

# THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF DANIEL

by

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## Preface

During these perilous times, men are asking questions concerning what we may expect in the future. Life seems to be becoming more involved and less certain as the years pass. Standards which have been considered in former generations as permanent and unshakable have in recent years been cast into the discard. Ideas and criteria, new and unproven, have been adopted and our entire civilization is moving at a rate never before known. No one can keep apace with the developments which are springing up overnight. Well may we ask, "Whither are we headed?"

The only answer to this question is to be found in the infallible Word of God. According to it, we are now living in the last days of the present dispensation. The sand in the hourglass, as pictured on the front cover of this volume, is now running out for this age. Mighty events and stupendous changes are now in the offing. The world is facing a crisis the like of which has never confronted men since the times of Noah. The one thought which should concern us most is, "Are we ready to meet the Master's summons?"

The greater portion of chapter two appears in chapter thirteen of my volume, *Messiah: His First Coming Schedule*. In this treatise I have discussed thoroughly the chronology which appears in the Old Testament. After twenty-five years of studying chronology I am convinced that the Scriptures alone can be relied upon for accurate data concerning man's earthly career. Everyone who reads this present volume and who wishes an accurate knowledge of the Scriptures should examine *Messiah: His First Coming Scheduled*.

May the Lord be pleased to use the present study to stimulate in the reader a desire to investigate farther this most fascinating theme of Biblical chronology.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	ONE	EARLY PROMISES OF A REDEEMER OF MANKIND	4
CHAPTER	TWO	THE SIXTY-NINE WEEKS OF YEARS	10
CHAPTER	THREE	THE PROPHETIC STUDENTS OF THE FIRST CENTURY	53
CHAPTER	FOUR	THE STOPPING OF GOD'S CLOCK	59
CHAPTER	FIVE	THE SEVENTIETH WEEK	65

## CHAPTER ONE

### EARLY PROMISES OF A REDEEMER OF MANKIND

When man sinned, he fell from his high estate. God then drove him out of the Garden of Eden lest he should put forth his hand and partake of the tree of life and live forever in his fallen condition. When, however, that tragic event took place, God immediately made an announcement that He would send the Redeemer into the world who would deliver a crushing blow to Satan, the instigator of all trouble and evil.

This pronouncement is found in the language spoken by the Lord to the serpent: "And Jehovah God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life; and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." These verses constitute the text of the Bible. Everything that is recorded within the sacred volume is but the unfolding of this announced plan to salvage everything that is possible from the wreckage caused by Satan and sin.

In this germinal statement, one sees that there is to be a conflict between him who is called the seed of the serpent on the one hand and Him who is designated as the seed of the woman on the other. What the former will do to the latter is compared to a flesh wound upon the heel, whereas what the latter will inflict upon the former is compared to a crushing blow upon the head. While this statement has within it the embryonic thought of a struggle between the forces of good on the one hand and the powers of evil on the other, which had a partial fulfillment at Calvary, it is a definite prediction of a specific conflict that will take place between these two personalities or individuals.

In the expression "the seed of the woman" lies inherent the idea of the virgin birth of the Redeemer of mankind. If one had only this single statement and no additional information, it would be difficult for him to conceive of a definite idea regarding the virgin birth of the Savior. Nevertheless, since the genealogy of men was always reckoned through the male and never through the female, this expression immediately assumes something very extraordinary and strange about this individual. When it is read, however, in the light of later revelations, it becomes immediately apparent that what is enigmatic

in the prediction is elucidated by the doctrine of the virgin birth of King Messiah. This mystery in the light of these later predictions becomes a revelation.

But who is the seed of the serpent? The proper approach to this question is a close examination of the expression "the seed of the woman." This phrase evidently is a reference to some person, a man, who, as one gathers from the context, is more than a man. Since "the seed of the serpent" has this mortal combat with "the seed of the woman," it becomes evident that he likewise, in all probability, is a man. But there is something supernatural about this individual. There are hints here and there in the Scriptures that offer clues as to his identity and activities. Since this seed of the woman, who is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, is to deal a terrific blow to the "seed of the serpent," and since, according to the Book of Revelation chapter 19, Christ at His second advent will come in mortal combat with the beast, who is none other than the Antichrist described in John's first epistle, and slays him, one immediately arrives at the conclusion that probably this world dictator is the one who is referred to as the seed of the serpent. But why should such a character as he be thus designated? An examination of Revelation 13 and 17 possibly will unlock the mystery. This individual receives the death stroke in the middle of the Tribulation. But from it he is healed or restored. Prior to this incident he enjoys the period that is referred to in Revelation 17 as "the beast that thou sawest was." He is slain and thus is ushered in the time that is designated as the period when he "is not." During this time he will be in Hades; that is, his spirit will be there. But he is not to remain there always. Shortly he is restored to life; Satan bringing him back by his supernatural power and energizing him. This event seems to be the thing referred to by Paul in II Thessalonians 2:8 in the statement, "whose coming is according to the working of Satan." When he is thus brought back to life, he enters that period of his career referred to in these words, "and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go into perdition."

When he is thus brought back from the dead and Satan has full possession of him, all men who have heard but have not accepted the truth will be deceived by his supernatural powers and activity, and the whole world will wonder after this beast. The resurrection of this lately-slain potentate by the power of Satan may have been in the sacred penman's mind when he referred to him as "the seed of the serpent." The combat of Genesis 3:15, studied, therefore, in the light of the many passages that point to the

final clash between the Christ and the Antichrist, seems to be the thing referred to in this primeval announcement.

This promise of a redeemer who would put down all opposition to God made an indelible impression upon both Adam and Eve. When their first son, Cain, was born, Eve immediately said, "I have gotten a man with *the help of Jehovah*" (Gen. 4:1). The words, "the help of," are in italics in the American Revised Version. This fact shows that the translators supplied them, thinking that they would convey to the English reader the correct idea of the Hebrew text. Sometimes this device in the translation, designed to aid those not knowing the original, is indeed helpful; in other instances, it is misleading. This case happens to be one of the latter in my judgment.

Let us translate literally what is in the Hebrew without supplying any words. The sentence reads thus: "I have gotten a man, even Jehovah." The early Jewish Targum, the Aramaic translation, renders it this way: "I have gotten a man, even the angel of Jehovah." These Hebrew scholars supplied the word "angel." In doing this they were nearer the meaning of the original than our translators, who inserted the words as indicated above. In the early books of the Scriptures at various times the "angel of Jehovah" is said to have appeared to certain ones of the ancient worthies. Hence the Jewish translators, realizing that there is a supernatural element in Eve's statement and knowing that the angel of Jehovah did make appearances to man at different times, inserted the word "angel." When one simply makes a literal translation of the Hebrew, as given above, he sees an echo of the primitive promise in her statement. In other words, she thought that her firstborn was the fulfillment of the promise regarding the seed of the woman. But, as the sequel to the story shows, she was sadly mistaken.

Lamech, when his son Noah was born, had clearly in mind the original promise, for he said, when he named his son Noah, "This same shall comfort us in our work and in the toil of our hands, *which cometh* because of the ground which Jehovah hath cursed" (Gen. 5:29).

The word "Noah" means literally "rest." Lamech knew that the world was suffering under the curse which fell upon the earth when Adam and Eve sinned. In his prophetic vision, however, he was granted a view of the work which his son would accomplish in the unfolding of God's plan of the ages. He therefore spoke of his future accomplishments by

saying that God would comfort their hearts in their work and toil because of the curse which was resting upon the ground. When this prophetic utterance is read in the light of the historical facts concerning the flood and its spiritual significance, one can see that Lamech was not given all the truth, but only a partial vision of the future. The Lord's sending a flood to destroy the wicked from the face of the earth was indeed a mercy and was also a comfort to Lamech, Noah, and their families. They realized that the world was becoming so very wicked that life for the godly would become more miserable day by day. Thus to purge the world of the wicked was indeed a comfort and consolation to the righteous. It is altogether quite probable that as Lamech viewed the future and saw the work of his son, there also appeared the dim outline of Him whom Noah typified; namely, the redeemer of man who will in deed and in truth deliver man from the toil of his hands which has been brought about by the falling of the curse upon the earth at the time of man's disobedience.

Lamech, like his grandfather Enoch, had his gaze fixed upon the future, expectantly looking for the day when the "seed of the woman" would bring the longed-for deliverance. Doubtless this hope had been kindled in the heart of this venerable patriarch by Enoch, his grandfather, who in prophetic vision looked forward and saw the time when the Redeemer of mankind will come with ten thousands of his saints and will execute judgment upon the wicked and the ungodly (Jude 14, 15).

Abraham, the friend of God, who walked with his Maker by faith, looked forward with eager anticipation to the time when this Deliverer would make His appearance upon earth and would free man from the effects of the fall and the curse. He, his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob were prophets to whom God gave visions of the future (Ps. 105:13-16). By faith Abraham was granted a vision of the day of Christ and was glad (John 8:56).

Upon his deathbed, Jacob, in vision, looked out into the future and gave the outline of the condition of his descendants in the latter days. In this unfolding of the future he saw the time when Messiah, who is called Shiloh, would make His appearance; for he declared, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be" (Gen. 49:10). Without a doubt Jacob saw the time when Messiah would come and stated that the ruling

power and authority would not depart from the tribe of Judah until He should make His appearance. For the first time in the sacred record is there given any idea as to the time when He would appear. We must admit, however, that this prediction is rather vague and indefinite, but the time element does begin to appear dimly in this prediction.

Balaam, the false prophet, invited by Balak, king of Moab, to curse the Children of Israel who were at that time passing along his borders, was granted a prophetic vision of Israel and of her future. Thus, the Spirit of God came upon him four times and gave him information concerning Israel and her future king. For instance, in the first oracle (Num. 23:7-10) he revealed the fact, regarding the promise made to Abraham, that his seed should become as numerous as the stars of heaven and emphasized this thought in the following rhetorical question: "Who can count the dust of Jacob, Or number the fourth part of Israel?" The vision of Israel thus increased was so very entrancing to the false prophet that he exclaimed spontaneously, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" In his next oracle (Num. 23:18-24), he saw that Israel would be free from all perverseness and iniquity and that Jehovah God would be in her midst while the shout of a king would be heard among them. Thus, in this oracle there is clearly revealed the fact that Israel's future King in her midst is to be Jehovah. In the third oracle (Num. 24:3-9), a vision of the land of Israel when the curse is lifted and its fertility restored is given in the most glowing words. Reference again is made to the might of her king.

In the last oracle granted him, Balaam caught a clear vision of this future sovereign of Israel and shouted:

"I see him, but not now;  
I behold him, but not nigh.  
There shall come forth a star out of Jacob,  
And a sceptre shall rise out of Israel,  
And shall smite through the corners of Moab  
And break down all the sons of tumult" (Num. 24:17).

Balaam beheld this future king, but it was clearly revealed to him that His appearance upon earth was not to be expected immediately. The implication, however,



is that His coming would be in the rather distant future. Thus the time element again appears dimly to be seen here on the horizon of prophetic vision.

The history of Israel has indeed been one of pain, tragedy, and catastrophe. Never has a people been more persecuted than the Hebrews. Throughout their long career their history has been written largely in tears and blood. It is true that during short intervals she has enjoyed a little peace and prosperity. But these periods in comparison with the times of sorrow have been indeed very short.

Continual suffering and disaster has at times heightened and intensified the longing for the appearance of the deliverer. Naturally the question was repeatedly asked by both the prophets and the psalmists: "How long, O Lord, how long?" From the contexts in which this question appears, it is clear that information with reference to the time when deliverance would be wrought by the appearance of King Messiah was sought. It was as the apostle Peter declared: These messengers of God were constantly seeking the answer to the question concerning the time and the manner of time when the Messiah of whom they spoke would make his appearance. "Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them" (I Pet. 1:10,11). The prophets and the psalmists were indeed very much concerned about the salvation which we have in Christ now. They therefore thought about and searched diligently concerning what time and the manner of the time the Holy Spirit had in mind when He foretold the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow.

After centuries of silence on this point, the Lord finally through the prophet Daniel gave the answer to the question. This revelation is recorded in Daniel 9 and was given in the year 538 B.C., which, in Biblical chronology, is the year 3587 Anno Homonis.

With the data which we have collected in this chapter, we are now ready to approach an intensive study of the one prophecy of the Old Testament which gives the exact time when Messiah would be cut off. Of course, as we shall see later, He had to appear on earth before He could be cut off and have nothing.

## CHAPTER TWO

### SIXTY-NINE WEEKS OF YEARS

A rapid survey of the principal messianic predictions found in the Pentateuch has awakened in our hearts a desire to know the time specified by the prophets when Messiah would make His first appearance. To this investigation we shall now turn.

We are told upon good authority that "a text apart from its context is a pretext." The correctness of this statement immediately becomes apparent, when one notes the present day use of the Scriptures. All too often a verse of the sacred Word is snatched from its setting and is used as a basis for a lecture or sermon. Very frequently only a portion of a sentence is selected because certain words appearing within the statement seem appropriate as a title for the subject to be discussed. Such a practice led one of my seminary professors to remark on many occasions, "I know the Bible is true because it has survived so very much poor preaching." In view of this abuse of Scripture texts, I shall give herewith the entire oracle which forms the basis of the present discussion that the reader may have the entire picture before his mind as we enter into the study of this most intriguing passage which unfolds before our vision an outline of the ages beginning with the times of the prophet.

**9** In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans, **2** in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years whereof the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah the prophet, for the accomplishing of the desolations of Jerusalem, even seventy years.

**3** And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. **4** And I prayed unto Jehovah my God, and made confession, and said, Oh, Lord, the great and dreadful God, who keepeth covenant and loving kindness with them that love him and keep his commandments, **5** we have sinned, and have dealt perversely and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even turning aside from thy precepts and from thine ordinances; **6** neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, that spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. **7** O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of face, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou has driven them, because of their trespass

that they have trespassed against thee. 8 O Lord, to us belongeth the confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. 9 To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness; for we have rebelled against him, 10 neither have we obeyed the voice of Jehovah our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. 11 Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even turning aside, that they should not obey thy voice; therefore hath the curse been poured out upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against him. 12 And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil; for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. 13 As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet have we not entreated the favor of Jehovah our God, that we should turn from our iniquities, and have discernment in thy truth. 14 Therefore hath Jehovah watched over the evil, and brought it upon us for Jehovah our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth, and we have not obeyed his voice. 15 And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly. 16 O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, let thine anger and thy wrath, I pray thee, be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are round about us. 17 Now therefore, O our God, hearken unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. 18 O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name; for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies' sake. 19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God, because thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

20 And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before Jehovah my God for the holy mountain of my God; 21 yea, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. 22 And he instructed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come

forth to give thee wisdom and understanding. 23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment went forth, and I am come to tell thee; for thou art greatly beloved; therefore, consider the matter, and understand the vision.

24 Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. 25 Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed one, the prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks; it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troublous times. 26 And after the threescore and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing; 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 even unto the end shall be war; desolations are determined. 27 And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and upon the wing of abominations *shall come* one that maketh desolate; and even unto the full end, and that determined, shall *wrath* be poured out upon the desolate.

As we approach the study of this marvelous prediction, we must keep in mind that God fulfills His prophecies as written and not as interpreted by the speculations of men. In studying this prediction, we shall also bear in mind that there is but one rule by which we may be guided in order to arrive at the correct understanding of any passage. This principle is called "The Golden Rule of Interpretation," which is: "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the context indicate clearly otherwise."

The scientific method of Bible study is what is known as the historico-grammatical exegesis. Those who approach a question from this standpoint and who ask the guidance of the Holy Spirit in their study of a given passage will in most cases arrive at the correct interpretation. We shall therefore begin this study by looking at the situation which gave the occasion for the uttering of this oracle.

## I. THE HISTORICAL SETTING

In order for one to understand the meaning of a given passage, whether in profane or sacred writings, he must study the historical circumstances which called forth the utterance. Especially must one study all of the antecedents which have any bearing upon a prediction in order to arrive at its meaning. If the historical background of any passage be ignored, it will be absolutely impossible for one to understand its full import. In keeping with this scientific principle we shall first study the predictions spoken by Jeremiah on this point.

### A. *Prophecies of Jeremiah 25 and 29*

Jeremiah has rightly been called the weeping prophet. He lived through the crisis of the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem. His heart was crushed on account of the sins of his people and the hardness of their hearts. Although he constantly called his people to repentance and confession of their sins, his messages were unheeded. Finally, the Lord, speaking through him, said that the nation, having gone so very far into rebellion and evil practices, could not escape the punishment due for her sins.

