sins, with which He identified Himself; but faith, according to its measure, always does so. The faith may be very feeble, but if there be any sense of the privileges of the people of God, and of the glory of God in His people, faith must have reference to this glory. But if it considers the glory, it considers also the sins which have been the occasion of the chastisement. Faith identifies itself with the state of the people, and by placing itself in their condition, perceives the cause of the judgment; for faith identifies the glory of God with His people, and itself with both; and the state of the people before God becomes the principle which animates the heart; and the more faith there is, according to the measure of its intelligence, the more does it enter into the depths into which the offenders have fallen, pass their sins in review, and confess them in identification with them; and if faith did not do this, there could be no presenting of these sins in confession, in order to their being pardoned. The Spirit which is in us (and yet more fully than the spirit of prophecy) necessarily looks at the thing morally. My distress at the condition of the saints is in every sense incomplete, unless the cause of that condition in God's sight is taken notice of-just as the high priest confessed all the sins of the people upon the scape goat.

It is fully admitted, that there may be imperfection in the act; but according to the principles of faith, there must be identification-a full confession before God. If I thought to get remission of sins (in the sense of removing chastenings) by partial confession, or without having felt their enormity, it is evident I should be mocking the just government of God; so that it is absolutely necessary, if I wish to suffer with Christ, for His church (and the case of the Jews serves morally for us), if I am led by His Spirit in love and care for His sheep, that I should humble myself, recognizing the fallen condition of the

Verses 2-4. " In the first year of his [Darius'] reign, I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And I set my face unto the Lord God... and I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to

them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments."

Daniel has the prophecy of Jeremiah present before his mind.

When I speak of the spirit of prophecy, I do not speak of a revelation made to the prophet-it is not a question of the answer which God makes to a prophet when he presents the wants of His people. Daniel was a prophet, but there is, in this instance, no special revelation made to him. Hence we are told, that he had understood by books. He was simply one of the faithful studying prophecy. God afterward gives him a direct revelation. But in the present instance, faith alone was acting, and he was only made to understand what God had already spoken about His people. All is revealed in the Bible, and in searching it we can, like Daniel, know and understand what God has already written about His people.

There are many questions which we cannot resolve, because we are not spiritual enough. The teaching of God is as necessary for the understanding, as for the revelation of His thoughts. It is interesting to remark this. Daniel had understood by books that the captivity was to last seventy years. As a faithful man he interests himself in the people of God, and searches, by the spiritual intelligence which is given to those who walk with God, what are His thoughts and ways.

I do not say that we have the same faith and intelligence, but we are upon the same ground. Daniel represents the faithful remnant, who have their hearts full of desires for His grace towards His people, and who, to this end, study the word of God. As a consequence, the Spirit of God leads him into supplications; for whatever be the intentions of God, there is always in His acts of government a recognition of the moral road which He has ever traced out for His people-certain moral principles by which He leads them. " I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock," Ezek. 36:37.

Faith does not lead us into mere speculative knowledge-the head may be full of dates, etc., things, in a certain degree, useful-but when the Spirit of God really acts, we turn to the Lord with prayer and supplication, and with humbleness of soul, recognizing the actual condition of His people. It was thus with Daniel. " I set my face," says he, " unto the Lord."

Daniel had been led captive when very young, and he had taken no part in the actual iniquity of Israel. There was, therefore, no ground for self-accusation. But the fact is, there is no such thing as a Christian separated from the interests of his brethren. This could not be. The Spirit of Christ, which, in a certain sense, is more powerful in us than among the faithful in the time of Daniel, is nothing else than the Spirit of Christ in Christ; that is to say, the principle on which He acts is the same. Christ has done, He alone, that which no other could have done; we know this well. But the tendency, the feelings, the affections, of the Spirit of Christ in us cannot be other than the Spirit of Christ in Christ. If, then, Christ identifies Himself with all that the people have done from the beginning, Daniel also can say, " We have sinned," (v. 5-7). He identifies himself with all, in the unity of the same people, though he had not been partaker of any of these sins: " O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings," etc. (v. 8). These kings were no longer in existence, but he saw the whole thing together; " we have not hearkened to the voice of thy servants the prophets." The prophets had not prophesied to him, and had a deaf ear turned to their words. Behold then the whole mass of Israel in this confusion of face-behold the justice which belongs to God. But there is another thing which the Spirit of Christ confesses: " To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him " (v. 9). This is a singular reason; but he had such a conviction of the goodness of God, that he says, It is not only the justice which punishes that is found in God, but, though we have sinned, there is mercy: as David says, " 0 Lord my God, pardon my iniquity, for it is great." As if to say, Nothing will do for me, or meet my case, but mercy; I cannot offer sacrifices like the Jews, I must have recourse to Thee-I must have mercy and pardon. The prophet draws this as a consequence-there is sin; well then, this can be met by mercy alone.

