

Dr. Ernest Martin's Home Study Course: Lesson 11

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These notes, composed from 2013 on, are based on taped Home Study Course made between 1977-98 by Dr. Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D. Former Head of Theology for the Worldwide Church of God; he resigned in January 1974 because of his unresolved doctrinal issues with the administration. Sadly Dr. Martin died in January 2002, a great loss to the world and to those who seek Biblical truth.

BIBLE STUDY LESSON 11 THE INTER-TESTAMENT PERIOD

It is important to know what happened during the four hundred year period gap between the canonisation of the Old Testament by Ezra around 400 B.C., and the birth of Christ Jesus in 3 B.C. Ezra had 120 helpers, and they were called the Sopherim which means 'counters' in Hebrew, To ensure the accuracy of any and all copies of the original texts, every letter was counted meticulously, and if any error at all was detected, then that copy was destroyed. This ensured the accuracy of the texts.

Most know little of this period, and there is some skeletal information in the Bible, and the 70 weeks prophecy in Daniel is the one and only key that bridges the gap between the Old and the New Testament, and goes on to prophesy events just prior to the Second Advent.

There are many anomalies, and not everyone can resolve them. There is much more historical information that we need to understand, and put flesh on the bones.

Daniel 9:1 In the first year of Darius (538 B.C.) the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; 2 In the first year of his 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.

Then follows the introduction of the seventy weeks prophecy.

Daniel 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, 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 most Holy.

Notice the progression, to finish the transgression, to make an end to sins eventually, and to make reconciliation by the death of Christ, and bring in everlasting righteousness at Christ's return.

Daniel 9:25 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: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

This word 'determined' in the Hebrew actually means 'cut out', or separated. The Emperor Titus destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 A.D., but this was not the time when the Abomination of Desolation took place, that is yet to come.

Virtually everyone agrees that these are seventy 'weeks' of years that span from the the 'going forth of the commandment to restore and build the Temple' until to coming of the Messiah. Seven weeks plus three score and two weeks is 7+ 62 weeks equals 69 weeks. But there are seventy weeks' of years which is $70 \times 7 = 490$ years. The last week is defined by verse 26, Messiah shall be cut off but not for himself.

There are two Princes in this prophecy. The second prince is about an individual who shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.

Daniel 9:26 ... and the people of the prince (who is this prince? Not Messiah the Prince. It is the little horn, the man of sin, the antichrist, etc.)) that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; 27 And he (the second prince) shall confirm the **a** (Hebrew) covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week 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.

This cannot be Christ who is confirming the covenant, which He confirmed back in the time of Moses. This is to do with a 'covenant' a 'contract' that will be made between this prince and some people that will last for one week, which actually is a 'week' of seven years. And in the midst of the week, he shall cause 'the sacrifice and the oblation to cease', that is in the Temple.

This is not past, and it is not yet, as there is no Temple, and no sacrifices for him to cause to cease. People have wondered if a new Temple were built on perhaps Mount Moriah, whether there would be sacrifices. Yes there will be a Temple, with all the furniture and decorations of the original, and there will be sacrifices. Including the altar of burnt offering, and the Holy of Holies.

After three and a half years, half of the seven years, the sacrifices and oblation will cease. The abomination of desolation will be set up by the man

that will make desolate, this is the 'Little Horn' , the man of sin, or the Beast of Revelation.

The prophecies of Daniel 11 and 12 shows more on this period, and of the abomination of desolation and the great tribulation.

So there are four divisions of time covered by this prophecy. Seven weeks, or $7 \times 7 = 49$ years, plus three score and two weeks which is $62 \times 7 = 434$ weeks equals $69 \times 7 = 483$ years weeks. 483 years from the going forth of the commandment to rebuild the Temple and Jerusalem to the birth of Christ

But there are seventy weeks' of years which is $70 \times 7 = 490$ years. The last week is defined by verse 26, Messiah shall be cut off (crucified and killed) but not for himself.

The Old Testament Canonisation was done by Ezra in the 5th Century B.C., with Nehemiah and 120 helpers. It was at this time that Ezra introduced the 'square script' manner of writing the Hebrew language.

In Isaiah 8, God prophecies the destruction and the canonisation to come.

Isaiah 8:13 Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. 14 And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 15 And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken. 16 Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.

Notice the it is the decree of the Lord, YHWH, Christ who orders that His Book is to be 'bound up', and 'sealed' securely by His disciples the Prophets.

Christ referred to the three divisions of the Scriptures in the Old Testament, the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms or writings (Hagiographa) in Luke 24.

Luke 24:44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

When Ezra and his helpers were doing the work of the Canonisation, Ezra was making annotations to the Law and to Chronicles which formed vital information for us to see the Scriptural authority for the bridging of the 483 year period. At the end of the Law of Moses, Ezra added a postscript telling of the death of Moses.

Deuteronomy 34:5 So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. 6 And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. 7 And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.

Ezra also tells of the ordination of Joshua, authorised by Moses to lead Israel after his death.

Deuteronomy 34:9 And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Then follows a specific and clear statement that there had arisen no Prophet like Moses who knew God 'face to face' between the time of Moses' death, and the 5th Century B.C. When Ezra was writing this. There had of course been Prophets during this period, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Minor Prophets, to mentions a few, but none was a Lawgiver or of the rank of Elohim.