#### 1. ORIGINAL PREDICTION

In the fourth year of Jehoiakim king of Judah, which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the twenty-third of Jeremiah's ministry, the prophet foretold the Babylonian captivity, which, said he, would continue for seventy years. In his original prediction (chapter 25), he made it very clear that the captivity and its sufferings were the results of Israel's sinfulness and rebellion. The Lord called Nebuchadnezzar His Servant—not an obedient and willing servant, but one whom He would use in forwarding His plans and purposes. His using this heathen king is analogous to the way in which He later used Cyrus king of Persia. In 25:9,10 a distressing picture of the final collapse of the nation under Nebuchadnezzar is presented. This prediction is followed by a definite statement concerning the length of the exile in Babylon. "And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years." In verse 12 of this same chapter the prophet promised that at the expiration of this period the captives would be restored to the land of their fathers.

## 2. JEREMIAH'S LETTER TO THE CAPTIVES

The letter referred to in the heading of this section was written by Jeremiah to the exiles in Babylon after Jehoiakim together with the nobles of the land had been deported to Babylon. He sent this communication by the hands of Elasah and Gemariah, who were dispatched by King Zedekiah of Judah on a special mission to Nebuchadnezzar. Of course, these faithful men of God delivered the letter to "the residue of the elders of the captivity," while they were in Babylon conducting the royal business. Jehoiachin's captivity occurred in the year 597 B.C.E. of the popular, current chronology. This letter was not sent until Zedekiah had come into power, for the two men carrying it were dispatched to Babylon by him. We cannot say in just what year the document was drawn up. The oracle found in the preceding chapter (28) was spoken of in the fourth year of Zedekiah. This chapter recounts Jeremiah's conflict with the false prophets in Jerusalem. Since the letter deals with the impostors who were active in Babylon among the captives and since it is placed immediately after this account, it is likely that it was written about the same time, namely, the fourth year of Zedekiah.

Daniel and those who were deported with him had already been in exile between 10 and 15 years. During this time false prophets had arisen among the exiles, who were speaking presumptuously in the name of the Lord, insisting that the captives should not settle down to a regular and ordered life, for, they affirmed, the captives would soon be permitted to return to their native land. At the same time, the false prophets in Jerusalem were predicting a speedy return of their brethren from Babylon. For instance, Hananiah said that within 2 years they would be restored. Of course, Jeremiah refuted these lying predictions. It was with this thought in view that Jeremiah wrote the letter which now is incorporated into his work as chapter 29. In this message he repeated the prediction of seventy years for the exile.

In order that we might see the situation as it was, I wish to examine verses 10-14 of this chapter.

"For thus saith Jehovah, After seventy years are accomplished for Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. 11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith Jehovah, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you hope in your latter end. 12 And ye shall call upon me, and ye shall go and

pray unto me and I will hearken unto you. 13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. 14 And I will be found of you, saith Jehovah, and I will turn again your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith Jehovah; and I will bring you again unto the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive."

In verse 14 we see that the captivity was to continue for seventy years, and that at the expiration of this period God would visit the exiles in causing them to return to the land of their nativity. The restoration would, of course, be according to God's good word to them. According to verse 11 the prophet declared that Israel's return after the seventy years was absolutely necessary in order to the carrying out of the eternal plan of the Almighty for her. God has a plan of the ages, and Israel is the principal actor upon the stage of this world drama during the past and future eras; therefore, the prophet declared that it was necessary for the Lord to restore the exiles at the end of the seventy years of their residence in Babylon. His thoughts for Israel are for good; —to give her hope in the latter end. He could not do that, should the captives remain there perpetually.

We must note particularly that the restoration after the seventy years is blended with the hope of Israel in the latter end. The peculiar literary phenomenon found in this passage is characteristic of the prophetic word. Thus the picture of the return of the captives under Zerubbabel after the seventy years is blended with that of the final and glorious restoration of the entire nation at the end of the age. If this verse were the only passage dealing with this subject, one would naturally conclude that Israel would remain in Palestine until the latter days, when God will completely fulfill and perform His good word concerning the Chosen People.

In verses 12 and 13 the Lord promises Israel that, when she calls upon Him, He will answer; but at the same time He insists that the repentance be genuine and their calling upon Him be in faith. If the prediction had ended with verse 13, one would have thought that Jeremiah was simply looking to the end of the Babylonian captivity when the Lord would restore the captives, and that Israel's calling upon Him at that time was the thing which the prophet here mentions.

When we read verse 14, however, we see that the captivity concerning which he was speaking is one that involves a world-wide dispersion from which she will at the end

of the age be gathered. "And I will be found of you, saith Jehovah, and I will turn again your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations," etc. These words clearly indicate that he had in mind the final and permanent regathering of Israel from the four corners of the earth. This is the same mighty restoration of which he spoke in chapter 23:7,8.

7 "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that they shall no more say, As Jehovah liveth, who brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; 8 but, As Jehovah liveth, who brought up and who led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all the countries whither I had driven them. And they shall dwell in their own land."

Isaiah likewise foretold the same national restoration (Isa. 11:11,12).

Unless one is very careful to note every particular in the development of the thought as he reads verses 10-14, he will not differentiate between the return of the captives from Babylon at the end of the seventy years of exile and the final restoration of the entire nation at the end of the age. Jeremiah's letter to the exiles is immediately followed in this great prophetic book by an extended prediction concerning the new covenant which God will make with both Judah and Israel at their final restoration. The conversion of the nation is likewise foretold. The picture of the future presented in these chapters is tinted with the bright colors of the glorious kingdom age. The casual reader will probably not observe the delicate blending of the pictures of the two restorations, which we know, from our present point of view, are separated thus far by approximately 2500 years, but will see only one return—the one at the conclusion of the Babylonian exile.

We who are living between these two restorations can see that the new covenant was not made with Israel at the time of the return from Babylon, for when this prediction is fulfilled Israel will never again be rooted up from the land. Since she was cast out of it in 70 C.E. and has been scattered among the nations for approximately 1900 years, we know that the latter part of this prophecy has not yet been fulfilled. To us the restoration from Babylon after the seventy years was only a foreshadowing of the final and glorious one in the end time. In reading these chapters we must not look at them from our point of view, but from that of the prophet and his contemporaries. Could the casual hearer or reader at that time see these two restorations and the intervening period? In this



connection I will leave this question unanswered, but in the proper place (Section D) shall discuss it.

### B. *Daniel's Study of Prophecy*

"In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans, 2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years whereof the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah the prophet, for the accomplishing of the desolations of Jerusalem, even seventy years" (Dan. 9:1,2).

Daniel said that he understood from the books the number of years for the desolations of Jerusalem. Evidently, he had been studying several works, one of which was the writings of Jeremiah. But he understood from the *books*. What other volumes did he have that might give light upon the subject? The final chapters of II Kings and II Chronicles tell about the years of the captivity, especially the passage in II Kings 24. Furthermore, since Isaiah foretold that Cyrus was the one who would issue the decree for the rebuilding of both the temple and the city, we may be certain that Daniel had read this prediction. With a fair degree of certainty we may be sure that the books referred to included all of these.

It is important that we understand these facts in order that we may correctly evaluate the word *year*. What kind of year did Daniel have in mind when he read these records? There is but one answer: the type of year that is given in these historical books. The years of which we read in them were the regular solar years consisting of the four seasons. We have already seen that the Hebrews adjusted their calendar by observation of the crops and the seasons. Hence the years of which Daniel had read were the regular solar or tropical years. As we shall all see in this discussion, the message of the angel Gabriel must be interpreted in the light of Daniel's thinking, which was based upon the idea that the word *year* conveyed to him by the historical books. Because of the importance of this fact I cannot lay too much emphasis upon it. But more will be given later.

Daniel informs us that he was reading the book of Jeremiah in the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes. This year was the sixty-eighth of the

seventy-year period of exile. Hence within 2 years of the restoration Daniel was reading the writings of his older contemporary, who had been left in Jerusalem and the latter part of whose life overlapped that of his own. Why did Daniel consume his time reading the forecasts of Jeremiah?

### 1. THE PURPOSE OF PROPHECY

There are design and wisdom in everything which the Lord does. Hence we conclude that there is a purpose served by the prophetic word. He through Amos said that He would not do anything unless He first revealed the matter to His servants, the prophets. The fundamental principle underlying the Lord's making His plans and purposes first known to His servants before putting them into execution is that He has taken His people into a very close and intimate fellowship with Himself. "The friendship of Jehovah is with them that fear Him; And He will show them His covenant" (Ps. 25:14). Prophecy then is not given to satisfy idle curiosity but to cause the Lord's people to understand His plans that they may conform their lives thereto. This fact is beautifully illustrated by Daniel's sincere confession and earnest petition recorded in verses 3 to 19 of chapter 9. At a casual glance we see that he began to confess his own sins and shortcomings together with those of his people and at the same time to plead for an extension of the Lord's mercy toward the whole nation. The prophetic word, therefore, has a definite purpose in the plan of God; namely, that of enabling His people to cooperate with Him in unfolding His plan of the ages. Thus when one reads the predictions with spiritual discernment, he will naturally be led to pray in regard to the matters revealed and will adjust his life and activities in accordance with the divine program.

### 2. LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY

This circumstance furnishes us with one of the clearest examples of how to study and understand the prophetic word. In the original prediction God said that the exiles should remain in captivity seventy years. Daniel read this oracle, believing that the Lord said what He meant and meant what He said. He correctly understood that the expression "seventy years" meant exactly seventy years—nothing more and nothing less. This observation brings me back to the fundamental principle which I often mention, and which I feel is necessary for us to observe in order that we may understand any writings, profane or sacred. The basic principle of interpretation is that each word must be taken at its

original, primary, literal, usual meaning unless there are indications in the connection showing that such is not the case. We should never assign any signification to a given passage other than the usual meaning without warrant from the facts presented in the context. There is nothing in the message of the original prediction indicating a departure from the literal meaning of the words. Hence Daniel correctly understood that the expression seventy years\* was to be taken literally. Knowing that within less than 2 years the period of exile would come to a close, this faithful servant of God immediately began to confess both his own sins and those of the people and to plead for forgiveness and divine favor.

### *C. Daniel's Prayer and Confession*

When one reads the Scriptures, he should think seriously. Daniel believed them implicitly. To him they were the very WORD OF GOD. Hence when he read it, he applied it to his own life. Unless our reading the Word brings us into a closer fellowship with the Lord, our study of the Scriptures is a failure. Invariably when we read them conscientiously, they will bring us to the point of confession and intercession, not only for

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\* A popular hypothesis, current in many circles, is known as "the year-day theory." This doctrine assumes that a day in prophecy foreshadows a year in history. Numbers 14:34 is presented as proof of this position. "After the number of days in which ye spied out the land, even forty days, for every day a year shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my alienation." Ezekiel 4:4-8 is likewise offered as positive proof of this theory.

In the first instance it is quite evident that a day did foreshadow a year in history. Are we warranted from these two exceptional cases to conclude that everywhere a prediction involving the time element is made, a day stands for a year in history? In order to test this hypothesis, let us apply it to the seventy years of Babylonian captivity. The exponents of this theory claim that the prophetic year consists of 360 days, and that each foreshadows a year in history. According to this position we must multiply seventy by 360, the result of which calculation is 25,200. Since by hypothesis each of these so-called prophetic days foreshadows a year in reality, Israel was to remain in Babylon for 25,200 years; hence the restoration from that exile is yet far in the future. As the logical conclusion of the theory proves to be an absurdity, we see that it is not applicable in this instance. Let us test it once more. In Genesis 15:13 we read of the Lord's telling Abraham that his seed should be sojourners in a land not their own and that they should serve the people of the land. The oracle also foretold that this period of affliction should last 400 years. According to the theory, these 400 years would be equivalent to 144,000 days each of which would signify a year of actual history. Therefore by hypothesis, the Israelites have a very long time yet to remain in Egyptian bondage.

In these two instances we observe that this theory reduces itself to an absurdity. If it should be applied to other passages in which a definite time is stated, we should find that in each case an application of this hypothesis would produce a ridiculous absurdity; therefore, I must reject this theory as unscriptural so far as a general principle for interpreting the prophetic word is concerned. This theory will come up for full discussion in chapter XXI. (Ed. Note: refers to chapter XXI of *Messiah: His First Coming Scheduled.*)

ourselves, but also for all the people of God. The primary object of God's giving us His Word is that we should know more perfectly His will to the end that we may fit our plans into the divine purpose and conform our wills to His. Of course, to learn the marvelous and wonderful things revealed in the Word is a source of great satisfaction and joy, both spiritual and intellectual. The primary object of God's revealing His Word to us is not to feed morbid curiosity concerning things past and future, to gratify a purely intellectual craving for knowledge and wisdom, and to satisfy the ambitious longings of the carnally-minded intellectuals, who are simply seeking cultural advantages, but to show us the way back to Himself and to real joy and contentment. It fully meets and completely satisfies the longings of the honest truth-seeker. It also challenges the mental acumen of the profoundest philosophers and scholars and meets their souls' demands. The one purpose the Lord had in mind in giving us His Word is to draw us into a closer fellowship with Himself as was exemplified in the case of Daniel.

When Daniel began to pray, the angel Gabriel was dispatched from heaven to answer his cry. His petition can be read in four minutes. Thus the angel made the long journey through space to his side in this inconceivably short time. This deduction is correct, provided we have the prayer recorded in full. According to the Word of God, the angels are God's messengers for good to those who acknowledge Him. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, And delivereth them" (Ps. 34:7).

#### *D. Gabriel's Mission*

In Daniel 9:22,23 we have recorded the language of the angel to the prophet upon his arrival. In his introductory speech we find an echo of the fact that Daniel had misunderstood what he had read.

##### 1. TO INSTRUCT DANIEL

Gabriel immediately informed Daniel that he had been sent forth "to give thee (Daniel) wisdom and understanding." From the entire context it is clear that, since Daniel was reading Jeremiah's prophecies, and since the angel came to give him wisdom and understanding, the prophet evidently did not understand what he had read; i.e., he did not comprehend the full import of Jeremiah's prediction. Concerning Gabriel's message Daniel, in the beginning of verse 22, said that the angel had instructed him. To instruct

one means to impart knowledge which one does not already possess; therefore we legitimately conclude that Gabriel gave the prophet knowledge concerning the things which he had just read, and which he did not understand. Daniel's statement is, of course, reinforced by Gabriel's, concerning the purpose of his visit. Had the prophet thoroughly understood Jeremiah's writings, Gabriel certainly would not have come to Him.

His misunderstanding the oracle leads me to make the following observation. The prophets were not always inspired. This fact becomes evident when one reads their messages and the statements which they frequently made concerning the coming of the word of the Lord to them on given occasions. Many of their predictions are dated. At times the people went to them and sought information. These men of God would then go to Him in prayer, and He would respond. Whenever the Spirit was upon them, they spoke infallibly. Under these conditions they could make no mistakes. On other occasions when the Spirit was not inspiring them, nor the hand of the Lord was upon them, they could and did draw wrong conclusions concerning certain matters. As an illustration of this fact, may I call attention to the case of Nathan? According to II Samuel 7 David informed the prophet concerning his purpose to erect a temple for the glory of God. Immediately he approved the royal purpose and assured the king that God would be with him. When he gave this bit of encouragement, he was speaking as a man to his friend. That night the word of the Lord came to him reproving him for what he had said to the king and commanding him to countermand his advice given in the energy of the flesh. The reason assigned by the Lord for preventing David from building the temple was that he was a man of war and blood. When the Spirit of the Lord was upon Nathan he, of course, spoke infallibly. On other occasions when the Spirit was not making revelations through him, he could, as at this time make a mistake.

We certainly thank and praise the Lord for the fact that the prophets were unerringly and completely inspired so that they have given us an infallible revelation, upon which we can rely with perfect assurance. The prophetic word, as in many instances, has been verified by literal fulfillment. All of those forecasts which pointed to things that are now past have been literally fulfilled. This fact encourages us to believe that the prophecies which look out into the future will likewise be literally fulfilled just as those which related to the past were accomplished exactly as written.

## 2. TO WARN THE PROPHET

Daniel was like other men. He, of course, had his prejudices, likes, and dislikes. He, like all of us, was naturally subject to the false attitude of dismissing something that did not especially appeal to him, even to the point of rejecting knowledge that he had not already acquired. The angel, knowing this human weakness, spoke to and admonished him: "Therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision." Had there been no occasion for this admonition, Gabriel would never have insisted that he consider the explanation which he was about to make. In genuine humility and with a desire to learn the truth in regard to the matters about which he had been reading, Daniel listened attentively to the angelic message.