All have transgressed the law. It does not do to say, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, have not done so; Josiah had done much that was good; David was a man after God's own heart; but this or that instance is lost in the idea of a broken law. If the people of God are no longer in the enjoyment of their privileges, it is because they have sinned, and that sin is punished. Certain alterations for the better may have retarded the judgment, but judgment having once come in, the way of the Spirit is to say, that all have sinned. Besides all this, there is a government in detail, as we see in the case of Hezekiah, where chastisement was announced, and afterward postponed. They were to go to Babylon, but not in his time. As to further matter of detail of government, consult the case of Josiah; he fell by the hand of Pharaoh-Necho, although it was said, " Thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace," 2 Kings 22:20. But he was taken from the evil to come. The circumstances were afflicting, for it would appear that he should have listened to Pharaoh. Josiah was chastened individually, but he did not see, like Daniel, all that came upon Jerusalem: what a sparing from sorrow was that! " The righteous man dieth... and none considereth that the righteous is taken away from the judgment to come."

" Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law " (v. 1). " Yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth " (v. 13); that is, not only have we transgressed, but when the chastening came we did not turn to the Lord with a true heart, to turn us from our iniquities. Here sin reached its height. " Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil and brought it upon us " (v. 14), as He watched upon the good to bless. How terrible, when the government of God watches upon the evil to make it come upon His people!

" And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly " (v. 15). " 0 Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain " (v. 16). The words of Daniel are quite touching. He deeply felt that it was the sin of the people that had brought down all the evil. Nevertheless, he reiterates, It is a question of Thy name; he says nothing about the name of the people. He had truly felt their wretchedness and sin; moreover, he was humbled for it, but he insists upon this point, that Jerusalem is the city of God, and so he says " Let thine anger be turned away from thy city Jerusalem." In confessing the sins of his fathers, he could not bear the idea of the city of God being in desolation; but these sins being the cause, they must be forgiven before the city can be restored. It was called by God's name, and in the eyes of Daniel, his people were, so to speak, the name of God in the earth, as it is said, " This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, 0 Jacob," Psa. 24:6.

This, then, was the pleading of Daniel; he confesses all the sins of Israel. Thus, " for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach," etc., etc. (v. 16). " O my God, incline thine ear and hear... for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies " (v. 18). " Defer not, for thine own sake, O my God, for thy city and thy people are called by thy name " (v. 19). God Himself is made the motive. That faith which perceives the sins of the people, by reason of the glory of

God which identifies itself with such people, can claim deliverance from the results of these sins; because this very glory necessitates the forgiveness, God having identified Himself in goodness with the people: and so much the more, inasmuch as it is this glory on which faith feeds and with which it is pre-occupied, and which, as before said, causes the extent of sin and failure to be felt. But if God is to act for His name, He must deliver Jerusalem, for there was no other place on the earth which bore His name.

If the same spirit animated us, as Christians, we should be saying, It is for the sins of the church that we are suffering, and that we are held in contempt by all the world.

Something remains to be said, dear friends, as to the place which Daniel takes prophetically. It has struck me, in reading the chapter, that he does not take the position in which the promises made to Abraham would have placed him. The full blessing of the Jews will be grounded on another truth than that which Daniel pleads here.

The blessings of the Jews, such as they are yet to enjoy, are based upon the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, without condition. These are not touched upon here by Daniel. They have never possessed the land under the law, properly speaking; but they have had it, according to the promises made to Moses in favor of the people, at the time of the mediation at Sinai. The land has never been possessed on the principle of obedience to the law, for immediately after it was given, the apostasy of the golden calf came in. Moreover, they have never yet enjoyed the land in quality of Messiah's people. In order to enjoy the land according to the promises, they must enjoy it according to the new covenant; but as yet, neither the Messiah nor the new covenant has introduced the people into it. The new covenant is not yet established with the Jews. The promises cannot yet have been accomplished, because Christ is the true seed of Abraham. The Jews have been rejected, and the accomplishment has never yet taken place. These, viz., the Messiah and the new covenant, are two great elements of the future blessing of this people.

