Daniel - Commentaries by John Thomas Mawson

Answers to Correspondents, Seventy Weeks of Daniel, The

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The Seventy Weeks of Daniel

Daniel 9:24-27

C.S.R. You ask whether the first half of the seventieth week of Daniel has already been fulfilled in the three-and-a-half years ministry of Christ on earth, as has been suggested.

We think not. You will notice that it is distinctly stated that after the three score and two weeks (mentioned immediately following the first seven weeks, or forty-nine years, during which the wall of Jerusalem would be re-built “in troublous times”) Messiah would be cut off. The cutting off of Messiah is thus placed not in the midst of the seventieth week, but after sixty-nine weeks in all had run their course: that is, of course, in the symbolism of Daniel’s prophecy, weeks of years, that is, 483 years. The period of 483 years runs from “the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem:” this commandment was evidently that given to Nehemiah in the l0th year of the reign of Artaxerxes, for the earlier decrees recorded as to Jerusalem concerned simply “the house of the Lord God of Israel” (Ezra 1:1-3; 6:38; 7:7); and the dates of secular history confirm the fulfillment of the prophecy in the fact of the 483 years running out in the time of Christ, His crucifixion, and the suspension of God’s special dealings with the Jews. From that point they were left to the mercy of the Gentiles, and very soon “the people of the prince” (the Romans) besieged and destroyed the city and the sanctuary.

So that the last week, or seven years, still awaits fulfillment. This week will commence when God resumes His special dealings with the Jews. This will be of course after the rapture of the Church (1 Thess. 4:14-18), but how soon after is not revealed.

It is interesting to notice that it does not say “the prince” will destroy the city and the sanctuary, but “the people of the prince;” the prince himself comes into the arena during the last week, which is still future. He will belong to the Roman Empire, for he is of the same people that destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70; but it is the Roman Empire divided into ten kingdoms, the ten horns (the horn is symbolical of power) of Daniel 7:24. He shall arise and subdue three of these kingdoms. At the appearance of this prince it would seem that many of the Jews are already gathered in unbelief to their own land, their temple rebuilt and the sacrifices resumed, and they will make a covenant with him, in order, probably, to save themselves from “the overflowing scourge” — some great power from the North (Isa. 28:15). Nothing corresponding to this covenant of verse 27 has taken place since the events of verse 26.

But the alliance thus formed with this blasphemous prince will be broken by him in the midst of the week; he will force idolatry upon them, and even erect an idol in the holy place within the temple — the abomination of desolation (Matt. 24:15, see also Rev. 13:5). There are several Scriptures which evidently refer to this point of history: “In the midst of the week (i.e., in the middle of the seven years) he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease,” etc. (Dan. 9:27). “He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High (the true remnant of Israel), and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time, and times, and the dividing of time” — three years and a half (Dan. 7:25). Then under the figure of the “beast” (power) “there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months” — three years and a half (Rev. 13:5-7.) “And the holy city shall be trodden underfoot forty and two months” (Rev. 11:2).

It will probably be, during this period that the Jews will go through the “great tribulation” (Matt. 24:3-25), the time of Jacob’s sorrow, the result of her rejection of her Messiah. But through all this period the true remnant of Israel shall be preserved of God “for a time, and times, and half a time” (Rev. 12:14). Finally those days of sorrow will be shortened for the elect’s sake (Matt. 24:22). The Lord will answer the cries of His people by coming to Mount Olivet (Zech. 14:14) to the exact spot from whence He left the earth (Acts 1:11, 12). And the seventy weeks will close in “everlasting righteousness” brought in by Him, who, in His cutting off as Messiah, made “reconciliation for iniquity” (Dan. 9:24).