In faithful obedience to the will of God he recorded this most wonderful revelation, which gives us the correct date when the Messiah was to be cut off and have nothing.

One of the most unfortunate traits of human nature is the assumption of the individual that he has learned all that may be known in regard to a given subject and, therefore, cannot be taught anything relative to this matter. Even in this enlightened era there are those who feel that they have mastered certain subjects; hence they are unwilling to listen to something new on these topics. May I earnestly state that the wider my experience becomes, the less I see that I know and the greater is my need of more knowledge and clearer insight into the things that I have already learned? May the Lord deliver each of us from the false and fatal attitude of assuming that we cannot be given further light on any subject. Often even small children call our attention to things which have escaped our observation. May we, like Daniel, always be ready to learn more of the truth of God's word.

## II. THE REVELATION CONCERNING THE SEVENTY WEEKS

Having urged Daniel to consider carefully what he was about to say, Gabriel informed him that seventy weeks were decreed upon the prophet's own people and upon the Holy city. What is the significance of "seventy weeks"? Does the word *week* have the meaning which it usually signifies in ordinary conversation? The average reader upon seeing it in this connection assumes that it indicates a period of 7 days, for such is its

usual connotation in our vernacular. But is that its meaning in this passage? From our translation it is impossible for us to give the correct answer. Therefore it becomes necessary to examine the original text.

#### A. The Use of שבעים in the Hebrew text

The word שבעים is derived from the verbal form שבע the meaning of which is "to swear, to confirm with an oath." In the Semitic world the number seven was used to indicate completeness and perfection. Since the oath was considered as final for confirmation, it was natural that the word connected with *seven* should be used. The form of the expression occurring in Gabriel's message is שבעים the plural of שבע. Hence it literally means *sevens*. Is the idea of day inherent in this word? In order to answer this query we shall have to examine passages in which it is used.

In Genesis 29 we have a record of Jacob's serving Laban 7 years in order that he might have Rachel in marriage. At the expiration of the designated period, which to Jacob, on account of his great love for her, seemed as but a few days, his marriage was solemnized. On the following morning, however, Jacob was amazed to learn that Leah, Laban's older daughter, had been substituted for Rachel. Immediately he remonstrated with his father-in-law in regard to the deception\* that had been practiced upon him. Laban replied that it was not the custom of his country to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older. Then he proposed to Jacob that he serve seven more years for which labor he would be given Rachel. The language is as follows:

27 "Fulfill the week of this one, and we will give thee the other also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years. 28 And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife. 29 And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid to be her handmaid. 30 And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years" (Gen. 29:27-30).

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\* God always punishes men for their evil deeds. Jacob had deceived his father in regard to the birthright. In his case, as in all others, the Lord, who overrules all things, saw that Jacob should reap what he had sowed. The law of sowing and reaping is unalterable.

According to verse 27 Laban insisted that Jacob fulfill the week of Rachel and then concluded his statement with an explanation of what he meant by *week*, namely, "seven other years." From verse 28 we see that "Jacob fulfilled her week." The last sentence of verse 30 states that Jacob "served yet with him seven other years." It is evident from this testimony that *week* in this connection indicates seven years. Let the reader note carefully that the idea of year is not inherent in the word *week*, but is expressed by the word **שָׁנִים** used in apposition with *week*.

In Genesis 41:25-27 we have a similar usage of this word. In interpreting Pharaoh's dream Joseph said, "The dream of Pharaoh is one: what God is about to do he hath declared unto Pharaoh. The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one." No one can misunderstand the significance of the word **שִׁבְעָה** here translated *seven*, but in Daniel 9:24 rendered *week*. The only difference between the word used by Joseph and the one employed by Gabriel is that, though they are derived from the same stem (one, a segolate noun; the other, the kal passive participle), the former is in the singular, whereas the latter is in the plural. The same usage occurs in Job 1:2. From this statement we learn that this patriarch had **שִׁבְעָה** *seven* sons. From these examples we can see that the inherent meaning of this word is *seven* without any intimation as to the objects thus designated.

Another passage that will throw further light upon this investigation is Leviticus 23:15,16.

15 "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven sabbaths shall there be complete: 16 even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meal-offering unto the Lord."

The Hebrew expression in verse 15 is **שִׁבְעָה שַׁבָּתוֹת** "seven sabbaths." The initial date of this period is "the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering." According to verse 16 "the seven sabbaths" constitute a period of "fifty days." The context shows that *days* are under consideration. But the idea of days is not inherent in **שִׁבְעָה** *seven*.

Before closing the investigation on this point I wish to notice another example of the usage of this word.



8 "And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and there shall be unto thee the days of seven sabbaths of years, even forty and nine years" (Lev. 25:8).

Let the reader note the expression, "seven sabbaths of years." From the context it is evident that the writer is talking about the year of jubilee. Since he had years in mind, he used the word *years* in connection with his numbering them. Let us, therefore, keep in mind that the idea of *year* is not expressed by the word *week*, namely, *seven*.

From these examples we see that the word *week* occurring in Gabriel's message simply means *seven*. Since it is put in the plural form, it should properly be rendered *sevens*. Because *week* in English connotes *seven days*, great confusion has resulted from the translators' use of it to render the word that primarily means *sevens*. Much misunderstanding would have been avoided had they rendered it literally *seventy sevens*. A parallel case in English corresponding to the use of the Hebrew word *seven* is the term *dozen*. Should I in conversation with another exclaim, "I see a *dozen*," only one idea would be conveyed to his mind by the word *dozen*, i.e., 12. If, on the other hand, I should be speaking of birds and state that I had counted a dozen, my friend would understand that I had seen 12 birds. Again, if the conversation were about children, and I made the observation that I had counted a dozen, he would naturally understand that I had counted 12 children. Frequently we use the words *score* and *gross* as synonyms for the numbers 20 and 144. These examples will suffice to illustrate the use of *week* in this passage.

The context alone is to decide what is indicated by this word. From the connection we learn what is the topic of conversation. Hence when it occurs, we know that it indicates the number of the objects constituting the subject of discussion.

### B. *A Play Upon Words*

In section one I discussed the point of Daniel's misunderstanding the prophecy of Jeremiah, which he had been reading. In that examination I called attention to the fact that the description of the restoration at the conclusion of the Babylonian captivity blended imperceptibly into the prophecy concerning the final regathering of Israel at the end time. I emphasized the fact that, unless one is very careful in noticing the significance of every word, he will see but one restoration described in Jeremiah 29:10-14, whereas the

passage unmistakably foretells two which we now know are separated by centuries. A further fact which I pointed out was that this prediction is followed in chapters 30-33 by the promise of a new covenant which the Lord will make with the house of Judah and Israel. When this new covenant is put into effect, the entire house of Israel will be given a new heart and spirit, and sin in every form will be unknown among the Chosen People. In reading this prediction Daniel, like many today, failed to see the two regatherings of the tribes of Israel and the intervening period, and arrived at the conclusion that the entire prediction would be fulfilled at the close of the seventy years of Babylonian exile. Hence he confidently expected the materialization of those wonderful prophecies within the next 2 years. That he received such an idea from the reading of the passage is evident from the message brought to him by Gabriel. His misunderstanding is reflected in the angel's statement (vs. 24). Daniel's heart was thrilled with the anticipation of the fulfillment of these glorious hopes in the immediate future. Since he entertained those misconceptions, Gabriel came to correct his mistakes and to show him the truth concerning the entire situation.

The angel's first utterance is a play upon words. Daniel had read and had been thinking of the seventy years of the desolation of Jerusalem. Then this heavenly messenger informed him that the great kingdom age would not be ushered in at the conclusion of the "seventy years" of Jerusalem's desolations, as he had thought, but that there would be "seventy sevens" of years for the accomplishment of the glorious forecast given by Jeremiah. To bring clearly before our minds the psychology involved in the entire affair, may I use this simple little illustration? Frequently a child takes very lightly something that is of a serious nature and attempts to laugh the matter off. By way of warning the parent firmly yet gently says, "Soon you will be laughing on the other side of your mouth." All recognize that this method of speech is a play upon words. The parent simply speaks of what the child will be doing in terms of his present attitude and conduct. We constantly use this mode of expression. The time element of Gabriel's message, as far as possible, is expressed in terms of Daniel's thought. Speaking in a figure, we would say that the angel's language is an echo of the prophet's thinking. In order to make the idea so very clear that no one may misunderstand, I will paraphrase and supply the implied elements of the revelation brought to the prophet.

Daniel, you have been thinking that the final restoration will be accomplished and the full covenant blessings will be realized at the close of these seventy years of exile in Babylon. On this point you are mistaken. You are not now on the eve of the fulfillment of this wonderful prediction. Instead of its being brought to pass at this time, I am sent to inform you that there is decreed upon your people and the Holy City a period of "seventy sevens" of years before they can be realized. At the conclusion of this period of 490 years, the nation of Israel will be reconciled and will be reinstated into the divine favor and will enter into the enjoyment of all the covenant blessings."

We have already learned that *week* simply connotes the number *seven*; therefore, the "seventy sevens" mentioned by the angel are 490 years. This interpretation is evident to one when he remembers that Daniel had read of years and had been thinking in those terms (vss. 1,2). In view of the drift of the thought, the message can have no other significance. This revelation brought by Gabriel was evidently given to correct the prophet's misapprehension concerning Jeremiah's language.

Having ascertained the meaning of the "seventy sevens," we are now prepared to advance in our investigation concerning the message relative to this era of righteousness mentioned by Gabriel.

### III. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD UPON EARTH

The title of this subdivision is "The Establishment of the Kingdom of God upon Earth." The reader is not to infer from this heading that there is no kingdom of God in the world at the present time, for such is contrary to fact. The expression "kingdom of God" is a very broad and comprehensive term, including the entire universe and all beings and things therein. As proof of this position see Psalm 103:19-22:

- 19 Jehovah hath established his throne in the heavens;  
And his kingdom ruleth over all.
- 20 Bless Jehovah, ye his angels,  
That are mighty in strength, that fulfill his word,  
Hearkening unto the voice of his word.
- 21 Bless Jehovah, all ye his hosts,  
Ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.
- 22 Bless Jehovah, all ye his works,  
In all places of his dominion:  
Bless Jehovah, O my soul.

In certain contexts we know that the term does not have this all-inclusive meaning, but is used to define a limited sphere in which God's will is done—more or less imperfectly.

In the Tenach the kingdom of Israel is called the kingdom of God. To the leaders of the kingdom David declared that God had raised up Solomon to sit upon "the throne of the kingdom of Jehovah over Israel" (I Chron. 28:5). Again, Solomon is likewise said to have sat upon the throne of Jehovah in the place of his father David (I Chron. 29:23). From these and other passages we see that the kingdom of Israel, consisting of the twelve tribes, was used synonymously with the expression, "kingdom of Jehovah."

Though the nation of Israel was recognized as the subjects of the kingdom of God, it is not to be supposed that the people were perfect and did the will of God in every detail, for such is contrary to the facts presented by the Tenach. The Lord chose Israel to be His peculiar possession and made Himself known to her. By the outward symbol of the Shekinah of Glory God constantly spoke of Himself as dwelling in her midst. She continued, nevertheless, to depart from the divine revelation and to adopt the customs and habits of the heathen with whom she was perpetually in contact. At times it seems that the entire nation took one plunge headlong into vice and degradation. Finally the Lord was forced by her iniquity to withdraw from her midst and to bring His judgments upon her. The crisis came in the form of the invasion of the realm by the Babylonians and the consequent exile.

The prophets constantly looked forward to an era when the will of God shall be done perfectly on earth as it is done in the heavens. They foretold the time when the Lord in person would come and dwell in the midst of the nations. At that time a new, sinless order will be introduced. This vision was presented by Balaam, whose predictions are recorded in Numbers 23 and 24. Practically all the prophets and psalmists sang of this marvelous era when the glory of the Lord shall encircle the earth as the waters cover the sea. Already we have briefly seen that Daniel, having read Jeremiah's prophecy, was thrilled with the anticipation of the establishment of this perfect order upon earth. It is this phase of the investigation to which we shall now devote our attention.

Gabriel declared that seventy weeks or 490 years had been decreed upon the Hebrew people and their beloved city to bring about six results: to finish transgression; to make an end of sin; to make reconciliation for iniquity; to bring in everlasting

righteousness; to seal up vision and prophecy; and to anoint the most holy. In order that we may see the full import of this prediction, it becomes necessary for us to examine each of these phrases most minutely.

#### A. *To Finish the Transgression*

What is signified by the expression, "to finish or to restrain transgression" or "the transgression?" The word rendered finish is **פָּלַח**. Its primary meaning is "to retain, bar, restrain, close, shut up, hinder." The form here appearing is the Piel infinitive. In this conjugation it is equivalent to **פָּלַח**, the meaning of which is "to be completed, finished, ready; to be at an end, to be consumed, destroyed, to vanish." In the Piel conjugation it has the same meaning: "to complete, finish, end, execute; to cease; to consume, to spend, to destroy." These various meanings are simply shades of the one central idea of restraining or completely hindering. The idea of vanishing is likewise prominently conspicuous in its fundamental concept.

The verb form translated "to finish" or "to restrain" is transitive and has as its object the word "transgression." In the text of the Revised Version we have "transgression," but in the marginal note the definite article appears: "the transgression." In the original text the article is prefixed to the noun and should be rendered "the transgression." The term in the original is **הַפְּשָׁע** and is derived from the verb **פָּשַׁע** which means "to sin, to transgress, to rebel, to be refractory." Transgression, according to its Latin derivation, means to "go beyond the limit or boundary." The pictorial element of this Latin term is not so distinct as the Hebrew word which it is used to translate. From all of the definitions given we may be certain that it emphasizes the idea of rebellion against God and disobedience to His will.

But what is the significance of the article prefixed to this noun? Literally rendered, the expression should read "the transgression." The article in Hebrew, as in Greek, is very definite and points clearly to some outstanding thing or object. Thus the expression "the transgression" seems to indicate some specific, outstanding, national sin of the Chosen People. When we study their history, we are confronted with the fact that the nation has indulged in many and gross sins. But what nation has not? According to the significance of the article we must find some national sin that looms like a high mountain

peak above all others, and that might properly be designated as her transgression. In this connection may I take the occasion to call attention to the fact that God does not evaluate sin and wrongdoing as man does. There are some sins that are considered great and heinous, whereas others are termed lesser wrongs or faults. Such classifications are foreign to the Scriptures. While this statement is true, it is also correct to say that there is some one national sin of which the people of Israel are guilty. What is it?

In Leviticus 26:40 we find the following prediction: "And they shall confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, in their trespass which they trespassed against me," etc. This verse seems to teach that there is some definite sin which is here designated as the iniquity of the last generation of Israel scattered among the nations, which was committed by the fathers while they were still in the homeland, and on account of which God cast them out and scattered them among the nations of earth. From these facts it is evident that not only those who actually committed the transgression, but those of the last generation of their descendants dispersed among the nations are alike held guilty of this national crime. How can this thing be? Since God is just, it is also evident that He will not condemn one for an act with which he has nothing to do. The only way in which the descendants of those who actually committed the crime can justly be held guilty of the act is by their assuming the same attitude as their fathers did, in both their thinking and in their justifying them. When the people of Israel scattered among the nations make this confession, as is here foretold, the Lord will remember His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and He will also remember the land promise.

Hosea seems to be thinking of this same national sin in his prediction found in Hosea 5:14,15. From the immediate context we see that he was discussing the things that will occur in the latter time of Israel's trouble. Passing in review, however, the conduct of both Judah and Israel, he moved on rapidly to the end of the age and, speaking for God, declared:

"For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah; I, even I, will tear and go away; I will carry off, and there shall be none to deliver. I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me earnestly."

A careful examination of this quotation reveals the fact that God compares Himself to a lion that goes forth from his den in quest of food. Pouncing upon his prey, he tears it to pieces; then he returns to his den. Thus God declared that He would do to Ephraim and Judah. He comes to them; they commit some offense against Him; then returning to His place He remains there until they acknowledge their offense against Him and seek Him earnestly. The prediction concludes with the statement: "in their affliction they will seek me earnestly." Interpreted literally, we would say that Hosea declared that at some time in the future (from his day), God would come to Israel, but that she would commit some offense against Him. Because of that sinful act He returns to heaven and remains there until the entire nation in genuine repentance acknowledges her offense against Him and seeks Him earnestly. Then He will return.