The fact is, that God, after the idolatry of the golden calf, placed His people Israel (consult Ex. 32; 33; 34), under a government, founded, half upon law, and half upon grace, for when Moses ascended the mount of Sinai, God declared His name (Ex. 34:6) as " the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." This was grace, whilst at the same time He gave him the law of the ten commandments, so that the people were placed under a condition of obedience. This was the condition under which Israel was placed from the time that Moses ascended Sinai the second time. Although he had previously confessed the sins of Israel, and, by his intercession, obtained the pardon, through grace, of the people, yet God, notwithstanding, replaces them under a condition of obedience to the law.

In all that there was no question of Jerusalem, but only of the great principles which were the groundwork of the relationship between God and His people. Later, as in Lev. 26, we have threats made to the people should they fail in their conduct. It is a long chapter, where blessings are promised in the event of obedience. He engages even to place His tabernacle in their midst, and every earthly blessing was promised them (v. 3-13), " but if ye will not hearken to me," (v. 14) they are menaced with the heaviest judgments and at last are to be cast out of their land (v. 31-39). This was precisely what befell them, when they were carried captive to Babylon (compare 2 Chron. 36:21, with Lev. 26:34), and the land enjoyed her Sabbaths, during the time of the desolation of Jerusalem. Once every seven years there was to be a year of rest, but the people had not faith in God to observe it; and the consequence of their not believing God in not allowing the sabbatic years was, that God found this means of enforcing obedience to His law. A promise succeeds this threat, " If they shall confess their iniquity... then I will remember my covenant with Jacob," etc., etc. (v. 40-42), that is, they would be brought back. The same principle is presented in Deut. 28; 29 We have conditional blessings and cursings, and subsequently (chap. 3o) promises; that is, grace for those who repent in the land whither they have been carried captive.

It was this special case that Daniel had to do with-the case, namely, foreseen in the threatenings. I would call your attention also to 1 Kings 9, for there God shows, in answer to Solomon, what He would do in case of infidelity, and He identifies His name with the city of Jerusalem, and particularly with the temple; 1 Kings 8:29. In his prayer he does not ask for the accomplishment of the promises made to Abraham, but only of those made to Moses, which place the people under the condition of obedience when in their land (v. 56). It was this prayer which was answered.

We have seen what passed with Moses. And when Solomon dedicates the temple to God, he asks Him to acknowledge it always according to His principles of government as revealed to Moses. Now, the people having sinned, Jeremiah had prophesied that there should be a special chastisement for seventy years, and Daniel takes this up. He does not go back to the promises made to Abraham, but only as far as the words of Solomon and Moses; Dan. 9:11.

Verse 16. " Let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain." God had, according to Solomon's prayer, chosen Jerusalem. We will not now enter into the answer which God gives, except to say that He declares all that should happen to Jerusalem; but in taking as His occasion the return to that city of the captives, He goes on much farther, even to the circumstances of that city to the very end. He does it, as it were, under a Mosaic point of view, and not in revealing its final state of blessedness, as being an answer to the prayer respecting the judgments which had befallen the holy city, on account of the violation of the law of Moses; the result of which was, that the city was placed under the judgments which Moses had threatened.

It may be well to point to two or three passages, as to this choice of Jerusalem: for instance, Psa. 78:68; 87 and 132. This last opens with a description of finding and bringing back the ark, and giving it a place. Then Jehovah speaks, " If thy children will keep my covenant.... For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest forever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it," (v. 12-14). Nothing can be more striking than the goodness of God throughout this Psalm. God goes beyond all that is asked of Him. The prayer is, " Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy " (v. 9). But the answer is, " I will also clothe her priests with salvation; and her saints shall shout aloud for joy " (v. 16). Again, the prayer had been, " Arise, 0 Lord, into thy rest, thou and the ark of thy strength " (v. 8-1o). And the reply is, as we have seen, " The Lord hath chosen Zion: this is my rest forever," etc. Again the prayer is, " For thy servant David's sake, turn not away the face of thine anointed " (v. 1o): to which God answers, " There will I make the horn of David to bud." In every case the answer largely surpasses the request. There is yet a passage (Zech. 2: II) which shows the exceeding joy which Christ will feel over Jerusalem in the last days. " And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee; and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee. And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again." These blessings follow upon all the trying and humbling circumstances of which Daniel treats, for it must be remembered that in Zechariah it is " after the glory " (v. 8), that is, beyond the period included in Daniel's prophecy. Again, in Zech. 12:2, "

Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling to all the people round about." It is an elect city, just as Israel is an elect people, or the church an elect bride.

Let it be again observed, that whilst Daniel is personally concerned with the return of Israel from Babylon under the circumstances predicted by Moses, the Spirit of God uses this thought to continue the history of the people, or rather of the city (introducing the chief events of the first coming of Christ), as far, but only as far, as the point where final blessing commences; for the matter of Zechariah and the Psalms, just now touched upon, is not entered into. The essential point, however, is the spirit in which Daniel identifies himself with the people of God, confessing all their sin as his own before God.