Deuteronomy 34:10 And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,

Earlier in Deuteronomy God, YHWH Elohim, says He will raise up a Prophet from within the people of Israel in times to come.

Deuteronomy 18:15 The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;

Notice, like unto me said Moses. Moses was a Lawgiver, and he had the rank of Elohim and was appointed to be in place of God to Aaron.

Exodus 4:16 And he (Aaron) shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.

So the Prophet to come who would be like Moses would have the rank of God, and was to be a Lawgiver, and that Prophet to come was Christ.

Deuteronomy 18:17 And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. 18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. 19 And it shall come to pass,

that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

God also puts in another warning which is a reminder to us about how we can recognise false ministers and false prophets.

Deuteronomy 18:20 But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. 21 And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? 22 When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

Sadly many, many people have fallen prey to 'Christian' ministers who were not who they appeared to be.

2 Corinthians 11:14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

In the Divine Order of Books, the last book of the Bible should be Chronicles, but the last book we have chronologically speaking is Malachi. It is to the end of Malachi that Ezra appends another postscript telling of the Elijah to come.

Malachi 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: 6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Elijah was a priest, and John the Baptist was a priest, but although he was a type of 'Elijah', he was not **the** Elijah to come. Christ was the Elijah to come.

So in the last book of the Divine order, we have another link.

2 Chronicles 36:22 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 23 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up.

Let him go up. Go where? To Jerusalem.

This section of this home study lesson concerning the seventy year prophecy we have just covered is another prime example of the 'here a little and there a little' way the Bible is written and constructed by Christ. Correctly used, this

principle can help us to greater understanding as we study.

Christ is the centre of the Bible, and of all history, and Christ directed from heaven all the events recorded by Luke in the book of Acts.

When Alexander the Great was in power, he investigated the gods of all the nations he subdued, and found many similarities in the practices and the names of the various local gods.

God took the name of YHWH away from Israel because of their spiritually adulterous behaviour with other gods, and disallowed Israel from speaking that name under any circumstances. The Israel and the Jews were also absorbing the philosophies of one worldism started by Nebuchadnezzar in the 6th Century B.C.

After the death of Alexander, the kingdom was divided, although into four, in reality two cultures emerged. The Syrian Seleucids, and the Egyptian Ptolomaics. They both absorbed the Hellenistic Greek philosophies, and both vied for control of Palestine.

After 198 B.C., the Jews went into a period of religious anarchy. Some wanted to put the Scriptures back into synagogues, but they had absorbed so much error in regard to such a large number of teachings and doctrines that had no basis whatsoever in the original manuscripts and therefore they could not justify by the Bible. The Pharisees also claimed to be following Zadok, but they were not, and Zadok had gone off on his own way.

Ezekiel 44:15 But the priests the Levites, the sons of **Zadok**, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord God:

So the Pharisees began to make up the 'Oral Law', and claimed that the heathen had learned their practices from Moses Law, which of course was sheer nonsense. Thus they had their 'authority', and that is what Christ was talking about when he was condemning the Pharisees for teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

The Sadducees objected to the 'Oral Law'. The Pharisees which means 'separatists' relied upon it almost completely.

The Essenes had gone far away from scriptural adherence, and embraced the doctrines of reincarnation and the immortality of the soul.

The same thing has happened in our era in much of 'Churchianity', where these two Satanic teachings are very widely accepted.

Some even believe various stages of a kind of 'life' after death, in heaven, or in limbo, or purgatory, or at worst in hell to burn for ever. These notions are totally the inventions of men devised to give them a form of control over

others.

In 175 B.C., there was a man called 'Joseph the Permitter' who changed many laws and added many of his own, claiming to be led by the Holy Spirit, which of course he was not.

The Pharisees also claimed to be guided by God's Holy Spirit, and used that as their authority to invent all kinds of new 'laws' which as Christ said, they 'bound' onerous practice of them, 'heavy burdens' on the Jews. They made the Sabbath burdensome, instead of a delight.

A lot of Greek ideas were embraced and included in their teachings, again this is true of many churches today in our era. One such teaching was that when a person died, their body died, but their spirit had an 'immortal vigour', not exactly 'life', but not death either.

Some say this was the case with Christ, his body died, but His spirit did not.

When we are dead, we are dead, and although the Bible refers to death as a 'sleep' that is only a type, because in sleep we breathe, and dream, and are still alive, but in the 'sleep' of death, we have nothing going on.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.*

Any teachings that suggests that the dead are really not totally dead strike at the very core of the central truth of the Bible. If it were true, then Christ did not die for our sins, we are not cleansed by His sacrifice, and we cannot be presented to the Father spotless and guiltless, so we do not have salvation.

1 Timothy 6:14 That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: 15 Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; 16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

Christ the man is the only One who has Immortality, given back to Him three days after he died, dead in the grave for three days and nights.

If we do not believe Christ dies, we are in our sins, and we have no prospect of Salvation. Christ gave up His Godship, and came to earth as a man for the precise purpose of dying for our sins.

First Corinthians, Thessalonians, are about the 'out' resurrection, that of those that Christ calls out to be in the first resurrection, others not called 'out' will have to wait for another time. Christ calls His dead saints 'up' out of the graves, not down from a life in heaven!

The central key to Christianity, to the purpose and meaning of our life here on Earth is Christ's death and resurrection which is our guarantee of salvation.