This position is in perfect accord with that set forth in Isaiah 53:1-9. This *servant* passage, of which these verses are a part, begins with 52:13 and continues through 53:12. A close study of the context shows that the servant of Jehovah is King Messiah who comes to Israel, and against whom the leaders of the nation sin. So far as this passage is concerned, nothing is given relative to his disappearing from the scene of opposition and hostility. Nevertheless the prediction is made that He again will appear upon the scene, and that which the kings of the earth have not heard shall they see. Our prophet simply omitted these details which are given by Hosea. Isaiah 53:1-9 may properly be called Israel's penitential confession which the faithful remnant will make in the year 1939+. I placed the plus sign after the number 1939 to indicate that in a certain definite year the whole nation of Israel living at that time will see the outstanding sin of the nation—the execution of her Messiah—and will confess her guilt in that tragedy. A careful study of this passage reveals the fact that these verses describe what might correctly be called Israel's national sin and her confession of the same.

In order for one to understand this passage correctly, he must, in his thinking, take his position with the remnant of Israel in the time of Jacob's trouble and look back over the weary waste of 1900 years to the execution of King Messiah. Thus having identified himself with the nation of Israel, he can clearly understand the point of view from which these verses were spoken.

From the three passages that have just been discussed it is evident that there is one national sin of Israel which, like the towering peak of a mountain range, stands out prominently above all other sins committed by the Hebrew race—the rejection and execution of King Messiah. When one thinks carefully of all the facts which are presented in the Tenach on this point and then takes a survey of Israel's spiritual and moral condition through the centuries and at the present time, he will come to the conviction that there is no other crime that can properly be called *the national sin*. According to many predictions found throughout the Tenach, Messiah comes to the nation which rejects and executes Him. He comes in mercy and with a heart pulsating with a divine love for His own people; nevertheless, the leaders, being unable to recognize Him and concluding that He is an impostor, turn popular opinion against Him and bring about His execution. This great tragedy unquestionably stands out above all crimes as Israel's national sin. Since Gabriel spoke of "the transgression" in connection with what might be called "the Jewish problem," we are logically forced to conclude that it was this sin against King Messiah which the angel had in mind when he prefixed the article to the word "transgression." When the children of Israel, nationally and publicly, have repented of, confessed, and repudiated this crime against their true Messiah, have turned to God, and implored His mercy, He will return and deliver them out of all their troubles. Since the lesser is included in the greater, we may be certain that when the surviving remnant has genuinely repented of this national sin, it will likewise repent of all crimes and invoke the divine favor upon it. At that time this penitent, believing minority of the people will be restored to fellowship with their God.

The Lord does not arbitrarily forgive and blot out sins, but waits until the guilty one has repented and in genuine faith pleads for forgiveness. This passage assumes, therefore, that the whole nation repents and turns to God for mercy and forgiveness. Thus this first phrase implies the conversion of the nation. But what is assumed here is stated specifically in the third phrase.

### B. *To Make an End of Sin*

The second thing to be accomplished at the conclusion of the 490 year period is to make an end of sin. The word rendered "to make an end of" is **סָתַם**. It literally means "to shut, close, seal; to hide, to reveal as a secret." This word was regularly used to indicate the closing of a letter or an official document. When the scribe had finished his work, the



king placed his royal seal upon it, thus showing that the communication was brought to a close and at the same time giving it the official imprimatur. The primary idea is that of bringing a matter to a conclusion. Such is its significance here.

The word in the original rendered "sin" is **חַטָּאת** and literally means "sin, transgression, sin-offering, atonement." It is derived from the verb which means "to fail, to sin, to miss, to forfeit; to endanger." In the Piel form, the intensive stem, it means "to atone for, to expiate, to clear from sin."

Thus in both the verbal and nominal forms the idea of wrongdoing and that of atonement for sin blend. The context, therefore, is to determine which idea stands in the foreground. Since in the preceding phrase the thought of rebelling against God was mentioned, it is quite natural that this phrase should be a development of that thought. Hence we take it in the primary literal meaning of sin and transgression. Again, since the transgression mentioned in the first phrase pointed out the national sin of the race, the second phrase seems to indicate sins in general—acts of wrongdoing, iniquities, and immoral conduct.

The infinitive, "to seal up" or "to make an end of" sin, would seem to indicate that this statement is a prediction of the time when sinning shall cease in Israel. Since the cause of sin must be removed before the cure can be effected, this expression assumes that at the time here foreseen the nation will have turned to the Lord, and that by His Spirit a new heart and spirit will have been given to all the people.

### C. *To Make Reconciliation for Iniquity*

In the margin of the Revised Version we have as an alternative reading for "to make reconciliation for iniquity" the expression "purge away." The word in the original is **כַּפַּר** which literally means "to cover, to forgive, expiate, atone for." The primary meaning may be seen in connection with the construction of Noah's ark. The Lord gave this faithful servant instructions as to how to construct this boat. In the specifications we find this statement: "pitch it within and without with pitch" (Gen. 7:14). The word *kaphar* appears in both the verbal and nominal forms in this statement. In the first instance it is rendered "shall pitch" and in the latter case by the noun "pitch." From the context it is clear that the idea of covering the wood with what is called pitch is conveyed. Hence the primary

meaning of this term is "to cover from sight." From this literal meaning the idea of forgiveness was easily derived, since in a pictorial way one's sins are covered when they are forgiven. The blood of the various sacrifices is said to atone for the sins of those bringing these offerings. Specific sacrifices were commanded to atone for certain classes of transgression and disobedience. One of the sacrifices which stands out above all others is that of the annual atonement. The ritualistic requirements for that occasion are recorded in Leviticus 16. Since Gabriel's message pertained to the entire nation and the Holy City, it is quite certain that the expression, "to make reconciliation for iniquity," is an echo of the yearly atonement.

The word translated "iniquity" is **עֲוֹן** and means primarily "perverseness, sin, guilt, crime." It is quite probable that in this series of phrases *iniquity* might properly be termed *perverted human nature*, which is the result of man's original disobedience and fall. When Adam rebelled against the Lord, his nature became corrupt. A new power or force, evil and diabolical, entered his very being, perverted his nature, and plunged him and his descendants into their present miserable state. This word, the third of the series, seems to trace the evils and calamities of the race back to this original cause. Before man can live right and please his Maker, his nature will have to be changed by the renewing power of the Spirit of God. The psalmist David realized this fact and thus prayed for the creation of a new heart within (Ps. 51:10).

The phrase, "to make reconciliation for iniquity," doubtless is a clear reference to the time when all Israel in genuine penitence shall acknowledge her departure from God and her national sin. At the same time each individual, of course, will acknowledge his own wrongs and all will call upon God for pardon. Then that which was foreshadowed by the annual atonement will become a reality. At that time the nation will be brought back into fellowship with God and become a blessing in the earth.

#### D. *To Bring in Everlasting Righteousness*

The word translated "to bring in" is the Hiphil verb form of **בוא**, and in this phrase means "to cause to come in." The text reading of our translation is therefore very close to the original. The phrase rendered "everlasting righteousness" is **צְדָקַת עֲלָמִים** which literally translated is "righteousness of the ages." This phrase is indeed significant. The English

word "righteousness" primarily refers to the correct and proper motives and dealings of man with man. God's righteousness would, therefore, consist of His correct attitude and actions towards His creatures and His standards for them. The Hebrew word rendered "righteousness" is צְדָקָה. It also carries that idea. Hence our translation is close to the original. What is the significance of עֲלָמִים? In the singular form it is constantly translated "forever." Frequently it indicates an age—an indefinite period of time unless there are specific facts in the context which show that it in a given case is to be limited. In the phrase under discussion it has the meaning of "ages." Hence the phrase "righteousness of the ages" signifies that there are rules or formulas of attitude and conduct that are right and will be reckoned as correct throughout all ages—past, present, and future. These criteria are, therefore, God's standards of ethics and morals.

At the present time God has shown us in His Word what are His standards for men, to which they are to conform their lives. Even the very best and most consecrated servants of God now are very poor specimens of His standards of ethics. When, however, the 490 years are completed and the Almighty brings in His great regime of righteousness, these eternal principles of justice and equity will be in force; therefore, Gabriel said that at this future time God will bring in the righteousness of the ages.

#### E. *To Seal Up Vision and Prophecy*

The word here rendered "to seal up" is identical with the one employed in the second expression with reference to the cessation of sin. In the preceding discussion we saw that it signifies the completion of a letter or official document. Hence the idea of concluding or finishing a matter is indicated by it. The word rendered "vision" comes from הִזָּהָה *hazah* which means "to split, divide; to see, look, behold, observe, gaze; to select; to prophesy." The noun form means "vision, revelation, prophecy." In different manners God made His will known to man. Sometimes He used the dream, while on other occasions He made Himself known by a vision, and still at other times the Word of God came in a subjective manner to the prophets. On all occasions these men of God were conscious that a divine disclosure was being communicated to them. The word employed here indicates a vision. An example of this mode of revelation is seen in the case of the beast visions in Daniel 7. The word rendered "prophecy" is the regular one that is translated "prophet." This fact is indicated in the marginal note of the Revised Version.

The phrase, then "to seal up prophecy and vision" signifies that at the conclusion of this period of 490 years, God will have fully made known His will; hence, there will no longer be any necessity of further revelations.

From the second chapter of Isaiah we see that at the time of the fulfillment of this vision, the God of Jacob will dwell in Jerusalem personally and will instruct the people who make pilgrimages continually to that city to be taught of Him.

#### F. *To Anoint the Most Holy*

About the expression **קֹדֶשׁ קְדוֹשִׁים** there is quite a bit of discussion. The text reading of the Revised Version renders it "the most holy." The marginal note, however, is "a most holy place." Commentators differ very greatly. In order to see the significance of this expression, we shall have to investigate it in the Torah. A comprehensive statement of the various usages to which it was put is found in the following paragraph from Dr. Keil:

"In addition to this, there is the verbal argument that the words **קֹדֶשׁ קְדוֹשִׁים** are not used of a single holy vessel which alone could be thought of. Not only the altar of burnt-offering is so named, Ex. xxix. 37, xl. 10, but also the altar of incense, Ex. xxx. 10, and the two altars with all the vessels of the sanctuary, the ark of the covenant, shew-bread, candlesticks, basins, and the other vessels belonging thereto, Ex. xxx. 29, also the holy material for incense, Ex. xxx. 36, the shew-bread, Lev. xxiv. 9, the meat-offering, Lev. ii. 3, 10, vi. 10, x. 12, the flesh of the sin-offering and of the expiatory sacrifice, Lev. vi. 10, 18, x. 17, vii. 1, 6, xiv. 13, Num. xvii. 9, and that which was sanctified to the Lord, Lev. xxvii. 28. Finally, the whole surroundings of the hill on which the temple stood, Ezek. xliii. 12, and the whole new temple, Ezek. xlv. 3, is named a 'most holy'; and according to I Chron. xxiii. 13, Aaron and his sons are sanctified as **קֹדֶשׁ קְדוֹשִׁים**." — *The Book of Daniel*, p. 346.

In view of the great latitude of this expression, it behooves one to be cautious in taking a position with a dogmatic tone. The most scientific way for ascertaining its meaning in this case, however, is to see which of the usages given in the quotation above fits most perfectly into this special context that we are studying. Since the angel was talking about Daniel's people and the city of Jerusalem with reference to the final abolition of all sin and the introduction of righteousness, it becomes most highly probable that this expression refers to the holy temple which will be in the glorious kingdom age, built by the Lord Himself (Zech. 6:12,13) in Jerusalem. The specific description, plans, and

specifications for this future temple are given in Ezekiel 40-48; therefore, when this fact is taken into consideration, it appears to me that the only logical conclusion to which we can come is that this promise implies the rebuilding of the temple on the magnificent scale foreseen by the prophet and its dedication.

When the things here foretold are accomplished, the golden era concerning which the prophets constantly spoke will become a reality. As has been suggested above, Daniel read, in connection with the prediction concerning the Babylonian captivity, other promises relative to a final and glorious restoration of Israel to the land of the fathers and to fellowship with God. From Jeremiah and other prophets it is clearly seen that, when Messiah re-establishes the throne of David and mounts the same, He will establish a world-wide kingdom of righteousness. Under His sovereign power, transgression and sin there will be none, for the glory of the Lord shall encircle the globe as the waters cover the sea. Therefore, this twenty-fourth verse of our chapter, read in the light of the various predictions of the prophets, is obviously a forecast of the establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth in all its glory.

#### IV. THE INITIAL DATE OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS

"Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed one, the prince, shall be seven weeks, and three score and two weeks; it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troublous times" (Daniel 9:25).

The initial date of this seventy-week period of years, according to this verse, is the year in which the commandment goes forth to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem. Can we ascertain the time when a decree was issued for the restoration of the Jewish people to the homeland? In order to answer this question properly, it is necessary for us to examine very carefully a prediction found in Isaiah, chapters 44 and 45. Chapter 44:24-28 reads as follows:

"24 Thus saith Jehovah, thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb ... 26 that confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith of Jerusalem, She shall be inhabited; and of the cities of Judah, They shall be built, and I will

raise up the waste places thereof; 27 that saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers; 28 that saith of Cyrus, *He* is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built; and of the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid."

The statement to which I wish to call attention is verse 28. In this prediction Isaiah spoke relative to Cyrus the Great\* in the following language:

"*He* is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built; and of the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid."

The Lord foretells that Cyrus will perform two things with reference to the Hebrew people: "and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built; and of the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid." This prediction says that Cyrus will speak concerning Jerusalem and declare, "She shall be built"; and concerning the temple, "Thy foundation shall be laid." To everyone who accepts the genuineness of this passage, it is clear that Isaiah foresaw the career of Cyrus and knew that he would issue a decree relative to the rebuilding of the city and of the temple. Confirmatory evidence that he would issue the decree concerning the rebuilding of the city is found in 45:13:

"I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will make straight all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let my exiles go free, not for price nor reward, saith Jehovah of hosts."

The words "he shall build my city" are clear and unmistakable to everyone who will accept this language at its face value. It is abundantly evident that Cyrus would issue a decree

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\*Isaiah the prophet lived in the latter half of the eighth century before the common era. Cyrus, concerning whom this prophecy is spoken, lived approximately two hundred years later, i.e., in the latter half of the sixth century.

The rationalistic critics who on *a priori* grounds reject the possibility of miracles and of divine inspiration naturally reject this passage as a genuine one by Isaiah. This prediction relative to Cyrus and some other facts presented in the second half of the book of Isaiah are advanced by the rationalists as evidence that Isaiah did not write this prediction. Of course, if we reject the possibility of miracles and of divine inspiration, then we are forced to the conclusion that Isaiah did not utter this prophecy. Hence we would be forced to believe that this prediction was uttered by someone who was living in the time of Cyrus, and who saw the possibilities of his advancing career.

On the other hand, if we accept the possibility of miracles and inspiration, we can very easily accept the Isaianic origin of this prediction.

For one to deny on philosophical grounds the possibility of miracles and inspiration is to assume omniscience on his own part, for only an omniscient being could survey the fields of the past and the future and make such a generalization as this one. The modernistic critic, therefore, being blinded by a philosophical deduction, is illogical in denying to Isaiah the authorship of this wonderful prediction.

authorizing the building of the city of Jerusalem. Thus from Isaiah 44 and 45 it is evident that Cyrus would make the decree authorizing the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem and of the temple.

The predictions in these two chapters presuppose the destruction of the city and of the temple. From the history found in the books of Kings and Chronicles, together with the prophecies of Jeremiah, we gather the information relative to the fall of Jerusalem and its destruction at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. Thus the implication of this prediction of Isaiah was fulfilled in the career of Nebuchadnezzar.

Did Cyrus the Persian do the two things foretold by Isaiah approximately 200 years prior to his career? We who accept the Bible as the Word of God must answer this question in the affirmative. What historical evidence have we that Cyrus issued the decree?

"1 Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, that the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and *put* it also in writing, saying,  
2 Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath Jehovah, the God of heaven, given me; and he hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whosoever there is among you of all his people, his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of Jehovah, the God of Israel (he is God), which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever is left, in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the freewill-offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem" (Ezra 1:1-4).

Part of this decree constitutes verses 22 and 23 of II Chronicles 36, which see. An examination of these passages shows that Cyrus actually issued the command for the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. In fact, according to Ezra 1:4, the decree of Cyrus permitted the neighbors of the Jews who desired to return to the fatherland to assist them with gifts of silver and gold and other things as freewill-offerings to the God of the Hebrews. Concerning the matter of Cyrus and of his issuing the decree for the rebuilding of the temple, therefore, there is no question.