Letters 3, Jehovah and Jerusalem

The difficulty suggested as to the date can have no1 place whatever. Other questions may arise as to the force of words. In Rev. 12 Satan is cast down, clearly before the last great tribulation, greatly enraged, because he knows he has but a short time, and persecutes the woman for the "time, times, and half a time." In the passage in the gospels, where the mark of time seems precise (Matt. 24, Mark 13), the shaking of the powers of the heavens is after the tribulation. That is, the casting down of Satan in Rev. 12 is before, and introductory of, the last tribulation; in Matt. 24 and Mark 13 the shaking of the powers of the heavens is after the tribulation. Thus, as events, they have nothing to do with one another. In Luke 21 The expression is vague, and gives a general ground for what happens. The inquiry then is simply, without any reference to the fall of Satan from heaven, what these terms mean.

It seems to me that in Luke there is a mixed metaphor; in Matthew and Mark it is more in the style of Old Testament prophecy. I have little doubt that the scene will be as mixed as the metaphor-terrible signs actually given (compare Luke 21:11); and, besides that, an actual disruption of all existing powers, and terror on every heart, with the tumultuous swellings of peoples. Compare Psa. 93, where I do not believe it is mere literal waters. Further, I find in Dan. 8:10 the host and the stars clearly refer to rulers (Jewish priestly rulers) on the earth. Now I do not doubt the shakings and subversion of the future (before the great and terrible day of the Lord) will be much greater and more terrible than what is in Dan. 8; but this gives an inlet into what those expressions mean. I would not confine this tremendous breaking up of existing powers and rule to Jewish ones there, though it is in Dan. 8, because Gentiles and Jews are all mixed up together, the sacrifice taken away, and idolatry come in. But there will be more than a revolution—a subversion and upsetting of all manifested and organic powers. There is an analogous upsetting of all powers in Rev. 6, supposed by the inhabitants of the earth to be the great day of the Lamb's wrath, which it is not, but only a precursor of it. I refer to it to show that such subversions of all constituted powers are so spoken of, without any raising of the question whether Satan is cast down from heaven or not. This is before the trumpets and the vials; the end of the last tribulation comes after it—somewhere at the end of the second woe-trumpet, and then God's judgment by Christ Himself. The beast and the final tribulation are a special subject, besides the general government under which these shakings come; and they are so given in the Apocalypse. The general government of God applies to the nations at large; the beast is in connection with the rejection of Christ and enmity to Him. They go on concurrently, but the latter is a special matter.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Prophetic 2, Daniel*, Remarks on a Part of

My dear brother,

I send you some remarks on an interesting part of prophecy, including some principles long ago remarked, and recalled by recent study of some parts of Dan. 1 shall be short, my object being to throw out the grounds of judgment rather than to reason on them. It has been long my conviction that there are two very distinct parties engaged in the trials of Jerusalem in the latter day. The affiance of Jerusalem with the one is the chief occasion of the desolation brought on by the other. This other is habitually termed the Assyrian in Isa. 1 now proceed to give you the elements of certain passages which seem to me to throw light on these points, and to facilitate the understanding of Daniel.

First, the indignation, see Isa. 10 we have the revelation that the rod in the hand of the Assyrian is the Lord's indignation. This indignation is to cease in the destruction of the Assyrian. The characteristic term for this closing period is the indignation of Jehovah against the nation. We find, in Dan. 8:19, the expositor, who tells Daniel that he will make him know what is in the last end of the indignation, for at the time appointed the end shall be. The willful king prospers till this indignation is filled up. When the overflowing scourge (Isa. 28), which is a flood and a treading down (compare Dan. 9:27 and 8: 13), comes through Ephraim (that is from the north), the scornful men which dwell at Jerusalem have made a covenant with death and are at agreement with hell, and hence hope to escape the overflowing scourge. But, as there is a foundation-stone for faith, so judgment is laid to the line, and the overflowing scourge passes through and they are trodden down by it. We have then the period of the indignation and the special instrument of it (this attack of the Assyrian being repeatedly referred to in Isaiah, compare Psa. 83). We have also the fact, that, when the scourge of desolation passes through, the rulers at Jerusalem had made an agreement with death and hell to avoid it; but the overflowing scourge sweeps on.

