

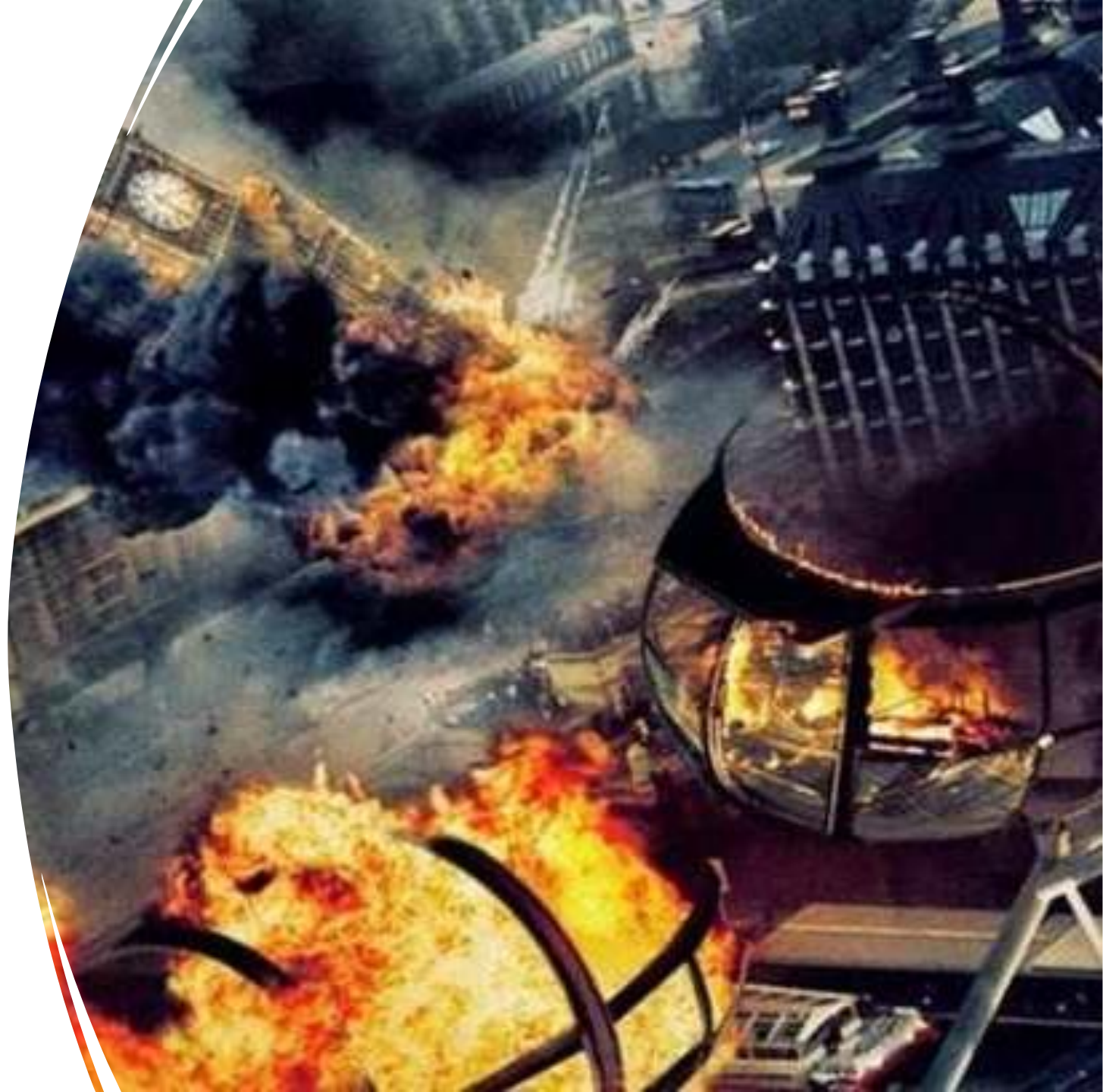


Jeremiah-Ezekiel-Daniel

Nahum-Zephaniah - Habakkuk

Introduction...

- The common context of these prophetic books is the Exile.
- Jeremiah prophesies about the impending doom of Jerusalem and Judah and then witnesses it unfold.
- Ezekiel and Daniel are part of the displaced Israelites to Babylon.
- Nahum and Zephaniah fit into the time frame of just before the fall of Judah whilst Habakkuk is a dialogue between Prophet and God on why He is using wicked nations to judge Israel.
- They experience the horrors of war, destruction of their national identity and pride as Babylon sacks the capital city.
- Imagine your nation and capital destroyed before your eyes and you are then captured as slaves or displaced as refugees?