But there are those who tell us that he said nothing about the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. In fact, we are informed that Cyrus issued no decree relative to the

rebuilding of the city. Thus there is a clear issue between the prophet Isaiah, inspired by the spirit of God, and those who say that Cyrus never gave the Jews permission to rebuild Jerusalem. The Word of God is such that I believe every word spoken by the inspired men of God either has been fulfilled in the past or will be in the future. Since this prediction referred to Cyrus, an historical personage of the latter half of the sixth century before the common era, then I know that this prophecy has been fulfilled literally and completely.

To this position one may reply by calling attention to the fact that nothing is said in the decree, as recorded by Ezra, concerning the rebuilding of the city. At first this objection seems to be plausible. Upon further consideration it becomes evident that it is based upon the fallacious argument of "silence", which form of reasoning is recognized by all logicians as being most dangerous. There is nothing in the text of this decree which would preclude the authority to rebuild the city. Furthermore, when one remembers the fact that the temple was the one institution in which all the interests and activities of the community were headed, he may correctly conclude that, since the lesser is included in the greater, the authority to rebuild the temple also permitted the reconstruction of the city. This inference must be accepted as the necessary one in view of Isaiah's prediction that Cyrus would issue the decree concerning the rebuilding of both the temple and the city.

From this position there is no possible escape. Further absolute and positive proof of this position is found in the letter to Artaxerxes which Bishlam, Mithredath, and Tabeel wrote, and which is found in Ezra 4:7, 11-16. Note especially verse 12:

"Be it known unto the king, that the Jews that came up from thee are come to us unto Jerusalem; they are building the rebellious and the bad city and have finished the walls, and repaired the foundations."

From this statement as one sees, the opponents of the Jews in Palestine reported to the Persian king that those who came up from the captivity were building the city of Jerusalem, which they called "the rebellious and the bad city." Furthermore, they claimed that they had finished the walls and had repaired the foundations.

To this letter the king sent a reply in which he instructed Rehum the chancellor, and Shimshai the scribe saying, "Make ye now a decree to cause these men to cease, and that



this city be not builded, until a decree shall be made by me" (Ezra 4:21). When Ezra 4:7-22 is read in the light of Persian history, the conclusion is forced upon one that the Artaxerxes to whom this letter was written was none other than the usurper, Pseudo-Smerdis, who, with his brother, upon the death of Cambyses, seized the government. In view of these facts we can see the significance of the word "kings" in verse 22. Thus the work upon the temple and the city was brought to a standstill in the year of Pseudo-Smerdis, who held the authority for about 7 months in the year 522 of the Ptolemaic chronology.

According to Ezra 4:23,24, the work of building the house of God ceased until the second year of Darius king of Persia, who is known in secular history as Hystaspes. In the second year of his reign, namely, 520 B.C.E., the prophets Haggai and Zechariah began their ministry and stimulated Zerubbabel and Joshua to undertake the work which had been laid down 15 years prior. Immediately opposition began in the form of a protest of Tattenai, the governor beyond the River, and Shethar-bozenai, and their companions who said to the prophets and to the leaders of the Jews, "Who gave you a decree to build this house, and to finish this wall?" (Ezra 5:3). The wall in this question referred to evidently was the city wall. The Jews under the leadership of these two great prophets of God would not be intimidated by the opposition of the governor and others, but prosecuted the work with all dispatch.

The enemy once more sent a letter of protest to the Persian court. In it they recounted what the Jews had told them relative to the history of the temple and the decree of Cyrus to rebuild the same. They closed their communication by asking the king to investigate the records and to see whether or not the report given by the Jews was correct.

Upon receipt of this official communication from his subordinates, Darius issued an order that an investigation be made in the official archives of the reign of Cyrus in order that he might know the facts. Those who were assigned this task reported to the king that the Jews were right in making this claim; hence he issued a proclamation (Ezra 6:6-12) giving instructions that they should be permitted to continue their work and should be assisted by his officials.

Since the protest was against the building of the house and the wall, and since Darius after his investigation issued an order that the Jews be not hindered, it is evident

that the decree of Cyrus included permission to rebuild Jerusalem. Therefore from this point of view it is absolutely certain that King Cyrus did what the inspired prophet Isaiah foretold that he would accomplish. In the light of these facts we are irresistibly driven to the conclusion that it was Cyrus who issued the decree for the restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem as foretold by the angel Gabriel to Daniel the prophet (Daniel 9:25). The initial date, therefore, of the seventy weeks decreed upon the Jewish people and the holy city of Jerusalem was the year in which Cyrus issued his famous decree.

Though the facts presented in the Scriptures show that Cyrus did issue this decree, there are many excellent brethren who, overlooking some of the facts, assume that Cyrus gave the order to rebuild the temple only. According to these scholars, it was the year 536 B.C.E. They also take the position that it was Artaxerxes Longimanus who, in the twentieth year of his reign and in the month Nisan, issued the decree for the rebuilding of the city. Sir Robert Anderson and those of the same school of thought claim that the calendar year 445 B.C.E. was the twentieth year of Artaxerxes when he issued this decree. According to these scholars, the proclamation authorizing the rebuilding of the city was ordered 91 years after Cyrus gave the command for the building of the temple. Since Isaiah said that Cyrus would issue a decree for the rebuilding of both the city and the temple, and since the facts which we have seen in the book of Ezra show that he actually did what was foretold, we are forced to accept the position that the decree mentioned by the angel Gabriel was that which was issued by Cyrus in the year 536 B.C.E., according to the Ptolemaic chronology. This position being true, it is impossible for one to accept a contrary proposition that Artaxerxes Longimanus 91 years later issued a decree for the rebuilding of the city.

What was the origin of this latter theory? The answer must be sought by an investigation into the Ptolemaic chronology. The real status of this system of dating events is succinctly put by that prince of chronologers, Martin Anstey, in the following quotation:

"The Chronology of this period has never yet been accurately determined. The received Chronology, though universally accepted, is dependent on the list of the Kings, and the number of years assigned to them in Ptolemy's Canon. Ptolemy (A.D. 70-161) was a great constructive genius. He was the author of the Ptolemaic System of Astronomy. He was one of the founders of the Science of Geography. But in Chronology he was only a late compiler and contriver, not an original witness, and not a contemporary historian, for he lived in the 2nd Century after Christ. He is the only authority for the Chronology of this period. He is not corroborated. He is

contradicted, both by the Persian National Traditions preserved in *Firdusi*, by the Jewish National Traditions preserved in the *Sedar Olam*, and by the writings of *Josephus*.

"It has always been held to be unsafe to differ from Ptolemy, and for this reason. His Canon, or List of Reigns, is the only thread by which the last year of Darius Hystaspes, B.C. 485, is connected with the first year of Alexander the Great, thus:

PERSIAN KINGS AS GIVEN IN PTOLEMY'S CANON				
Persian Kings	Reigns	Nabonnassarian Era	B.C.	
			Connumerary	Julian
Cyrus	9 years from	210	538	538
Cambyses	8 years from	219	529	529
Darius I. Hystaspes	36 years from	227	521	521
Xerxes	21 years from	263	485	486
Artaxerxes I. Longimanus	41 years from	284	464	465
Darius II. Nothus	19 years from	325	423	424
Artaxerxes II. Mnemon	46 years from	344	404	405
Artaxerxes III. Ochus	21 years from	390	358	359
Arogus or Arses	2 years from	411	337	338
Darius III. Codomannus	4 years from	413	335	336
Alexander the Great	<u>      </u> 207	417	331	332

"From these 207 years of the Medo-Persian Empire, we must deduct the first two years of the Co-Rexship of Cyrus with Darius the Mede. This leaves seven years to Cyrus as sole King, the first of which, B.C. 536, is the first year of Cyrus, King of Persia (2 Chron. 36:22), in which he made his proclamation giving the Jews liberty to return to Jerusalem. That leaves 205 years for the duration of the Persian Empire proper.

"In Ptolemy's Table of the Persian Kings, all the Julian years from Xerxes to Alexander the Great inclusive, are connumerary. Therefore, each requires to be raised a unit higher to give the Julian years in which their reigns began. Ptolemy reckons by the vague Egyptian year of 365 days. The Julian year is exactly 365 1/4 days. Had Ptolemy never written, profane Chronology must have remained to this day in a state of ambiguity and confusion, utterly unintelligible and useless, nor would it have been possible to have ascertained from the writings of the Greeks or from any other source, except from Scripture itself, the true connection between sacred

Chronology and profane in any one single instance, before the dissolution of the Persian Empire in the 1st year of Alexander the Great. Ptolemy had no means of accurately determining the Chronology of this period, so he made the best use of the materials he had, and contrived to *make* a Chronology. He was a great astronomer, a great astrologer, a great geographer, and a great constructor of synthetic systems. But he did not possess sufficient data to enable him to fill the gaps, or to fix the dates of the Chronology of this period, so he had to resort to the calculation of eclipses. In this way then, not by historical evidence or testimony, but by the method of astronomical calculation, and the conjectural identification of recorded with calculated eclipses, the Chronology of this period of the world's history has been fixed by Ptolemy, since when, through Eusebius and Jerome, it has won its way to universal acceptance. It is contradicted (1) by the national traditions of Persia, (2) by the national traditions of the Jews, (3) by the testimony of Josephus, and (4) by the conflicting evidence of such well-authenticated events as the Conference of Solon with Cruises, and the flight of Themistocles to the court of Artaxerxes Longimanus, which make the accepted Chronology impossible. But the human mind cannot rest in a state of perpetual doubt. There was this one system elaborated by Ptolemy. There was no other except that given in the prophecies of Daniel. Hence, whilst the Ptolemaic astronomy was overthrown by Copernicus in the 16th century, the reign of the Ptolemaic Chronology remains to this day. There is one, and only one alternative. The prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27 fixes the period between the going forth of the commandment to return and to build Jerusalem (in the first year of Cyrus) to the cutting off of the Messiah (in the year A.D. 30) as a period of 483 years. If this be the true Chronology of the period from the first year of Cyrus to the Crucifixion, it leaves only 123 years instead of the 205 given in Ptolemy's Canon, for the duration of the Persian Empire.

COMPARISON OF DANIEL AND PTOLEMY		
	Daniel	Ptolemy
Persian Empire (Cyrus to Alexander the Great)	123 years	205 years
Greek Empire (Alexander the Great to A.D. 1)	331 years	331 years
	454 years	536 years
A.D. 1 to the Crucifixion, A.D. 30	29 years	29 years
A difference of 82 years.	483 years	565 years

"Consequently the received or Ptolemaic Chronology, now universally accepted, must be abridged by these 82 years. The error of Ptolemy has probably been made through his having assigned too many years, and perhaps too many Kings, to the latter part of the period of the Persian Empire, in the scheme which he made out from various conflicting data.

"We have to choose between the Heathen Astrologer and the Hebrew Prophet.

"Other interpretations have been given of the date of 'the going forth of the commandment to return and to build Jerusalem' (Dan. 9:25).

"Bishop Lloyd, the author of the Bible dates in the margin of the Authorized Version, reckons the 483 years from the leave given to Nehemiah to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem in the 20th year of Artaxerxes, whom he identified with Artaxerxes Longimanus (Neh. 2:1), and to make the fulfillment fit the prophecy on the erroneous Ptolemaic reckoning of the Chronology he has to curtail the interval by reckoning in years of 360 days each.

"Dr. Prideaux reckons the 483 years from the date of Ezra's return in the 7th year of Artaxerxes (Longimanus), Ezra 7:1-28.

"Scaliger reckoned the 70 weeks of Daniel as commencing in the 4th year of Darius Nothus, B.C. 420, and ending at the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D.70.

"Others have reckoned the 483 years from the going forth of the commandment in the 2nd year of Darius Hystaspes (B.C. 519) to build the Temple (Ezra 4:24,5:1-6:15).

"But the true point of departure for the 70 weeks, and therefore, for the 483 years also, is unquestionably the 1st year of Cyrus (Dan. 9, 2 Chron. 36:20-23, Ezra 1-4, Isa. 44:28; 45:1-4,13), and no other epoch would ever have been suggested but for the fact that the count of the years was lost, and wrongly restored from Ptolemy's conjectural astronomical calculations.

"It would be far better to abandon the Ptolemaic Chronology and fit the events into the 483 years of the Hebrew prophecy.

"The one great fundamental truth to be remembered is the fact that modern Chronology rests upon the calculations of Ptolemy as published in his Canon or List of Reigns. And since the foundation of Greek Conjectural Computation Chronology, upon which Ptolemy's Canon rests, is unstable, the superstructure is likewise insecure. Ptolemy may be called as a witness. He cannot be allowed to arbitrate as a judge. He cannot take the place of a Court of Final Appeal. He cannot be erected into a standard by which to correct the Chronology of the text of the Old Testament."

From the data assembled and presented in this lengthy quotation it is quite evident that the chronology for the Persian period from which Ptolemy made his computation was in utter confusion. The conclusions which he drew, therefore, are just as uncertain as the sources from which he gathered his information. Anstey, therefore, is correct in saying that "Ptolemy may be called as a witness. He cannot be allowed to arbitrate as a judge. He cannot take the place of a court of final appeal. He cannot be erected into a standard to correct a chronology of the text of the Old Testament."

The chronological scheme of Sanchoniathon "is a confused, unintelligible jargon, culled from (1) the mythologies of Egypt and Greece, and (2) a corrupt tradition of the narrative in Genesis. It may well have been forged by Porphyry, or by Philo Pyblius, in order to prosper the sinking cause of Paganism and to retard the rapid spread of Christianity in the second and third centuries of the Christian era."

Neither can we rely with absolute certainty upon data which is presented to us by the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus. Concerning his three monumental works, Anstey makes the following statement: "These three great works contain most valuable chronological material, but the figures given are not reliable. They are not always self-consistent, in some cases they have been carelessly copied, and in others they have been corrected by his Hellenistic editors in order to bring them into accord with those of the Seventy, i.e., the Septuagint. Apart from this it must be admitted that chronology was

not a strong point with Josephus and chronology being but a secondary object with him, he was not always over-careful in his calculations."

We have seen that according to Ptolemy's canon there were ten kings of the Persian period. Josephus gives six:

1. Cyrus.
2. Cambyses = Artaxerxes of Ezra 4:7-23.
3. Darius Hystaspes.     2nd year, Temple foundation laid.  
                                  9th year, Temple finished.
4. Xerxes = Artaxerxes of Ezra 7:1-8:36.  
                                  25th year, Nehemiah came to Jerusalem.  
                                  28th year Wall of Jerusalem finished.
5. Cyrus (son of Xerxes), called by the Greeks Artaxerxes, and identified with the Ahasuerus of Esther.
6. Darius, the last King, a contemporary of Jaddua and Alexander the Great.

The *Sedar Olam, Rabbah*, i.e., *The Large Chronicle of the World*, is a Jewish Talmudic tract, containing the chronology of the world as reckoned by the Jews. It brings the chronology of the world from the creation down to the days of Hadrian, the Roman emperor (76-138 of the common era). The author is supposed to have been Rabbi Jose ben Chaliptha, the master to Rabbi Judah Hakkodesh, who composed the Mishna. A second Jewish work on chronology is the *Sedar Olam Zeutah*, i.e., *Small Chronicle of the World*, and is said to have been written about 1123 C.E. It is a history of the world from creation to the year 522 C.E. Both of these Jewish works contain the tradition respecting the duration of the Persian period. According to them, in the last year of Darius Hystaspes the prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi died. Thereupon the spirit of prophecy ceased from among the children of Israel. This continuance of the prophetic spirit was

"the sealing up of vision and prophecy" spoken of by Daniel (Dan. 9:24). This same tradition tells us that the kingdom of the Persians also ceased that very year. Evidently the one originating this legend thought that this was the Darius whom Alexander the Great conquered. Below I will give the tabulation of the data presented in these works as given by Anstey:

<b>SEDAR OLAM:</b>	
Darius the Median reigned	1 year
Cyrus	3 years
Cambyses (whom they identify with the Ahasuerus who married Esther)	16 years
Darius (whom they will have to be the son of Esther)	32 years
Total	52 years

"This last Darius, they say, was the Artaxerxes who sent Ezra and Nehemiah to Jerusalem to restore the state of the Jews, for they tell us that Artaxerxes among the Persians was the common name for their Kings, as that of Pharaoh was among the Egyptians."

As has already been seen, Ptolemy considered the Persian period 205 years long, whereas these two Jewish chronological works credit Persia with only 52 years. According to the evidence, which is the most authentic obtainable, the conquest of Alexander and the beginning of his world empire was 331 B.C.E. If we accept Ptolemy's reckoning, then the restoration of the Jews from Babylon by the decree of Cyrus was in the year 536 B.C.E. On the other hand, if we accept the shorter chronology presented in these Jewish works, this restoration was in 383 B.C.E. Thus these two sources conflict. They also contradict the statement of the angel Gabriel to Daniel; they give the Persian and Greek periods as covering 536 and 383 years. The angel Gabriel to Daniel stated that there would be 483 years from the issuing of the decree which, as we have seen, was written in the first year of Cyrus, and which year, according to the Ptolemaic reckoning, was 536 B.C.E.