The distinction we have at the close of Isaiah 30, where it seems to me the king is a distinct personage (Heb. gam hoo lammelek), "Topheth is prepared of old, for the king also it is prepared." These passages lead me to another expression of importance in this respect, and which also links together Daniel and these passages in Isaiah (Heb. chalah veneheratsah) the consumption decreed. You will find this in Isaiah to: 23 (and something like it in verse 22) in connection with the indignation, and the Assyrian, and a very small remnant left of Israel from the judgment, but a determined one of God. In Isa. 28 the judgment is clearly on Israel. Coming, as I have said, as to its progress through Ephraim, it finds the rulers of Jerusalem in league with death; and they are warned (v. 22) not to be mockers, because (Heb. chalah veneheratsah) a consumption is determined on the whole earth (land).

In Dan. 9:27, we find the same expression translated " the consummation," and that determined. I apprehend the force is " for the overspreading of abominations [the protection of idols, which makes the great charge against the Jews of the latter day a desolator (m'shomehm)] there shall be a desolator, until the consumption decreed be poured on the desolate "; that is, the " overspreading of

abominations " (al c'maph shikkutsim), whatever that may be taken to be, is the cause why the consumption decreed is poured on the desolate. Some take it as a fact, or prefer the margin. As I take the sense of the English translation to be just, I venture on Hebrew ground, but only to put questions. I suppose the Hebrew may mean " because," or " for," as in English. Next, is it not certain, according to the points, and the regular Hebrew construction, both from letters and accents, that it is because of the protection of idols; and that the idols of the desolator is not the connection in the Hebrew? The best translation I have access to concurs in this. If so, the sense, as it seems to me to be, is clear, namely, " because of the protection of idols [there shall be] a desolator, until the consumption decreed "-this appointed measure of wrath (against Israel).

I think the reading of the passages quoted, in Isaiah, shows plainly that the decreed consuming or accomplishment of judgment applies to Israel, and such a statement accords with the whole testimony of God's word on the subject. This confirms the English translation " on the desolate." And here again I appeal to my Hebrew friends. The usual sense of the Hebrew words (shamehm and shomehm) is, I apprehend, " to be desolate." The word used here (shomehm) is several times used for Jerusalem desolate, by Jeremiah in Lamentations, and in other parts of Scripture, as to it and other subjects. No case of the active use is alleged by Gesenius, but this passage, which proves of course nothing, and Dan. 12:11, which rests on a similar basis, and chapter 8: 13, all involve the question to be decided. For either of the last two cases, " desolate " or " desolating " gives a sense according to truth; but would in any case (shomehm) be " causing others to desolate "? However, of this in a moment. The use of an unusual form (Ezek. 36:3) is the only other authority. Bagster's Lexicon does not give this sense. However this may be, there is no doubt that the common use of the word elsewhere is " desolate," and that the other expressions are usually applied to Jerusalem. The consumption decreed is poured upon the desolate. Until then there will be a desolator. Thus we should have the declaration that he (the prince to come) confirms covenant with the many (the body of the Jews) one week; and in the midst of the week he will cause sacrifice and offering to cease; and because of the overspreading or protection of idols there will be a desolator, until the consumption decreed be poured on the desolate-until God has filled up his judgment.

Now a few words on the question of the desolate; chap. 11: 31. It is a different word, the abomination of desolation (m'shomehm) the word translated (chap. 9: 27) " he shall make it desolate "-rather a desolator; they shall plant the abomination of the desolator. This seems admitted by the common authorities I have recourse to. It inclines me much to think that this passage refers much more distinctly to Antiochus than to the latter days (v. 32). " Do exploits " does not seem to me to characterize that epoch. As to chapter 8: 13, I leave this question, whether it is not the transgression of the desolate; when the transgressors are come to the full, transgressions against the daily sacrifice. It is clear in either case, that this causes desolation, so that I have nothing to oppose; but I would arrive at the force of the word. It is not, at any rate, an active desolator, I should think, in a positive way-as m'shomehm.

The existence of the latter word in chapter 11: 31 makes chapter 12: II more interesting. There, and there alone, we have " the abomination that desolates " (Heb. shikkuts shomehm); and to that, I apprehend, the Lord's solemn words specially refer as to the last days. I can hardly think that the Spirit uses in chapter 9: 27 the two words as He does to mean the same thing. If the difference in chapter 11: 31 and chapter 12:11 be just, it throws vast light on the interpretation of the whole passage. Whatever may be the result as to the critical point, the connection of the two chapters of Isaiah (and others bear on it, particularly all from chapter 28 to the end of chapter 35) throws much light on the solemn scenes of the history of Israel and the world in the last days.

I just add here, that besides the evident division at the end of Dan. 6, between the historic scenes or dreams of others interpreted by Daniel, and the communications made to Daniel himself, there is a distinction to be made between chapters 7 and 8 (which have a common character) and chapter 9 to the end.