Introduction..

- As we have gone through several of the prophetic books, you now see a pattern.
- Prophet warns the people about God's Judgement whilst also preaching a message of Hope.
- The people largely ignore the Prophet and his message.
- The words and speech of the Prophet are strong and strident as he delivers God's word.
- He speaks into the present, near future and distant future at the same time.



Introduction...



- In this session, we will travel at ‘warp speed’ through the three large prophetic books written before and during the Exile of the Israelites
- Jeremiah was ‘waving bye bye’ to those leaving Jerusalem, whilst Ezekiel was saying ‘Hello’ to and welcoming those arriving in Babylon. Daniel and others experienced the journey from Judah to Babylon and the life of political refugees in a foreign nation.
- This session will only be summaries of each book rather than a full breakdown because we will be touching on broad themes and not specific details.

JEREMIAH

The Weeping Prophet



Overview...

- Jeremiah son of Hilkiah was a prophet from the priestly town of Anathoth and may have been a descendant of Abiathar the Priest.
- We know more about the personal life of Jeremiah than any other prophet due to his writings
- Jeremiah was instructed not to marry as a sign that the next generation would be swept away.
- Jeremiah due to his message was not well received and had few friends.
- Imagine having the thankless task of telling passengers on a plane that it was going to crash-land as a result of their bad behaviour!



Overview...

- Jeremiah's volume is one overriding sigh of frustration and impending doom.
- Nobody wants to listen to the continuous rant of a street preacher telling you everyday that "the end is near!"
- Yet Jeremiah had an aching heart for his people but a scathing rebuke of the corrupt and idolatrous leaders.
- Jeremiah prophesied to Judah during the reigns of Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah.
- Jeremiah began his ministry during the reign of Josiah, who temporarily delayed God's judgement after the madness and wickedness of Manasseh.
- Josiah had begun a reformation to overturn all the pagan high places throughout Judah. After his death however the people reverted to their idolatrous ways.
- Josiah was followed by his three sons; Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah. Also his grandson – Jehoiachin.
- Jeremiah had the unpleasant task of warning these Kings but to no avail.



Overview...

- Introduction – Chapter 1:1-3
- Oracles against Judah and Jerusalem dictated by his scribe Baruch – Chapters 1:4 - 20:18
- Oracles against foreign nations – 25:15 - 38, Chapters 46 - 51
- Events about Jeremiah (probably by Baruch) – Chapters 26 – 45
- Historical index (almost identical to 2 Kings 24 – 25) – Chapter 52



Overview...

- Jeremiah had a compassionate and heavy heart for his people.
- God even told him not to pray for the people because their case was beyond intercession! Jer 7:16
- He advocated surrender to the Babylonians and encouraged those in exile to settle down and live normal lives: Jer 29: 7
- He prophesied that Israel would be in captivity for 70 years – Jer 29:10
- He was branded a traitor because of his prophecies and heavily persecuted.
- Whilst other prophets were prophesying that Judah would not fall, Jeremiah was blunt that the worst would happen – Jer 29:8-9
- Jeremiah suffered a lot at the hands of those he was sent to. Therefore, he is one of the most Christlike characters in the Old Testament.





Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah

Footnotes...

Zephaniah

- Lived in final decades of the Judah before the Babylonian invasion.
- Overlapped with the revival under Josiah before his death.
- Zephaniah warned Judah that the day of the Lord's judgement was coming.
- The book is a collection of his warnings about judgement on Jerusalem and also on the nations.
- He describes how Jerusalem is going to end using graphic imagery and language.
- All the cities walls will be gone and all the injustice and idolatry which the people turned back to after Josiah.
- Only the faithful remnant would seek the Lord despite the army coming and bringing judgement.
- The judgement is also coming on Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Assyrian.
- The burning fire of the Lord coming to consume will also purify the land and the nation.
- He will purify the nations so that they call upon the Name of the Lord 3:9.
- So this links back to God's promise to Abraham through whom the nations shall be blessed
- Basically, through the judgements of God, Jerusalem is transformed and restored. This is a prophetic picture of the first and second Coming of Christ.