The common era which, from the present point of view, dates from the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, who, as Christians believe, was both the Son of God in human form and the Jewish Messiah. In the computation of chronology by modern calculators there was a discrepancy of something like 4 or 5 years in the reckoning of His birth. According to the data obtainable He was executed in the year 30 C.E. The terminal date of the 69 weeks of years, or 483 years, is that of the cutting off of Messiah (Dan. 9:26). This prediction is interpreted as a reference to His execution.

Since Jesus of Nazareth is reckoned as the Messiah, to be cut off at the end of the sixty-ninth week, or the 483rd year, if we accept the longer chronology, we must add the 30 years of the present era to the 536 of the Ptolemaic chronology. On account of the transition, therefore, from the B.C. dates to those of the common era, one year must be deducted from the sum total, 566 years, making 565 years.

Certain commentators trying to fit the 483-year period mentioned by the angel Gabriel into the chronology passed on to us by Ptolemy and his successors have thought of the year 445 B.C.E. as the initial date of this Period<sup>1</sup>.

According to the Biblical, chronological data, the year in which Cyrus issued this decree was 3589 A.H. The anno hominis system of dating time begins the reckoning of time with the creation of Adam and traces the chronology throughout the Tenach and finds that in the year 3589 Cyrus issued his decree as was foretold by the angel Gabriel.

## V. THE END OF THE SIXTY-NINTH WEEK

The 69 weeks are divided into two sections: seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks:

"Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed one, the prince shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks: it shall be built again with street and moat even in troublous times" (Dan. 9:25).

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<sup>1</sup> For a full discussion of the method of reckoning adopted by these chronologers, see Chapter XXI, *Messiah: His First Coming Scheduled*. Since, however, the evidence is overwhelming in identifying Cyrus as the one who would issue the decree and who also did it, we accept unreservedly the position that the initial date of the seventy weeks was the year when Cyrus issued the decree for the rebuilding of the temple and Jerusalem.



During the first seven weeks or 49 years, according to this prediction, the city of Jerusalem was to be built with moat and street in troublous times. A glance at the book of Ezra shows that the Jews after they returned from Babylon were harassed constantly by Gentile enemies in the land. Thus the prediction was literally fulfilled. Next the angel comprehended the remaining part of this period in the expression, "threescore and two weeks."

Let us note the fact that the terminal date of the sixty-ninth week is "the anointed one, the prince." Who is this prince, the anointed one? Of whom would Daniel naturally think? Certainly his mind would not revert to the prince who, in Daniel 7, is called "a little horn." Neither would he think of the little horn mentioned in chapter 8. The one mentioned by Gabriel is "the anointed one, the prince." Could Daniel have known of any anointed one, who was called "Messiah, the Prince?" It is true that prophets, priests, and kings were at different times called "anointed" ones. The manner in which Gabriel speaks of this one shows conclusively that he presumed on Daniel's part a knowledge of this one. From the utterance of the promise of "the seed of the woman" (Gen. 3:15) men began to look for the coming of a mighty deliverer. The expectation aroused by this oracle finds expression throughout the Scriptures. Hannah, however, is the first one to call Him an anointed one. In speaking of the time when the Lord will destroy all the wicked from the earth she exclaimed,

"Jehovah will judge the ends of the earth;  
and he will give strength to his king.

And exalt the horn of his anointed (Messiah)" (I Sam. 2:10).

The priests, especially the High Priest, were called the "anointed" priests. None were ever designated as "the anointed prince." The prophets were sometimes spoken of as having been anointed, but were never called "the anointed prince." On the other hand, the kings of Israel were known as the Lord's anointed. This especially is seen in the early history of the monarchy. But the king was frequently called the anointed. At other times he was called by the title "king." Naturally when Gabriel spoke of "the anointed one, the prince," Daniel thought of an anointed king. But since they were looking for King Messiah to appear and to introduce the golden era, and since Gabriel in his message spoke of this

glorious time in the future, the prophet could think of no one besides Him. This proposition is, therefore, self-evident.

The expression "the anointed, the prince" undoubtedly is a reference to King Messiah, of whose nature and person we have learned the principal facts in my book, *Messiah: His Nature and Person*. In that discussion I showed from the Hebrew text of the Tenach that Messiah, according to the prophetic utterances, enters the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth. In the third book of this Messianic Series, *Messiah: His Redemptive Career*, I showed from the inspired predictions that Messiah was scheduled to come to the world, being born of a Virgin, to be rejected and executed, to be buried, to rise from the dead, to ascend to heaven at the invitation of God, and to sit at the Lord's right hand until He (Jehovah) puts His enemies under His feet, at which time He will return to earth and be enthusiastically welcomed by the Hebrew nation. At that time He will reestablish the throne of David and inaugurate a world-wide reign of righteousness and peace. Thus was outlined in the prophetic word the redemptive career of the Messiah.

The question arising at this point of the discussion is: What event in Messiah's redemptive career is referred to by the expression **עַד מְשִׁיחַ נְגִיד** "unto the anointed one, the prince." From Daniel 9:25 we cannot be dogmatic. We might conclude, however, that the special point of the passage refers to some great epoch in this redemptive career of Messiah. Further than this no one can conjecture. But verse 26 supplies the desired information. "And after the threescore and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing." It is evident from the drift of the thought that this statement is explanatory of the indefinite words "until the anointed one, the prince." This phrase from verse 26, therefore, points out which epoch in Messiah's redemptive career was before the angel's mind.

The impression which the passage makes upon the mind of one who has not espoused a theory relative to this oracle is that at the conclusion of the 69 weeks Messiah is cut off or executed; therefore, the terminal date of the 69 weeks, or 483 years, is the year of the Messiah's execution.

Will a critical study of this passage confirm the general impression received from reading the English translation of **אַחֲרָי**? The fundamental meaning of this word is to be

found in the verb from which it is derived, and which means "to remain behind, delay, tarry." The form used by Gabriel is the plural construct of the noun אַחֲרַי, rendered literally "the hinder or following part." For the fundamental idea see II Samuel 2:23. Here it is rendered "the hinder end" of Abner's spear with which he smote Asahel. Since the form appearing here is the plural construct, it means literally "the hinder part of." In this connection it is evident that this substantive has a prepositional force and is properly rendered "after."

This conclusion is supported by numerous references which might be cited. For instance, in the genealogical tables of Genesis 5 and 11, this word is used in such statements as, "and the days of Adam *after* he begat Seth were eight hundred years." The account began from the begetting of Seth onward. Our word is used to express this idea. Another example is found in Leviticus 16:1 in the following statement: "As Jehovah spake unto Moses, *after* the death of the two sons of Aaron." The Lord's speaking to Moses was immediately after the death of these men. We see this same usage in Deuteronomy 1:3,4. An examination of this text shows that this word means immediately after. It is to be found in such passages as Joshua 1:1; Judges 1:1; 10:1. In all of these cases it carries the idea of the transpiring of an occurrence immediately after a given event has taken place. Scores of instances support this contention. In view of this inherent meaning of the word, obviously it always carries the idea that an event, about which a statement is made, transpires immediately after some other occurrence with which it is connected. *Only in such cases* as those where the absolute evidences of the context show that some time might intervene is one at liberty to interpret it differently.

According to our prediction, after the sixty-ninth week, or at the expiration of the 483 years, "shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing." In view of the fact that the general usage of this word indicates an occurrence following immediately another action that has been mentioned, we are to conclude that the cutting off of the Messiah occurs at the end of the sixty-ninth week or at the close of the 483 years.

Gabriel was very specific in his mentioning the exact number of years and in giving the initial date of this period. Since he was speaking with mathematical precision with reference to it and also with reference to the initial date, it is to be presumed that our word *after* used in connection with such exact language must be interpreted as indicating

the cutting off of Messiah immediately at the end of the 483 years. Cold facts and plain logic demand this conclusion. On the other hand, there would have to be absolute and positive evidence showing that the cutting off of the Messiah does not occur immediately at the close of the 483 years in order for us to understand that any time interval separates its conclusion and the cutting off of Messiah.

The period under discussion begins with the going forth of the commandment to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem and extends "unto Messiah, the prince." As seen above, this statement is not specific enough inasmuch as it does not refer to a definite date or event in the life of Messiah. Gabriel, however, removed the ambiguity when he, following the principle of the law of recurrence, gave us the specific data indicating what point in the career of Messiah he had in view. This he explained in the following verse: "And after the threescore and the two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing." Thus the specific event in Messiah's career here intended is His being cut off. Since the angel was speaking with mathematical exactness and since the initial date is very specific, we are to assume that the terminal date is likewise definite.

The word rendered "cut off" **כָּרַת** means "cut down." In Exodus 4:25 it refers to circumcision; in Numbers 13:23,24, to the cutting of clusters of grapes; in Judges 9:40,49, to the cutting of boughs of trees; in I Samuel 17:51; 31:9; II Samuel 20:22, to the cutting off of the head of a man; in Jeremiah 11:19; 50:16, it also refers to the cutting off of men from the land of the living. By Gabriel it is applied to Messiah and evidently its significance is that of His execution. In the famous servant passage, Isaiah 52:13—53:12, the execution of King Messiah is expressed by a different word, **גָּזַר**. A comparison of the message given by Gabriel and that spoken by Isaiah shows that the same execution was before the mind of both speakers. Gabriel and Daniel assumed on the part of the reader the knowledge concerning this execution; hence only a brief statement was necessary to convey the thought.

From all the data, we see that the terminal date of the 483-year period is the time of Messiah's being cut off or executed for the sins of His people. From this conclusion there cannot possibly be any escape.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE PROPHETIC STUDENTS OF THE FIRST CENTURY

Notwithstanding the times of declension and moral decay, God has always had His seven thousand faithful servants who have never bowed the knee to Baal. The fact that a paralyzing materialism held the Sadducean section of the Jewish nation of the first century in a cold, philosophical stupor, while a dead orthodoxy on the part of the Pharasaic party devitalized its profession, there was a pious remnant who trusted God and who believed the messages of His prophets. They were in that time what in Christian circles of the present day would be called conservative, loyal believers. They accepted the Scriptures as fully inspired and studied them in order to ascertain the message which the prophets spoke.

At the proper time, according to the law of Moses, Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to the Temple to present Him to the Lord. When they arrived Symeon was present. Concerning him Luke tells us that, "this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Spirit was upon him." Concerning him Luke gives us the following account:

26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee. 29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this might be. 30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. 31 And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Of this man, the Holy Spirit, through Luke, tells us that he was "looking for the consolation of Israel." What is the significance of this participial phrase? In the light of the teaching of the Old Testament, it can mean only one thing; namely, that he was looking forward to the coming of the Messiah who would bring consolation and deliverance

to the people of Israel. This same thought was expressed by the apostle Paul in the phrase, "the hope of Israel" (Acts 28:20). These expressions are without a doubt an echo of Isaiah's prediction concerning Messiah: "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live: and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander to the peoples" (Isa. 55:3,4). From this passage we see that God promised to make with Israel an everlasting covenant which would be the embodiment of the sure mercies vouchsafed to King David. The prophet personalized these mercies by showing that they were to be embodied in this Son of David, who is to be "a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander to the peoples." In view of the promises to David and the references to the same by Isaiah, good old Symeon, a student of the prophetic word, was expectantly waiting for the appearance of this one who would be a witness and a leader to the peoples.

But, one gathers from Luke's statement in the passage quoted above that Symeon was expecting in his own day and time the appearance of this one who was the hope of Israel. Why would he be setting a date and expecting the appearance of King Messiah at that time? The answer, doubtless, is this: He had read Daniel's prophecy, which was discussed in the preceding chapter. He knew that Messiah would be cut off 483 years after the issuing of the decree for the exiles to return from Babylonian captivity. The Jews had counted the years, and those in Israel who, like Symeon, believed the prophecy knew that the time was at hand for Him to appear in order to be cut off at the expiration of the 483rd year after the return from captivity. Since he was living so very close to the Lord—he was a devout man—the Spirit revealed it unto him that he should have the opportunity of seeing Messiah before his death. Thus, from the Scriptures, he learned that the time was at hand for King Messiah to be born in Bethlehem. But by the Holy Spirit the revelation was made that he personally would have an opportunity to see the Christ-child. God gives special blessings and makes certain disclosures of truth to those who are walking closely by His side and are trusting Him.

There was another outstanding person in Jerusalem who, likewise, was a student of the prophetic word. This one was Anna, a prophetess of the tribe of Asher. She was so very consecrated to the Lord that she spent her time at the sanctuary in worship and

service. When Joseph and Mary brought the baby Jesus into the Temple, she came up at that very hour and gave thanks unto God "and spake of him to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38). From this quotation, we see that there were those in Israel who were "looking for the redemption of Jerusalem." This dear old saint of God was personally acquainted with those who were looking for the appearance of King Messiah. Figuratively speaking, one would say that they were upon the tiptoes of expectation, looking daily for His advent. Hence, when this aged prophetess came into the Temple at that very hour, she, by the Spirit, recognized the child Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament predictions and spoke to those who entertained the same hope.

From the meager data that we have concerning Symeon and Anna, we see that there was a group of devout, loyal people, who knew the prophecies, who believed them, and who were in great expectation, awaiting Messiah's appearance. The basis for their hope was founded upon the revelation of Daniel 9, which gives the date for Messiah's execution. Of course, it is to be presumed that the faith and the hope of this little group of prophetic students was fired by the instructions given to them by the prophetess Anna. It is to be noted that they were expecting the Messiah and the redemption of Jerusalem, when the Holy Spirit, through Anna, made the revelation concerning the presence of the Christ-child in the Temple on this special occasion. This disclosure of truth to them was doubtless no great surprise, because they knew from the inspired record that the time was at hand for Him to appear. In our ordinary parlance today, they could have said to Anna when she made known to them by the Spirit that the baby Jesus was the Messiah: "Just as we expected."

About thirty years later, John the Baptist broke the prophetic silence that had settled down over the whole nation for practically four hundred years by crying in the wilderness, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). With such an announcement the nation was electrified and people from all parts of the country rushed out to hear him preach. The great masses of the people received baptism at his hands, being instructed that they should look to Him who was coming after John. Six months after the Baptist began his ministry, Jesus came and was baptized of John (Matt. 3:13-17). On that occasion, the Spirit like a dove descended

upon Jesus, and the Father from heaven spoke saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Vast multitudes, doubtless were present on this most solemn occasion.

Again let us bear in mind that the great majority of the nation, doubtless, was not aware that they were living in prophetic times. They did not realize that it was time for the Messiah to appear. That epoch slipped upon them unawares—all because they did not know the prophetic word. In contrast with them, as we have just seen, that little group of prophetic students, who believed and who studied these predictions, knew ahead of time that they were living in momentous days and that Messiah would soon appear.

Not only from the sacred record do we learn this fact, but from an examination of the Jewish literature of the period, we see that in certain circles there was great expectation for the appearance of Messiah. This literature is known as *Apocalyptic*. This word literally means to *uncover*. Thus there was great literary activity on the part of a certain group in Israel who endeavored to awaken the nation to the seriousness of the times and to call it back to God.

In our studying this literature, we see that those who produced it, while they were aware that they were living in the very time when Messiah would appear, yet made many hasty and false deductions. Nevertheless, they were striking at the truth. They knew from the study of the prophecies that the time was at hand, but they indulged in excesses and extravagant, fantastic interpretations of certain of the prophecies.

This first century situation should teach us a serious lesson. The group which clustered around such people as Symeon and the prophetess Anna seem to have been very cautious, taking only what the Word said and refusing to indulge in extravagant, sensational, fantastic interpretations of the Scriptures. On the other hand, there was another group of prophetic students, who produced the apocalyptic of the first century and who indulged in many wild and sensational theories. Of course, there were many people then, like the masses today, who simply lived upon the fantastic and extravagant theories of sensational teachers. This group doubtless brought the study of prophecy into disrepute. It takes no wide stretch of the imagination to believe that the Sadducean, materialistic party was driven into their cold, philosophical isolation by the effervescent, sensational, prophetic teaching of those indulging in this extreme fantastic interpretation of prophecy.



The prophetic word is given to us for a light by which we are to be guided. God said what He meant and meant what He said. The Lord fulfills His prophecies as written and not as interpreted by the speculations of men. My appeal to all lovers of truth is that we avoid all striving at sensationalism and that we seek to know only what is revealed unmistakably in the Word and give that to the hungry masses. God will bless our efforts along this line.