Chapters 7 and 8 are communications made to Daniel of certain events during the power of evil (the Jews being in no way delivered) and give us the two horns and their bearing on the history of those beloved of God, whatever their condition. But all this is seen as a picture, though a picture explained- a picture of the power of evil.

In the last four chapters, which date subsequent to the overthrow of Babylon, Daniel, according to the mind of God, is brought forward as intercessionally interested in Israel, and he pleads for guilty Israel, as Moses of old-differently as to tone, but presenting, by faith in God's own thoughts, the people, as His people, whatever their state may have been (and that is the character of faith, while fully, for the very same reason, owning and confessing the sin). The result is remarkably analogous as to this. The angel who speaks on the Lord's behalf calls Israel Daniel's people, and the city his city, as the Lord did to Moses. Daniel sees no vision here of historical wonders, but of the person interested in Israel, who communicates to him Israel's history in reply to his faith in God and love to Israel, as the man greatly beloved. Chapter 9 seems to me to refer rather to chapter 7 and chapters 1o, II, and 12 to chapter 8; the former to the western, and the latter to the eastern, subjects of prophecy. I believe these considerations will assist in the intelligence of the book, the latter remarks opening considerably the bearing of the two subdivisions. The explanation of chapter 7 is not in terms confined to the end of the indignation, as that of chapter 8 (though the special actings of the little horn are identified with the periods of chapter 12).

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Prophetic 2, Daniel 11:36 and 12:1-2, Studies on

LECTURE 8

CHAPTERS 11: 36; 12: 1, 2

We have already said something in general upon this king; we have spoken of him in connection with what went before; but independent of circumstances, as a personage, he is of importance sufficient that we should notice him more fully. It is generally admitted, that it is the same as is called Antichrist, the wicked one, but under a special character, as I mentioned towards the close of the last lecture (that is, in connection with the Jews, and in the land, which is an object of dispute between the king of the north, and the king of the south). And in fact, this wicked one will unite in his own person every feature of iniquity. He will be a blasphemer against the true God-a persecutor of the saints-the head of the apostasy; and he will encourage idolatry. In fine, it is " the king who shall do according to his will."

It is impossible to mistake the character of the person mentioned in 2 Thess. 2, " showing himself that he is God." And it would be well if we referred to a few passages, which mention the different characters attributed to him, beginning with this chapter of Daniel. The first trait is, that he is in Palestine, in the land of the heirs of the holy covenant, and exalts himself, and magnifies himself above every god, whether false or true. In spite of this he is to prosper " till the indignation be accomplished ": God permits it, because it is the time of His indignation against the Jews; chap. 8: 19. This indignation is the period spoken of in Isa. 10:5, 24, 25: " For yet a very little while and the indignation shall cease." There is an indignation with a certain limit. It is not said that the time of this king is the period of the indignation, but it is a time during which God does not interfere to deliver Israel. He allows the trial to go on, and Israel to suffer the effects of it; and so Antichrist prospers until the indignation is accomplished. It is not said that when the indignation is over, Israel will be re-established in the enjoyment of their promises; but Christ can then act for Israel instead of leaving them under the indignation. He will yet have to subject the nations to the exercise of His royal power, in the midst of His earthly people.

Verse 37. " Neither shall he regard the god of his fathers... for he shall magnify himself above all." This is a strong feature of the pride of man; " he magnifies himself above all." He would efface every idea of the true God; he is indifferent whether about the real religion of the heart, or the religion of his fathers; he dislikes even the name of Christ (called here " the desire of women "); he is even against religious customs, and religious nationality; he has no respect for any god. But, arrived at this point, it is necessary to keep the people in restraint, and he needs instruments for this, as well as his gods, mahuzzim (fortresses)-some species of idolatry, which he introduces when he has denied every god. This idolatry will be connected with the interests of those who govern. He will cause them to rule over many (the many, the mass), viz., the people of Israel, and the country will be divided among his chiefs. So far the royal and Judaic history of this king.

We proceed with passages which represent him under other points of view. In chapter 7 he is seen as a little horn, not as king in Palestine, but as a particular horn of the fourth beast, and in the same chapter we also have the period determined for the end of the persecution of the saints, " until the Ancient of days came " (v. 22), as distinct from the time when He sat upon the throne (v. 9). Thus Christ comes, and " the judgment is given to the saints of the most high," or " of the high places," and " the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." These passages determine the general end of the war which the little horn wages against the saints. In the last it is not said " the saints of the high places." In fact three things are marked: viz., the coming of the Ancient of days; the judgment given to the saints of the high places; and the time when the saints shall take the kingdom.