Habakkuk

- Similarly to Zephaniah, he saw the last two or so decades of Judah and Jerusalem before it fell.
- The key difference with Habakkuk is that his book is a dialogue between him and God!
- Habakkuk therefore teaches the key principle that there is private dialogue before public exchange.
- His book teaches us the need for a personal relationship with God about challenge issues we face and getting God's perspective on the matter.
- We can be frustrated and angry and cast our burdens upon God but WAIT for His answer even if it does not line up with our expectations.
- Habakkuk's words are LAMENTS like in the Psalms. This shows us that when dealing with God we can be REAL and pour out our deep issues upon His altar.
- God responds to Habakkuk and this exchange is demonstrated in Chapters 1-2.
- God's response to Habakkuk is that He had an answer and was coming with Judgement from Babylon.
- Habakkuk doesn't like this response and tries to argue with the Lord about how He could rectify one evil with a worse evil?
- God told Habakkuk to write down His answer or vision so that others who are running would pause to read it!
- That Babylon will be brought down and punished.
- That the Righteous should believe what God has said even before it happens.
- The Righteous shall live by FAITH!
- God's rule over nation is absolute and He only allows nations to appear for a season until His final and ultimate ruke

Nahum

- Nahum is a collection of writings about how God will judge Assyria and Nineveh.
- It is a seminal piece about God as Judge.
- The first part outlines who the Judge is or
- “Know Thy Judge”!!
- Meet Thy God!!
- Once you know who the judge is then you can begin to discern His actions and judgements.
- God appears as the Judge who is slow to anger and great in power and He wouldn't leave evil unpunished 1:3 referencing Exodus 34: 6-7
- The fate of the violent wicked nations is contrasted with the fate of God's faithful remnant.
- God's HAND is over and above all powerful nations over and across history.
- We should never think because God appears to delay His judgement that He is weak or pacifist or detached.
- God knows every detail of what Nations get up to and He already has His answer and judgement for the nations good or bad.
- Remember Matthew 25
- *³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the ^[c]holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. ³³ And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.*
- Read the prophets so that you can know God as Judge and His Judgements



EZEKIEL

The Mystic Prophet



Overview...

- Ezekiel means God Strengthens
- He is identified as a priest and the son of Buzi
- His priestly family likely came into prominence during the Josiah revival.
- He was trained as a Priest during the reign of Josiah and deported to Babylon around 597 B.C
- His ministry briefly overlaps with that of Jeremiah's.
- He was part of the first wave of exiles to arrive in Babylon.
- His prophetic ministry saw the further invasions of Israel from a foreign land and then the total destruction of Jerusalem and the great Temple built by Solomon.
- It would be like seeing The White House bombed and destroyed for an American.
- Think of your Capital city whatever is your Nationality and think of the total destruction of that city, the way Russia has bombed Ukraine

Overview...

- Ezekiel is a mystic and his personality and writings reflect this nature
- He is constantly connecting and translating visions and revelations from the spiritual realm.
- He is like a Born-Again Believer trapped in a different timeline and dispensations.
- Ezekiel was tasked to minister to a remnant, confused and demoralized community of Israelites....
- Think about the song “by the rivers of Babylon”
Psalm 137
- The core of his message is the moral responsibility of the individual



Overview...

- Ezekiel encourages each individual to take responsibility of the state of the nation.
- Each individual must be responsible for their own sin
- It was the weight of the cumulative sin of each individual that contributed to the breaking of God's Covenant.
- Each must share and bear the blame for the judgement that resulted in the Exile to Babylon