In our discussing the prophetic students of the first century, we cannot fail to note a man who was high in the counsels of the Jewish nation, Joseph of Arimathea. Concerning him we have this statement by Luke: "And behold, a man named Joseph, who was a councillor, a good and righteous man (he had not consented to their counsel and deed), a man of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews, who was looking for the kingdom of God: this man went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus" (Luke 23:50-52). Since it is said of Joseph that he was a councillor, it is altogether possible that he was a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin. Only men of the very highest type of manhood, respectability, character, and accomplishments became members of this supreme court of the Hebrew race. He was a good and a righteous man and refused to consent to the execution of Jesus. He and Nicodemus were friends and seemed to have held aloof from the plottings of the Jews against Jesus. But of Joseph it is said that he was "looking for the kingdom of God." He went about his regular duties performing his tasks honestly and conscientiously before God. At the same time he had an unfaltering, unswerving faith in the establishment of the kingdom of God. Why did he feel this way? Evidently, he was a student of the prophetic word, believing the Scriptures and accepting the preaching both of John the Baptist and of Jesus.

These prophetic students believed that the kingdom of God would be established in their day and time. Such is the inference that is to be drawn from the word rendered "looking for" in the phrase "looking for the kingdom of God." John the Baptist said that the time was fulfilled and that the kingdom of God was at hand. It had drawn near. What is meant here by "the kingdom of God is at hand"? Evidently that which is set forth in the parables of the kingdom recorded in Matthew 13; Mark 4; and Luke 8. Matthew, in his record, used the phrase "kingdom of heaven", whereas Mark and Luke in recounting the same parables used the term "kingdom of God." Thus it is certain from this fact that these

two expressions have the same significance in these parables. Doubtless, Matthew used his expression "kingdom of heaven," through respect to the Jewish peculiar ideas and aversion to using the sacred and memorial name of God, substituting in its place expressions like "the heavens," or "the reign of the heavens." That which is called the kingdom of heaven by Matthew and the kingdom of God by Mark and Luke is obviously what we speak of as Christendom, which historically began with the preaching of the Lord Jesus and the apostles, has continued through this Christian dispensation, and will remain until the Lord Jesus comes for His saints at the time of the Rapture of the church before the Tribulation. The kingdom of heaven did come close at hand and was established on Pentecost. Peoples in reality enter this by the new birth only (John 3:1-8).

As was indicated in these parables, soon there was injected into Christianity and its teachings corruption—the three measures of meal became entirely leaven. Nevertheless, it was still the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven in the broad sense as used by Jesus on this occasion.

At the end of this age, as we learn from the parable of the dragnet (Matt. 13:47-50), all evil and things that offend will be cast out of this kingdom. Only the pure and righteous will survive and enter into the glorious millennial reign of our Lord.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE STOPPING OF GOD'S CLOCK

The students of prophecy frequently speak of the stopping of God's clock when Israel is out of fellowship with Him. A great principle that dominates His dealing with Israel, His Chosen People, is expressed by this illustration. We must prove that the Lord actually ceases to reckon time (when viewed from a certain standpoint) during the periods when Israel is out of fellowship with Him. Students want evidence and not assertions. Evidence we shall have on this point.

In my volume *Messiah: His First Coming Scheduled*, which is the fourth book of my *Messianic Series*, I presented the chronological scheme that is found in the Old Testament. In chapter seven of that volume, I discussed the period of time, from a chronological standpoint, beginning with the Exodus from Egypt and ending with the establishment of the United Kingdom under Saul. By taking all the chronological data found in the Books of Joshua, Judges, and First Samuel, I showed that there were actually five hundred and ninety-four years from Israel's leaving Egypt to the fourth year of Solomon when he began to build the temple. There were no more nor less years than these five hundred and ninety-four.

But in I Kings 6:1, we are told that the fourth year of Solomon's reign was the four hundred and eightieth after Israel's departure from Egypt. There is therefore a seeming discrepancy between this inspired statement by the writer of Kings and the conclusion based upon the actual chronological data found in the historical books just mentioned. In other words, the computation based upon all the data found in the records yields an excess of one hundred and fourteen years more than the blanket statement of I Kings 6:1. What shall we do about it? Shall we accept the calculation based upon the data in those books and reject the statement of I Kings 6:1, or vice versa? My answer is that we shall not reject either, but, on the other hand, we shall accept both. There are no contradictions between statements of truth. Sometimes there may appear to be one when we do not have all of the facts; but, when a full picture is presented, that which appears to be a contradiction becomes a sweet harmony, which proclaims the infallibility of the Word.

A close study of the data that is supplied by the Book of Judges shows that there were six periods of servitude during the lawless times prior to the establishment of the monarchy, when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." During these times, God delivered His Chosen People into the hands of foreign powers. Different ones of the surrounding nations invaded the territory and reduced the country to slavery until the Hebrews repented of their sins and cried unto God for a deliverer. Then He raised up certain judges to save them and to administer a just government. The sum of the number of these servitudes, plus the three years of the illegal kingship of Abimelech, gives us a total of one hundred and fourteen years. During these periods, Israel was out of fellowship with her God. During the rest of the time from the Exodus to the fourth year of Solomon, she was in fellowship with Him. Those years are properly called theocratic. Thus we see that there were one hundred and fourteen years during which she was out of fellowship with Him and four hundred and eighty years during which the fellowship was maintained. When we look at these facts, we come to the conclusion, therefore, that the writer of Kings was speaking of theocratic years during which God was recognized as the lawful ruler of the people, and they were enjoying His favor. During the remaining one hundred and fourteen years of the five hundred, ninety four, God was not ruling, but Israel was doing that which was right in her own eyes. We can, upon the basis of these cold, hard facts, say that God's clock stopped one hundred and fourteen years during this period.

It was God's prophetic clock which stopped and not His universal chronometer. The earth continued to revolve upon its axis, which movement makes night and day. Thus the years came and went, but the time during which Israel was out of favor with God was not reckoned by the writer of the Book of Kings.

I might use a simple illustration to enforce this truth. All large firms have regular clocks that are controlled electrically and that strike off the hours, both day and night, for 365 days every year. Many of them also have a time clock for measuring, for instance, telephone calls. Just as soon as the connection is made by the operator, the subscriber starts it and can tell to the very second how long the conversation lasts. When he finishes he stops it. Hence this small desk clock simply measures off a special time for a definite purpose, whereas the regular one measures every hour. The years come and go regardless of whether or not Israel is in fellowship with God, and His great universal clock

strikes off the hours. But, since He called her into a special relationship with Himself, He, figuratively speaking, has a time clock to measure the years when she is in fellowship with Him.

In chapter 2 we saw that the sixty-ninth week of Daniel's prophecy ended with the year of the execution of Messiah. In other words, that tragedy occurred at the end of the four hundred and eighty-third year after the return of the Children of Israel from the Babylonian captivity.

But did the final week of this period of time follow the execution of King Messiah? To this question my answer is a most positive No. My reason for making this statement is that at the end of the seventieth week of this period, the six things mentioned in Daniel 9:24 will be accomplished. As we have already seen, when they are brought to pass, the millennial age will have begun. In other words, to accomplish the six things mentioned in the prophecy is to establish the glorious kingdom of Messiah upon the earth. No one would for one moment say that seven years after the execution of King Messiah the glorious millennial reign of our Lord was established upon the earth. Sin continued in the world from that day until the present. Conditions grew constantly worse, even among the believers, until the Lord, according to Revelation 2:1-8, told the Church at Ephesus that it had lost its first love. Complaints are registered against five of the other churches mentioned in Revelation two and three. There was a gradual drift from Christianity, which culminated in the Dark Ages. Sin, vice, evil, wars, and calamities have characterized the present age. We are therefore safe in saying that the Millennial Kingdom did not follow, or, I would say, was not established seven years after the crucifixion. Since it is to be brought into existence when the seventieth week of Daniel has run its course and since those glorious conditions have never been established upon the earth, we may be absolutely certain in saying that the seventieth week of Daniel did not follow the sixty-ninth. There is therefore a long gap, which separates the sixty-ninth week from the seventieth.

Further proof that the seventieth week of Daniel did not follow the sixty-ninth is found in the fact that in verse 26 the angel said, "And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." By unanimous consent, prophetic students see in the prediction regarding the destruction of the city and the sanctuary an oracle

which was fulfilled in the overthrow of Jerusalem and the temple, which events we know occurred in the year 70 A.D., when Titus, the Roman general, finally took Jerusalem. This collapse of the Jewish nation and the destruction of its temple occurred 33 years after the end of the four hundred and ninety-year period, if the seventieth week followed immediately the sixty-ninth. But since the millennial age was not established in the year 37 A.D., as shown above, the seventieth week could not have followed the sixty-ninth.

What is meant by "The prince that shall come"? The only way to identify this one is to recognize the people who destroyed the city of Jerusalem in fulfillment of this prediction. All historians say that the Romans did it and that Titus was the general who finally destroyed the city. Since the Romans were the ones who captured Jerusalem, we may be certain that the prince to whom reference is made is to be a Roman. Daniel assumed an acquaintance on the part of his readers with the one to whom reference is made. A glance at Chapter 7 of Daniel shows that it presents the grand march of empire. A vivid description of the four world empires under the symbolism of wild beasts is here found. In his speaking of the last ruler of the fourth empire, he gave us a detailed account of his defiance of God and of his persecution of His people Israel. Inasmuch as Daniel had acquainted his readers with this coming prince who stands head and shoulders above every one else thus far described in the book, it is natural for us to look instinctively to this same prince as the one to whom reference is made in chapter 9.

"And the end thereof shall be with a flood." The end to which reference here is made is the overthrow and the destruction of the city and the sanctuary. The word *flood* is to be understood literally unless the facts of the context indicate clearly otherwise. Since Gabriel was speaking of the literal siege, the capture, and the destruction of Jerusalem, it is hardly likely that the word "flood" is used literally. What is its significance when used figuratively? A glance at Isaiah 8:5-8 shows that the invasion of an army is compared to the flood waters of a river. Since Gabriel was talking about the invasion of Palestine by the Romans, it is quite obvious that the expression flood refers to the army of the conqueror.

Gabriel in his exposition of the future therefore leaped from the conclusion of the sixty-ninth week of Daniel, when God's prophetic clock stopped, over a period of forty

years to 70 A.D., when Jerusalem fell, and the Jews were dispersed among all nations. From that day until the present they likewise have been scattered throughout the world.

Using 70 A.D. and the calamity of that year as a springboard, figuratively speaking, Gabriel leaped across the centuries of Christian history to the end of this age—the conclusion of the seventieth week. In his declaration "and even unto the end shall be war: desolations are determined," the word *end* can refer to nothing but the end of the period of time which he was discussing; namely, the seventy weeks of years. This prediction, therefore, put the seventieth week of Daniel far into the distant future from the standpoint of 70 A.D. During this Period—from the fall of Jerusalem to the end of the seventieth week—the time is to be characterized by wars and desolations upon the Jewish people, concerning whom the prophecy is made. A glance at Jewish history shows that this people has suffered as no other single race upon the face of the globe—even during the Christian era. The Jew, dispersed throughout the world, has been the football of the nations. He has been knocked from pillar to post. He has been robbed, plundered, and persecuted. Pogrom after pogrom has been launched against him. Notwithstanding these extremely difficult experiences through which the nation has passed, it has survived all of them, will continue to do so, and will emerge after its repudiation of the national sin at the end of the Tribulation into the glorious kingdom era of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

"Desolations are determined," declared the Angel Gabriel. This statement, of course, has specific reference to Jerusalem and the land of the Jews and refers to the period from 70 A.D. to the end of the seventieth week.

From this prophecy and the discussion here presented, it becomes abundantly clear that Daniel foresaw the long gap which has intervened between the sixty-ninth and the seventieth week of years. As has just been shown, this Christian era divides into two parts: that from 30 A.D., the crucifixion, (the cutting off of Messiah), to 70 A.D., the destruction of Jerusalem; and second, from the destruction of Jerusalem to the end of the seventieth week.

When all the facts are taken into consideration, one sees unmistakably that the Angel Gabriel clearly outlined the Christian dispensation as coming between the sixty-ninth and the seventieth week of this vision. It is true that he did not give the information

concerning the turn affairs would take after the Jews rejected their Messiah; but without a doubt he indicated that there would be a period of time intervening between the four hundred and eighty-third and the four hundred and eighty-fourth year of this prophecy.

The Psalmists and the prophets clearly set forth the propositions that Israel would reject her Messiah upon His first appearance and that He would be executed, buried, and be raised from the dead. Furthermore, they showed that, after His resurrection, at the invitation of God He would return to heaven and sit at the right hand of the Almighty until the latter puts His enemies under His feet. When this is accomplished and Israel is ready to receive Him, having repudiated the national sin of rejecting Him, He will leave Glory and return to this earth, for the purpose of delivering her and of setting up His millennial kingdom.

During the time when Israel is in rejection, God is taking out from among the nations a people for His Name. The gospel is to be preached to all, giving everyone an opportunity. It is not the will of God that anyone should perish, but that all should come unto repentance. He who, convicted of sin, comes unto the Lord Jesus Christ will in no wise be cast out. Hence, during the present era of Israel's dispersion and rejection, God is calling into being the Body of Christ—the Church of the First-born—consisting of Jews and Gentiles. The Jews are the natural branches, whereas the Gentiles are the unnatural. The latter are to be grafted in among the former and to partake of the fatness of the trunk of the tree, as indicated by the apostle Paul in Romans 9,10, and 11.

During this Christian era God is extending mercy to man as He has never done before this era began. Neither will He make such gracious offers to people after it closes. He has a special objective in mind in doing this, as is indicated in Ephesians 2:6,7. Because of this special purpose of God and the conferring of His grace upon people now, this era is called, "the year of Jehovah's favor," in the marvelous prediction found in Isaiah 61:1-3. Our hearts should well up in praise to God for His goodness to us at this present time and for what He will give us throughout all Eternity.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE SEVENTIETH WEEK

"And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease: and upon the wing of abominations shall come one that maketh desolate; and even unto the full end, and that determined, shall *wrath* be poured out upon the desolate" (Dan. 9:27).

#### I. THE ANTICHRIST AND HIS COVENANT

The heading of this division is "The Antichrist and His Covenant." This caption assumes that the Antichrist is referred to by the pronoun in this verse. This position has been, in certain quarters, called in question. Those who do challenge this contention insist that *he* refers to Messiah the Prince mentioned in verses 25 and 26. Is there any proof for this position? So far as this text goes, there is absolutely none. Only by reading into this passage something that is deducted from other statements can this position be maintained. Moreover, it is diametrically opposed to one of the fundamental principles that is common to all languages. The rule to which I refer is this: A noun, which immediately precedes a pronoun and agrees with it in gender and number is to be recognized as the antecedent, unless there is positive evidence to the contrary. The word agreeing thus with the pronoun *he* and immediately preceding it is *prince* in verse 26. Being governed by this universal law to which I have just referred, we must accept *prince* as the antecedent of this pronoun unless there is evidence forbidding our doing so. One will seek in vain in this passage for such negative testimony. We must therefore accept *prince* as the antecedent.

We have already seen that this coming prince of verse 26 is of the same nationality as those who destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 A.D. This prince therefore is to be a Roman. He has never come as yet. He is spoken of as *the coming prince*. As suggested above, this one is so spoken of as one who is well-known to the readers of the Book of Daniel. One instinctively identifies him as the prince mentioned in 7:25 who is the world dictator of the end-time.

One writer objects to this interpretation upon the basis that the pronoun *he* does not appear in the original Hebrew text but is included in the verb stem. This statement is correct. There is no pronoun in this verse separate and apart from the verb. Everyone who knows Hebrew is aware of the fact that the person of a verb is expressed by its ending. This verb is in the third person, singular number, and definitely must be rendered he, she, or it when there is no noun or pronoun expressed. The context alone determines what is intended. The objection therefore falls flat.

But who is this Antichrist or world dictator? As before suggested, he is mentioned in Daniel 7. A perusal of verses 23 to 28 of this chapter shows that Rome in its final form will embrace all nations and become in reality a world empire. After it has thus devoured all races and subjected them, it collapses and falls into ten divisions, over each of which a dictator will assume the authority. After the breaking up of this universal kingdom, and the rise of its ten dictators, there will come out of obscurity a man who is represented by the little horn of this passage, and who becomes associated with the ten kings. He will be a real diplomat. He will, as we learn from other passages, be inspired and energized by the devil himself. By his diplomacy, power and shrewdness, he will gradually snatch the power from these ten and concentrate it in his own hands. These kings will become "rubber stamps" or "yes-men." This man who appears upon the international scene after the collapse of the world empire and the rise of the ten dictators is the Antichrist. Could any of the dictators who are in the world now be he? Positively not, because they came up too soon. The international stage is not sufficiently set for the appearance of the Antichrist, according to the schedule set forth in Daniel 7, which is absolutely infallible and is very clear and definite so that no one need misunderstand it.

