Pinebrooke Community Church 16 March 2025 “The Messiah in View” Daniel 9:20-24

 Ignorance is bliss! Why do we say that? Where did it come from? What does it mean? It was a term coined by Thomas Gray in a 1742 poem entitled, Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College originally uttered by Publius Syrus. The full quote is *“Where ignorance is bliss, ‘tis folly to be wise.”*  For some of us sometimes it just feels easier to live life without knowing. Yet, in these chapters of Daniel’s biography there is much God wants Daniel and his readers to know. That is why God gave Daniel his vision. Daniel didn’t choose it. That is why God sent Gabriel to explain it, Daniel didn’t call Gabriel. The point is God is a communicator; He was then, and He is now.

 *While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the Lord my God for his holy hill – while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. (3:00 PM) He instructed me and said to me, Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision: “Seven ‘sevens are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.”*

 Noice what Gabriel says. God responds quickly to Daniel’s prayer because of who God is. The Lord listens to your heart before your prayer is even in your mouth. Notice how He operates. He understands our need and He is at work ahead of our words. Notice His love for those who follow Him: He is busy working out the best plan for your life because of His love and your faith. As a communicator God is revealing His calendar of the future to Daniel to relay to his readers, first Jew and then Gentile. The numbers can be confusing to us, but they communicated to Daniel. The net of the communication was that God had a plan that would involve Jesus’ advents. Jesus’ first coming had three purposes. The first purpose was to finish the transgressions. There is often the case when the words used matter a great deal in our understanding. In Gabriel’s first Hebrew word to describe finishing the transgression the word used was to finish the crime committed. Sin can be a crime against God when the perpetrator knows what he is doing is wrong. This is an open rebellion rather than accidental sin. The issue being addressed is their open rebellion, *“The kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One. Let us break their chains, they say, and throw off their fetters.”* (Psalm 2:2-3). The moral law of God is hard for fleshly man. Now a days what used to be considered sin is now acceptable as a personal or private choice. Resisting God’s moral code as outdated is characteristic of moral crime. The second purpose for Jesus’ advent was to make an end to sins. This word for sin means to miss the mark, to offend God. It is the same as what Paul writes in Romans 3:23, *“… for all fall short of the glory of God.”* God had purposed for the off-spring of Abraham to be a light to the Gentiles (Genesis 12:3), but they had preferred the darkness of the surrounding nations and thus gave up their purpose. Sins will be atoned for in Christ. The connection is made in Romans 11:25-27, *“I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so, all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”* Paul refers to Isa. 59, 27, and Jer. 31. Because of Christ’s sacrifice He atoned for our sins and merits our singular allegiance. The third purpose of His first advent was to make reconciliation for iniquity. In Gabriel’s words the covering over of iniquity means to twist or bend. The people of God had been living a bent lifestyle for generations. When people bend the Word to fit their personal lifestyles it is a bent lifestyle. That is twisted living! This then is a message brought in the first advent by which to get unbent. Jesus’ Second Coming also has three purposes as well in God’s plan. The first purpose is to bring everlasting righteousness. Jesus’ description of this righteousness was expressed in Matthew’s gospel, 23:27-28. *“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but, on the inside, you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.”* Jeremiah alluded to His coming, 23:5-6. ***“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteousness.”*** This will be the nature of Jesus’ message in the Day of the Lord. Remember in our study of Peter’s epistles that the church was anticipating the Second Coming, the Day of the Lord. It was His thorough righteousness that they were looking forward to. Israel had not yet identified nor accepted the redemption of Christ as a universal truth, but here there will be a day when they do. The second purpose of Jesus Second Coming is to seal up new visions and prophecies. In the words of our mentor, “Once the nation of Israel recognizes Jesus as the Messiah there will be no more need for vision or prophecy (p. 197).” “All that is to come has already been predicted.” The activities on earth will be real and finite experiences. The third purpose Gabriel describes is the anointing of the Most Holy. Scholars say this could mean one or two possibilities. This could refer to Jesus or it could refer to a place of worship since the temple in Jerusalem was always a physical place. Whatever the setting the Ancient of Days will be worshipped. The point is, God has a plan for history on earth future beyond Daniel’s lifetime. We know that. What then does that mean for us? Good question! God has a plan for Israel, and we live in the shadow of that plan. The noise that fills our airwaves is simply that - noise. God is a communicator extraordinaire and can move quickly when it fits His purposes. How often has our prayer gone on and on and then suddenly there’s the answer, as though it were all of a sudden. As we learn to know Him His ways don’t surprise us. Since we live in a realm that includes time, God’s movement within our realm seems to always include time. God gets to define the timeliness in His communication. In His ways, God has covered all the bases from His side. Nothing is too hard nor too far in the future. He always has it! Remember that! God always has purposes in what He does. When was and when will have always been a part of Jesus’ advents. The when biblically described as, “in the fullness of time.” The answer to the question consistently is, when the time is right according to God’s will. From when He spoke to Daniel through Gabriel, the first advent would take place within 490 years. The second advent will take place when the necessary steps take place. Throughout the scriptures God has always given us clues, but different than the game, Clue, there is no mystery to be solved just one to be lived. Recognize this there is a future for Israel in God’s story of redemption. Don’t be dissuaded by the noise. God has a sovereign hold on all that is. Therefore, for us, in the present, aligning our hearts with the heart of God is our most important task. It will lead us to be the kind of person we are to become, and it will lead us to do what he has called us to do for He has called each of us by name. Our place, each of us, is unique in His universe. No one else is designed to be me and no one else is given the task I have been given.