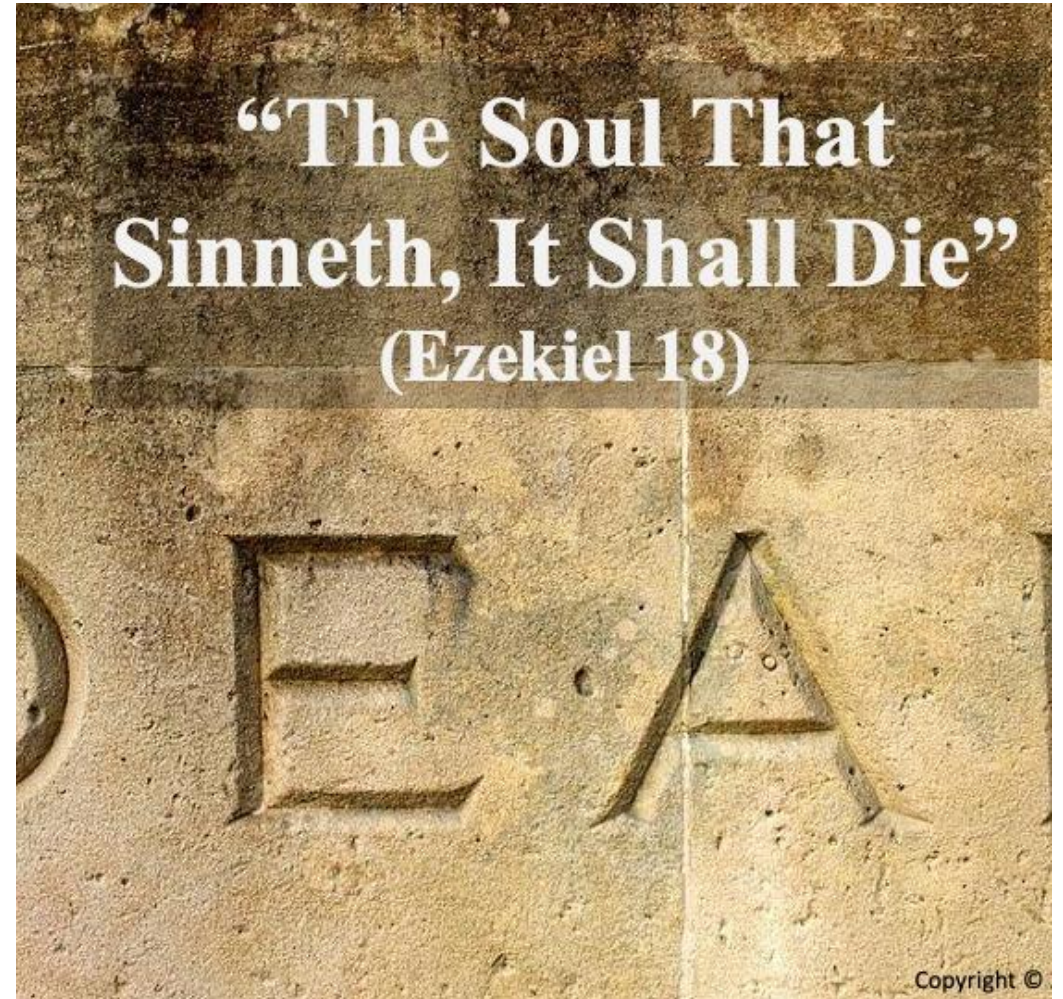
Overview....

- The book is divided into three sections.
- Chapters 4-24 – Judah's judgement
- Chapters 25-32 – heathen nations judgement
- Chapters 33-48 – future blessings for God's covenant people.



Overview....

- In Ezekiel's position on individual responsibility, "the soul that sins shall die"
- In his position on the nation's state, he emphasised the divine Grace on the restoration and rebirth of the nation.
- The repentance of the faithful Remnant amongst the Exiles would result in the recreation of Israel from dead dry bones.
- The divine (breath) of the Spirit of God would give life and quicken the dead bones
- This language and symbolism anticipates the doctrine of the new birth by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament.



Overview...

- Ezekiel employs a lot of New Testament language in his revelations
- In 11:5, the prophet says “the Spirit of the Lord fell upon me and said to me...”
- “The Spirit took me up and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea”
- Chapter 37 is a powerful revelation of the Spirit of God at work in regeneration of the Nation of Israel.
- The language could easily fit in the New Testament and foreshadows the Holy Spirit’s regeneration in the life of the Believer.
- 36:26, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you- this is the language of the New Birth in the New Testament.
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- similar to 2 Corinthians 3:3 “...not in tables of stone but in fleshy tables of the heart”



In Conclusion - Ezekiel

- Three very key themes or lessons emerge from this prophet
- 1 – Each person is responsible for their own moral state and must be accountable to God for their own decisions.
- 2 – Although God is reluctant to discipline His people; He Must because He is Righteous and Just.
- 3 – That God will ultimately triumph in History. Although the enemies of the Kingdom and God's people appear to be winning battles now, the Lord's future Judgement will prevail, and every knee will bow.





Daniel

The Statesman Prophet

Daniel

- The Book of Daniel is a very fascinating volume as the temperament of the prophet comes through in his writings
- The miraculous and the supernatural are stated naturally without colourful language or any form of hype.
- Daniel's importance as a prophet is confirmed by Jesus in Matthew 24:15 – “therefore when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken by the prophet Daniel...”
- Daniel means “God is my Judge”. His unshakable faith and consecration to Yahweh along with his loyalty to God's people is exemplary.
- Daniel's exploits within the treacherous political cauldron of Babylon and Midia are a model for the Believer in the parallel universe of today's cutthroat marketplace.



Overview...

