

Ancient Words—God in Control: Daniel, Darius and the Decree

God's control of world events is recorded by King David in Psalms 22.27-28: "All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, for dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations." David then records God's own proclamation in Psalms 46.10: "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

The specific events recorded in the Ancient Words of Daniel 9 and Ezra 6 are confirmation of God's presence in the role of nations. Daniel has been in exile for many years yet has served in the royal courts of at least 4 nations. This last nation or empire is Persia and is ruled by Cyrus the Great with Darius 1 serving over the captured Babylonian kingdom. Persia is the largest ruling empire ever in world history during this time in 550 BC. Over 50 million people are under Persian rule representing just under half the world's population. Daniel and friends have survived firey furnace, lion's den, and now Daniel finds himself serving in the courts of kings who control almost 50% of the known world. Daniel reads the words of Jeremiah's prophecy about the Jews 70 years in exile and prayerfully cries out to God to restore his exiled nation of Israel and to rebuild the holy city of Jerusalem. While Daniel is in prayer, the angel, Gabriel, appears to Daniel announcing that his prayers have been heard and answered: "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One (Messiah), the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens', and sixty-two 'sevens'." Gabriel has just revealed to Daniel the exact time line between a nation's decree, a small nation restored and the coming of Christ. This event occurred in 538 BC and Daniel just heard an answered prayer both for Jerusalem and for the future of the world.

The decree is formally issued a few years later in 515 BC by Darius in Ezra 6: "In the first year of King Cyrus, the king issued a decree concerning the temple of God in Jerusalem: Let the temple be rebuilt....The costs are to be paid by the royal treasury....The gold and silver articles of the house of God which King Neb. took are to be returned....I decree what you are to do to assist in the construction of this house of God...I decree that if anyone changes this decree, a beam is to be pulled from his house and he is to be impaled on it....I Darius have decreed it. Let it be carried out with haste." The Jews returned home, the temple was rebuilt, the city was restored just as Gabriel told Daniel. God controlled the mind and heart of King Cyrus in Ezra 1.1 and that resulted in the decree by King Darius. A small "nation", Judah, was released from the most powerful nation on earth and given a re-birth back in its homeland.

The 7-sevens and 62-sevens dating prophecy is agreed upon by almost all bible scholars and historians to mean 49 years and 434 years which when added equal 483 years. Gabriel stipulated that not only would Jerusalem be rebuilt after 70 years of exile, which came true, but that the Anointed One, Messiah, would come in 483 years from the date of the decree which

was issued in 515 BC. If you add 483 to 515, the number is 998, which is 2 from "0". If you advance on a timeline 515 BC by 483 years, you arrive at 2 BC. This date is precisely, biblically significant to the coming of Christ as you might recall: Herod ordered the slaying of all male babies born in 2 BC and younger by calculating the 2 year period of time the wise men had been following the star to Bethlehem. God is in control of all nations, including the United States, including the Kingdom of God, as the Ancient Words proclaim in Psalms 47.8-9: "God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne. The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham, for the kings of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted."

Sj-11/16