We turn now to certain portions in the New Testament, which speak of this period and of the little horn under still other aspects, just as we may behold Christ under different aspects. In the epistle to the Thessalonians he is described as a chief, the result of the apostasy which shall invade Christendom; " Now we beseech you, brethren, that ye be not soon shaken... except there come a falling away first," 2 Thess. 2:1-3.

The first thing is the apostasy, not of the Jews (this we have seen in Daniel), but of Christendom, and it will necessarily happen before the execution of the judgment-before the day of Christ; as must also the appearance of the " man of sin," who is clearly not the apostasy itself, but, I judge, follows and winds it up. The apostle marks the two events before the judgment: viz., the coming in of the apostasy, and the revelation of the man of sin-the son of perdition (an expression which signifies that he possesses this name, by his nature, his character, and his acts) " who opposes and exalts himself against all that is called God, or is worshipped." Read to verse to.

This is his character in connection with Christendom, and Christendom in connection with him. First of all, there was a mystery of iniquity, which was commencing in the time of the apostles, which was to continue for a certain time, afterward an apostasy would follow, and then the revelation of the wicked one. The Lord will destroy him " with the brightness of his coming " (the manifestation of His presence). But there is something else. The New Testament gives us the moral features of the appearance of this wicked one, viz., that it is according to the power of Satan; and what makes these verses remarkable is, that the same words which are used to describe the manifestations of this power of Satan are employed in speaking of the proof of the mission of Jesus Christ as Messiah; Acts 2:22.

There are two remarkable circumstances; viz., that the coming of Antichrist is spoken of just as the coming of Christ, one, a mystery of iniquity; the other, a mystery of godliness. As the Son of man is to come, so also will the Antichrist come; and his coming will be after the power of Satan; he will perform lying miracles. It will not be merely a set of principles at work; the effect will be mighty in seducing those who perish. A positive power of error comes in, because men " received not the love of the truth." " God shall send them strong delusion..." for they " had pleasure in unrighteousness." It is a judicial blinding.

It is said also in Isaiah, " Make the heart of this people fat." After a period of longsuffering on the part of God, blindness happened to the Jews, when they rejected the Messiah: and when patience has had its perfect work, they will yet be delivered over to a spirit of idolatry-that spirit which shall, meanwhile, have sought out seven spirits more wicked than himself, and the last state of that people shall be worse than the first. And so when those who call themselves Christians have obstinately refused to receive the truth, although it has been proposed to them, a positive and special blindness shall come upon them from God, " that they all might be damned who believed not the truth.".

We continue our history of this king from Rev. 12 There the dragon is seen (who is the devil or Satan, and seduces the whole world) cast out of heaven, v. 1o, 12. This malicious power no longer occupies the heavenly places, but when this occurs, it will be a time of fearful woe to the earth. It is the beginning of his " great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

After this we have a vision of the woman, who " is nourished for a time, times, and half a time." In other words, as soon as Satan is cast out of heaven, a period of three and a half years will elapse before he is judged on earth. Accordingly, in chapter 13 we find that the dragon gives the beast his power, throne, and great authority-this beast, of whom we read in the same chapter that " power was given him to continue forty and two months." He is found with the same characteristics as those before mentioned, only under more detailed historical circumstances. " And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies," v. 5. " And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven." Satan could no longer himself meddle with heaven, and therefore he sets on the beast against those who dwell there. Also " it was given unto him to make war with the saints (on the earth), and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations " (v. 6, 7).

There is a fact here worth observing-it is a kind of imitation of the ways of God. As the Father has given all power to the risen Son, and the Holy Spirit exercises all the power of Christ before Him; so Satan imitates the same thing in evil. The dragon will give his throne to the beast; and remark what is said of the character under which he will be worshipped, " And I saw one of his heads, as it were, wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed." It is when this wound is healed, when there shall be a kind of resurrection (not personal, but the power of the

beast raised up again), that all the world will wonder after the beast, and the second beast will exercise all the power of the first beast before him.

Rev. 13:11. " And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth "... which " causeth the earth and them which dwell therein, to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed." We have here a power which pretends to be that of Christ (I do not say the heavenly power), but which pretends to be like Christ on the earth; but, in fact, an ear which could hear would discover it to be that of the dragon himself. As Pharaoh said to Joseph, " Only in the throne will I be greater than thou," so this second beast will exercise all the power of the first beast before him-this second beast, which speaks like a dragon, whilst it has horns like a lamb. Verses 13, 14: " And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven... and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth." These verses speak of what is done before (in the presence of) and in sustaining this power of the first beast; the second beast causes him to be worshipped, and an image to be made to him, and he seduces them that dwell on the earth.