- The siege and deportation of captives from Jerusalem lasted several years.
- The mighty men, the highly skilled and educated were first to be taken to Babylon.
- Amongst the thousands and wealth exported, were the treasures of Solomon's Temple and palace.
- The Babylonians conquered all the provinces ruled by Assyria and consolidated their territory across most of the Middle East.
- Through high level bureaucratic administration, immigrants who were highly skilled or educated, became the manpower of the government. Very much like the organ of the Civil Service today.
- Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were chosen by virtue of their good-looking features along with their elite skills.



Overview...

- One of the key themes coming out of this book is that:
- God rules and reigns over all nations.
- We have a clear view of God dealing with a nation within another nation and judging the empires of men.
- Daniel is in three sections;
- Chapter 1 – introduces Daniel
- Chapters 2-7 – Daniel's political tests and prophetic interpretations
- Chapters 8-12 – series of visions of the end times and empires.



Overview...

- The book of Daniel emerges as a reading companion for the book of Revelation.
- Many insights into eschatology and the end-times are provided by this book.
- Jesus Mount Olivet prophecies and Paul's revelations and the Book of Revelation have parallels with Daniel's prophecies.
- A careful reflective read of this book gives fascinating insight to – the Antichrist, the Second Coming of Christ and The Tribulation etc...
- Daniel's writings cover two kingdoms and four regents – Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius and Cyrus.
- Daniel models the Believer sold out to God and separated unto Him.
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Overview.....

- Timeless lessons include;
- Do not compromise your faith
- God will back your consecration
- The supernatural flows out of obedience to God
- Courage in the face of clear and present danger
- Temporal gain versus eternal reward
- God is more powerful than all gods and deities
- Spiritual counterfeits are no match to the originality of the Spirit of God
- God can give you more Wisdom if you ask HIM and sold out to Him
- You can be given revelation of the future through your prayer life.
- Have a disciplined spiritual life and be consistent
- Angels do exist and bring messages from Heaven



Chapter 9....

- This chapter contains a vital prophecy which we will reflect on here.
- Daniels seventy weeks of seven is pivotal to one interpretation of end time events.
- There are different views on the interpretation. However it should be emphasised that Believers having a different view of what is not fundamental to salvation, should not cause unnecessary conflict between Christians.
- “We know in part...” as the Apostle Paul taught, so any interpretation should be held with an open mindedness.





Chapter 9....

- Daniel was seeking God regarding the time of captivity and when it would end.
- Jeremiah (29:10) had indicated seventy years in Babylon.
- Gabriel the angel brought Daniel an expansive view of the ages and what would happen in the future.
- The Angel was very specific with the time line and there are different views but we will look at the 'classic' interpretation here.

Chapter 9....

- **Seventy weeks are determined:**
- There is almost universal agreement among Bible scholars and commentators that this refers to **seventy** sets of seven years, or *weeks of years*.
- In ancient Hebrew, **weeks** simply refers to a unit of seven.
- The Hebrew word here is often used to mean a unit of seven days, but it may also be used for a unit of seven years.
- “The Jews had *Sabbatic years*, by which their years were divided into weeks of years, as in this important prophecy, each week containing *seven years*.” (Clarke)



Chapter 9...

- **For your people and for your holy city:**
- The seventy weeks were focused upon Daniel's **people** (the Jews) and his **holy city** (Jerusalem).
- Unless the church has become Israel, it is not in view here.
- Talbot calls the seventy weeks "God's calendar for Israel" in the sense that it does not focus on the Gentiles or the church.



Chapter 9....

- **To finish the transgression:** This says that transgression itself will be finished.
- Taken literally, this means establishing an entirely new order on earth, with an end to man's rebellion against God.
- "The culmination of appointed years will witness the conclusion of man's 'transgression' or 'rebellion' against God — a development most naturally entered into with the establishment of an entirely new order on earth. This seems to require nothing less than the inauguration of the kingdom of God on earth." (Archer)
- **To make an end of sins:** Taking these words at face value, this means not only the **end** of the guilt of sin, but an **end** of sin itself. It means to "seal up" or to "restrain" sins. This looks to a new, redeemed world.
- **To make reconciliation for iniquity:** Man's **iniquity** must be reconciled to God's justice and holiness. This work was clearly accomplished at the cross.



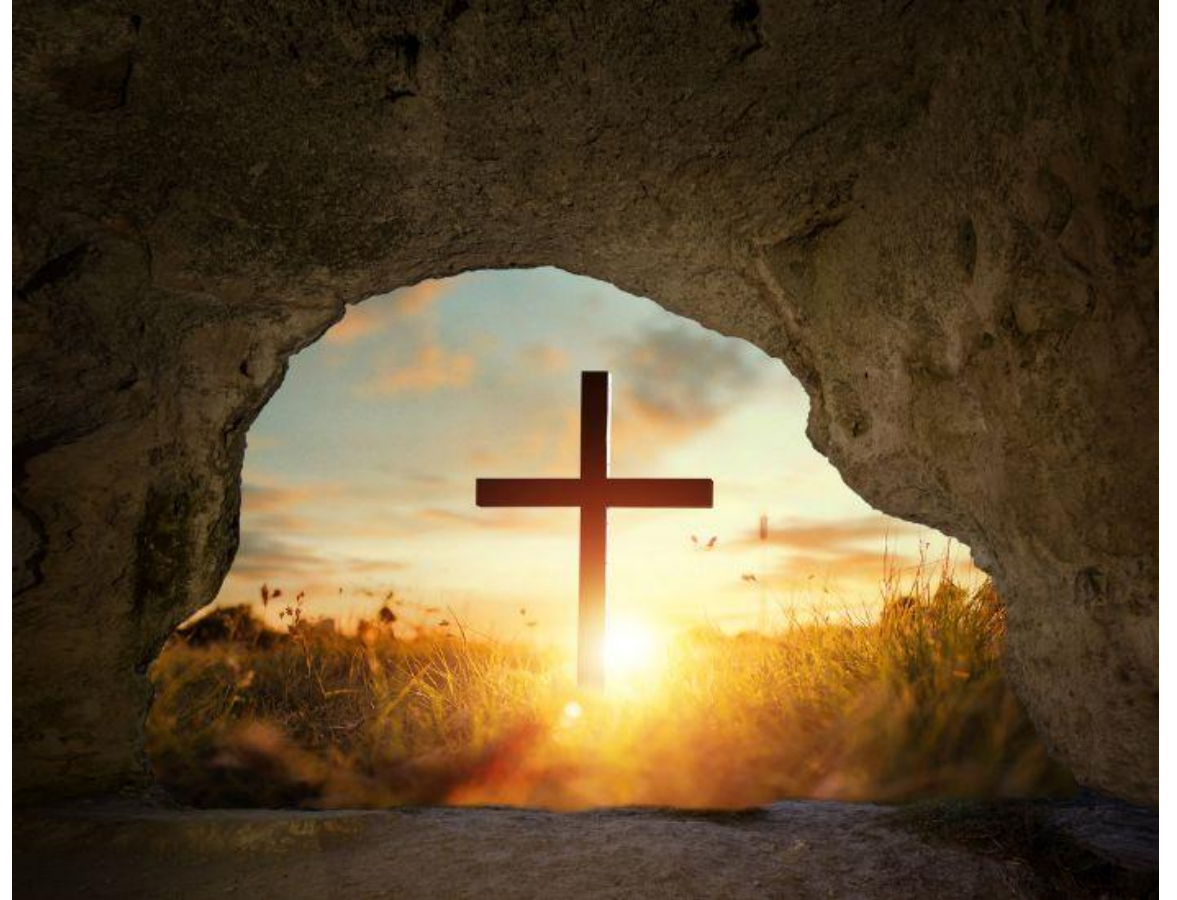
Chapter 9....

- **Until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks:**
- Gabriel's message to Daniel was simple and striking.
- 483 years — that is, 69 units of seven years —
- would pass from the time of the command recorded in Nehemiah 2:1-8
- until the appearance of **Messiah the Prince**



In Summary...

- Daniel was asking about the 70 years and God took him on a tour of 70 x7 years!
- The Angel basically informed Daniel, not only about the return of the Jews to their land but also His fulfilment of prophecy to Abraham and David.
- That which Isaiah and the prophets had spoken would come into manifestation at the arrival of the Messiah – Jesus Christ!
- This just shows us that God knows everything that will happen even to the Day!!
- We will further examine other elements of Daniel, when we read the Book of Revelation.



In Summary...

- God's Promise to Abraham in the beginning is the thread throughout the history of the Israelites.
- He renews the promise through David that through him would come one who will reign forever.
- Even when Israel messed up badly and had to be justly punished through conquest, captivity and exile, God was steadfast to His promise.
- God went with them into exile and would come back with them to start afresh and get ready for the Messiah.
- We will conclude our Prophet series next week as we examine "The Return" in Haggai, Zachariah and Malachi.