This second beast is again mentioned in Rev. 19, under the designation of the false prophet. Here again, as the Spirit of the Father, speaking in the disciples, acted for the glory of Christ; so this beast, here called " the false prophet," speaks the language of the dragon, and supports the glory of the last beast. It will be a spirit zealous for idolatry, and who will even execute judgment on the earth, as the prophets ere now have done.

In the Revelation we find the connection of the beast with Babylon, which is yet another thing. In chapter 17: 1, 3, it is said, " I will show thee the judgment of the great whore." " And I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast... having seven heads and ten horns." " The beast which thou sawest was, and is not... yet is " (v. 8). This is a kind of death and resurrection. When it appears for the last time, it has a devilish character, it comes out of the pit, and then is destroyed. " And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder... when they behold the beast that was and is not, and yet is " (or rather, " and shall be there "). It is a coming of this beast. When the world beholds this appearance of the beast, it is astonished. There is another circumstance, " And the beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth [king] and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast " (v. 11, 12). It is an event which has not yet occurred.

We perceive that these kings will exist at the same time with the beast. Three of them will fall (see Dan. 7), but the seven others will continue. The beast rules and unites in a single body the power of these kings, but the kings exist; it will be a kind of confederation, in which each horn acts royally in his own sphere, but gives his power to the beast, who blasphemes against God. " For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled," Rev. 17:17.

Another feature in his character is, " that the ten horns... shall hate the whore " (v. 16), who for a long while ruled the beast. We remember in Dan. 7 that among the ten horns another arose, who got all the power of the beast, who in fact morally becomes the beast, and causes three of the horns to fall before him. This one in the eyes of Daniel, and in fact in his conduct, will be the beast. This horn will control and give its tone to everything. Having touched upon the passages which refer to this same personage, we must still remember that it is in Palestine, and viewed personally, that we have to do with him here.

But to continue with Daniel 11. " And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him... he shall enter also into the glorious land " (v. 40, 41). This is the moment when God begins to act. Both the kings of the north and south, in their same geographical position, are at war with this king. " And the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind." This king of the north seems to be a very prominent power, which possesses the territory of the ancient kings of Syria. My judgment is, that the rest of the chapter applies to him, although formerly I thought it applied to the king. Daniel now continues the thread of this history (which had been interrupted by the notices concerning the king); that is, he resumes that of the Jews in connection with the kings of the north and south. And there is a fact which confirms me in the opinion of this invasion (v. 41) being that of the king of the north; namely, " he shall enter into the glorious land." Now if it is a question of " the king," he is already there.

Verse 41. " And many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon." This is a circumstance not to be omitted, because it demonstrates the exactitude of the written word. For in Isa. 2:14 you will find that these three powers which escape the king of the north, are in existence still later: " Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim, but they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines towards the west... they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab, and the children of Ammon shall obey them." Verse 42. " He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries; and the land of Egypt shall not escape "-an announcement that the king of the south loses his kingdom. See Isa. 11:15.

Verses 43, 44. " But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt.... But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him, therefore he shall go forth with great fury... yet he shall come to his end and none shall help him." This is the end of the king of the north.

I add a general idea of chapter 12 to show the connection. Verse I. " And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people." Here is special reference to the Jews, in whom Daniel was so much interested, and on whose account he had fasted and mourned for three full weeks. After having described the events pertaining to the kings of the north and south, the angel says, notwithstanding all these desolating scenes, Michael shall stand up for the children of thy people. Nevertheless, " there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation." This is exactly what is announced in Matt. 24 as to take place in Judea. " When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet " etc. (v. 15-21). It is clear that this cannot happen twice. It is the time of Israel's deliverance " and at that time, thy people shall be delivered ": only it is confined to " every one that is found written in the book."

One could not fail to remark, while reading the chapters of which I have given the abridgment in the two preceding lectures, the character of this terrible personage of the last days. The king of the north is fearful enough as a conqueror and pillaging invader; but this king is spoken of as making war against God. It is not merely a desire of conquest, but of open opposition to God and the Lamb. It is the effectual power of Satan and of a lie; it is blasphemy; it is persecution. One feels it to be everything the most terrible in human hatred, animated by the power of Satan fallen from heaven, and who establishes his throne upon earth against the God of heaven and the Lamb. The appearing of this wicked one is the most important point in these chapters, whether as the expression of the iniquity of the Jews and Christendom, or as that of the pride of man.