When this coming prince or Antichrist has thus gained the ascendancy in the world, he enters into a firm covenant with many of the Jews for one week of years. My reason for saying that this covenant is made with the Jews is this: The prediction which we are studying says very specifically that it pertains to Daniel's people and the Holy City (Dan. 9:24). Other nations are not in view in this prophecy—only the Jew. The many, therefore, with whom the covenant is made can be only Jews.

The fact that the prediction says that the covenant is made with "many" is proof that the entire Jewish nation will not be party to this Satanic agreement. When one looks

at a cross-section of Jewish life today and studies that people in the light of the past, he can come to a very definite and accurate conclusion as to who are the many referred to in this passage. It is evident that they are the apostate remnant of Israel who will sell their birth-right, like Esau, for a mess of political pottage. Should one speak of this section of the Jewish race in terms of present-day phraseology, he would say that those making the covenant are the modernistic crowd, which has given up largely the national hope and has abandoned faith in the inspiration of the Scriptures and the plan of God. One also comes to the conclusion that the faithful, orthodox Jews who believe in the Scriptures as the Word of God are the ones who hold aloof from such an alliance.

The "many" will enter into this covenant for the period of seven years. As we have seen, the final week of this prophecy precedes immediately the millennial age of our Lord's reign. The week referred to in verse 27 is therefore this seventieth week, which terminates the period of seventy weeks of years.

## II. THE TRIBULATION PERIOD

The prophets constantly speak of "the day of Jehovah." Descriptions of it are found in such passages as Isaiah 2, the Book of Joel, and Zephaniah 1:14-18. They picture it as a time of great distress and indignation when God arises to shake the earth mightily and to destroy the wicked out of it. One of the clearest descriptions of this period of trouble and judgment is found in Isaiah 24:1-20. This is called especially the time of Jacob's trouble, but he is assured that he shall be saved out of it (Jer. 30:7).

The Book of Revelation is a detailed account of the judgments which will fall upon the earth during that time. This period of Jehovah's wrath is described in chapters 6 through 19. Those chapters which give the chronological order of events are: 6,8,9, and 16. The other chapters give details concerning the conditions which will then obtain upon the earth. Thus, figuratively speaking, we would say that they give the stage setting.

A careful study of Revelation shows that this period of wrath is divided into two sections: The first half of the Tribulation covering 1260 days (Rev. 11:3); the second half consisting of forty-two months (Rev. 11:2). These judgments will be so very severe that the bulk of humanity will be swept from the face of the globe. The surface of the earth

will present the appearance of a desolation and a waste. The heavens likewise will be affected by these thorough-going judgments. Jeremiah, chapter 4:23-26, gives a very vivid description of the heavens and the earth at the end of the Tribulation. That he was talking about this time of judgment is evident from the fact that verse 27 begins with the conjunction *for*, which introduces a sentence explanatory of this passage. An examination of this verse and the following ones shows that Jeremiah was looking forward into the future—to this period of travail through which Israel as a nation shall pass in this period of Tribulation.

### III. The World-Wide Revival

The present age ends in apostasy and finally in catastrophe. This is clearly predicted by both our Lord and the apostles. In II Thessalonians 2 Paul especially spoke of "the apostasy." This prophecy foretells a deliberate renunciation of the faith of our fathers and an abandonment of it. "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith upon the earth?" This rhetorical question demands the answer "No" (Luke 11:8). Paul told Timothy that in the latter days there would be perilous times and described them very minutely. There is, therefore, no scriptural warrant to expect a revival in these days of declension.

But the Scriptures do speak of a mighty turning to God and locate it in the Tribulation. For instance, in Isaiah 24 we find, as stated above, a graphic description of terrific judgments and their effect upon the earth during this time of unprecedented suffering. Yet we see in the midst of this description a revival that flares up and that encircles the globe. This is expressed in the following verses:

"14 These shall lift up their voice, they shall shout, for the majesty of Jehovah they cry aloud from the sea. 15 Wherefore glorify ye Jehovah in the east, even the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel, in the isles of the sea. 16 From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs: Glory to the righteous" (Isa. 24:14-16a).

The gist of the songs that will be heard on every hand during this time of trouble will be, "Glory to the righteous." Different writers of the Psalms likewise spoke in the most glowing terms of a mighty turning to God during this time of terrific judgments.

In Revelation 7 one sees a mighty army of 144,000 Jewish servants of God who are sealed against injury by the judgments of the Tribulation. They are servants of God; therefore, they serve. Immediately after giving us this vision, John gave another one of an innumerable host of people saved from every nation, tribe, tongue and language. These come out of the great Tribulation, wash their robes, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. These who turn to God are the result of a mighty world-wide revival. They do not accept Christ before the Tribulation, but they come out of it. And in this vision John saw them standing in the presence of God. These facts force us to conclude that there is to be a mighty turning to God in the Tribulation. Since these 144,000 Jews are recognized as servants, are protected, and appear in this chapter immediately prior to the description of the result of the mighty world-wide revival, one concludes that they are the ones who conduct it. This is in perfect accord with the promise that God made to Abraham that in him and his seed should all families of the earth be blessed.

The apostle Paul, II Thessalonians 2, assumed unmistakably a world-wide revival as occurring in the first half of the Tribulation. The brethren in Thessalonica had been disturbed unduly by certain ones in regard to the Rapture of the Church and the day of the Lord, the latter of which is the Tribulation. In order to allay their fears and to set their hearts at rest, the apostle showed them that the day of the Lord could not possibly be until there should develop *the* great apostasy, and the man of sin (the Antichrist) be revealed. The knowledge of these facts would thus reassure them that the rapture had not occurred, as they had been led to believe, and that they had not therefore been left out of that glorious event. These facts presuppose that the rapture occurs prior to the Tribulation.

In his speaking of the revealing of the man of sin before the day of the Lord, the apostle identified this "man of sin" and "the son of perdition" as the one spoken of by Daniel in 9:27, which we are considering in this chapter. According to Gabriel, this future prince breaks his covenant in the middle of the week "and upon the wing of abominations shall come one that maketh desolate." The expression "the wing of abominations" refers to the highest expression of heathen worship. Idolatry has taken many forms throughout the nations and at various times, but its highest expression will be ushered into existence by this future Roman emperor when he makes his covenant with the apostate remnant of

Israel in the middle of the seventieth week of Daniel 9. When he thus takes this step, he will make desolate all opposition that is offered to him. He will reject the God of his fathers, the desire of women (the Messiah), and every god; but he will demand that they worship him. Such is the forecast appearing in the Book of Daniel. Paul, II Thessalonians 2:4, speaks of the one whom he calls the son of perdition as "he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God." This description identifies the man of sin as the one who is the willful king of Daniel 11 and also the one who makes desolate, mentioned in Daniel 9:27.

This opposition to all that is called God and the demanding of divine worship by the Antichrist occur in the middle of the Tribulation when the covenant made with the Jews is broken. It is clear, therefore, that Paul in II Thessalonians 2:4 was talking about the events of the middle of the Tribulation. This verse becomes very luminous in the light of the disclosure found in Revelation 13:11-18. This latter passage supplements Paul's statement.

Second Thessalonians 2:5 is a reminiscence. Here Paul carried his readers back to the time when he was personally with them and taught them: "Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?" Since he had given them personal instruction when he was with them, he could say to them, "Now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only *there is* one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way." Since they had been instructed by the apostle personally, they understood "that which restraineth." Paul had taught them that there was that which restrained and which would continue to do so until it is time for the revealing of this son of perdition. He further explained what he meant in the next verse, which he introduced by the conjunction *for*. This word shows that the sentence which it introduces is explanatory of verse 6. The mystery of lawlessness was working in Paul's day. Undoubtedly it is Satan's underhanded machinations and diabolical plottings. But, declared Paul, Satan could not bring forth the son of perdition until the time when he that restraineth now "be taken out of the way."

Since verse 7 is tied to verse 6 and is explanatory of it, since verse 6 is united to verse 5 by the adverb *now*, and since verse 5 is a retrospect which brought afresh to their minds his teaching when he was present, we are forced to the conclusion that these verses—5, 6, and 7—are parenthetical. Verse 8 takes up the thought that was dropped with verse 4. "And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth and bring to naught by the manifestation of his coming." Since verse 4 is unmistakably talking about the Antichrist's opposing all worship and his demanding divine recognition, which occurs in the middle of the seventieth week, verse 8 is likewise talking about events of the same time. The adverb *then* of this latter verse therefore connects verse 8 with verse 4. "And then (in the middle of the Tribulation) shall be revealed the lawless one." This one is revealed before the Tribulation according to verse 3, and then is again revealed in the middle of it according to verse 8. His *identity* is made known before; his real, diabolical, satanic *character* is revealed in the middle of the Tribulation, when he demands divine worship.

When the Antichrist thus abolishes all worship and demands that he alone be given divine honors, he will be energized by Satan and empowered by him to stage the greatest demonstration of superhuman power that will have been witnessed upon the earth to that time. Such is what the apostle referred to in this quotation: "*even he* (the Antichrist), whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." This manifestation of satanic power, miracles, and lying wonders is that which is mentioned in Revelation 13:11-18. God allows Satan and the Antichrist to make this display of power for a definite purpose, which is expressed in these words: "for them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." God will allow them to perform all of these satanic miracles in support of the claims of the antichrist for the benefit of a certain class; namely, "them that perish." These are in this category, "because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." They could not refuse to receive something that was not offered to them. The fact that they received not the love of the truth shows that it will, by the middle of the Tribulation, have been offered to them, but they refuse it. Furthermore, we see that it is given to them prior to this demonstration in order that they might be saved. Thus people can be saved after the rapture by receiving the truth.

Those who do not receive the gospel before this demonstration is staged will, in all probability, accept the Antichrist and his claims. By the permission of the reader, I will, because of its vividness, put the thought in a slang expression: These who hear the truth in the first half of the Tribulation, but who do not receive it, *fall* for the Antichrist when he puts on this demonstration of miraculous works and powers.

Paul declared that God will allow Satan and the Antichrist to work thus, in sending them this error that they should believe a lie, because they "believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Without a doubt, these who accept the claims, the error of the Antichrist, and his satanic miracles will have had a chance to receive the gospel but they refuse it, preferring to believe a lie rather than the truth and to have pleasure in unrighteousness. It is clear therefore from II Thessalonians 2 that the gospel will be given to all the world prior to Satan's great demonstration of miracles in the middle of the Tribulation.

It is the occasion of great rejoicing to our hearts to have the scriptural assurance that the Word of God will be preached to the entire world after the rapture of the Church and before the middle of the Tribulation. This, as has been stated, will be accomplished by the 144,000 Jewish evangelists mentioned in Revelation 7. Results of their labors will be the conversion of an innumerable host of people from every nation, tribe, tongue, and language.

Those who are now giving the gospel to Israel may come to the erroneous conclusion that their labors are futile. Not so. The Word which they are now sowing in the dry ground of indifferent hearts will be watered by the showers of judgments in the beginning of the Tribulation. As a result of their labors, there will arise a mighty army of 144,000 Jewish evangelists, who will conduct this sweeping revival in the first half of the Tribulation. Thus those who are laboring to get the gospel to Israel now will see the abundant harvest of their labors in the form of this innumerable host of people from every nation, tribe, tongue, and language, who are saved by the preaching of the 144,000 Jewish Pauls. This mighty turning to God of myriads of souls will indirectly be the result of the labors of those who are now giving the gospel to Israel. Of course, they will receive their share of reward for their part in this great soul-saving campaign.



#### IV. THE BREAKING OF THE COVENANT

As repeatedly stated in the preceding discussion, in the middle of the Tribulation the Antichrist will repudiate his covenant obligation to the Jews and will consider the material upon which it is written simply as a scrap of paper. His word will amount to nothing. From the twelfth chapter of Revelation we see that Israel, the woman of that prediction, flees into the wilderness to a place prepared of God for her. The occasion of her doing this will be the breaking of this covenant and the unrighteous, unreasonable demand of the Antichrist that he be worshipped as God. The Jews, the faithful orthodox ones, will flee to the mountains and live in the holes of the earth rather than submit to this type of idolatry.

As is indicated in Revelation 17, upon the beast, which is the civil power under the direct rulership of the Antichrist, will ride a woman, who is called Babylon the harlot. She symbolizes the false religious system of that day and time and will be supported by the government. In the middle of the Tribulation this ecclesiasticism will be abolished. All men will be required then to worship and serve this world dictator.

#### V. THE ABSOLUTISM OF THE ANTICHRIST

In the vision of the metallic image (Daniel 2), which symbolizes the four world empires (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome), we see that in the very end of the last one, Rome, there will be ten kings, who are signified by the ten toes on the feet of this image. These correspond to the ten horns on the nondescript beast of Daniel 7. When these two visions are presented side by side, this identity becomes evident. These ten horns, according to Daniel 7:24, symbolize ten kings who reign over the entire world.

To each of these universal empires, which are symbolized in the visions of the metallic image and of the beasts, are given worldwide dominion and authority. This is clearly seen in Daniel 2:36-39. This same universal sway is finally transferred to the fourth kingdom, which is Rome. None of these empires ever took possession of their possessions. Nevertheless, Rome, in the final course of her career at the end of this age, will seize this divinely-given authority. According to Daniel 7:23, she will devour the whole earth and tread it down. This language indicates a ruthlessness in gaining the supremacy

over the world and her incorporating into her dominion every tribe, nation, tongue, and language. The distress that will be caused and the havoc wrought will be appalling—far beyond the conception of the most vivid imagination. But this universal sway will be short-lived, for it will collapse and the kingdom will fall into ten divisions, which fact is asserted in Daniel 7:

"Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom upon earth which shall be diverse from all the kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And as for the ten horns, out of this kingdom shall ten kings arise: and another shall arise after them; and he shall be diverse from the former, and he shall put down three kings" (Dan. 7:23,24).

In these two verses, which are to be taken literally, we see that Rome is destined to become a world empire and that, after she has thus devoured the earth, this universal kingdom falls into ten divisions, over each of which a dictator or king will rule.

After these dictators have seized the authority and rule over the ten divisions of this collapsed empire, there will arise an unusual character, who is signified by the little horn which comes up in the midst of the ten other horns—and after them. This symbolic language translated into literal speech is this: Upon the break-up of this future world empire, ten kings will seize the authority over the ten sections into which it will split. There will appear a man who will come out of insignificance and who will by his shrewdness, diplomacy, and unusual ability ingratiate himself into the favor of these ten dictators. At the same time he will be advancing his interests and gradually seizing the authority, which they have usurped. Soon he becomes dominant among them. Expressing this thought in current phraseology, one would say that they soon become "rubber stamps" while he becomes the all-powerful master-spirit among them.

Finally, in the middle of the Tribulation there will be a mighty upheaval, one result of which is the putting down of three of these ten kings and the assumption of new powers and prerogatives by this world dictator. By this time, he, having absolute and unquestioned authority over the remaining seven kings and the entire world, changes the calendar—the times and the law—and rules for the last three and half years of the Tribulation with an unthought-of tyranny and despotism (Dan. 7:25). With ruthless inconsideration for others and an abnormal craving for human esteem, he will demand the

absolute worship of himself. He will inaugurate a regime so that no one can buy or sell, or have any type of commercial transaction without his consent. At that time the password will be 666 or the number of a man (Read carefully Revelation 13 and 17). For the last three and a half years of the Tribulation, he will hold high carnival in dominating man—body, soul, and spirit. His despotism will go so very far that he will actually destroy everything that is not in agreement with his plans and purposes.

"And even unto the full end, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolate" (Dan. 9:27). This prophecy affirms that from the middle of the week, when the covenant is broken, unto the very end of the Tribulation, wrath which is determined by Almighty God shall be poured out upon this one who is here called the desolate, because he is the one who causes great havoc throughout the world, and, at the same time, he is the desolate, in that, he is devoid of all human feeling and consideration for others. He is also the desolate one because his entire regime shall be wrecked by the terrific judgments that will be poured out upon him during the last three and a half years of his career. This prediction should be studied carefully in the light of the seven judgments which are set forth in Revelation 16 and which are, figuratively speaking, the thunderbolts of the Almighty against this ruthless tyrant, the Antichrist.

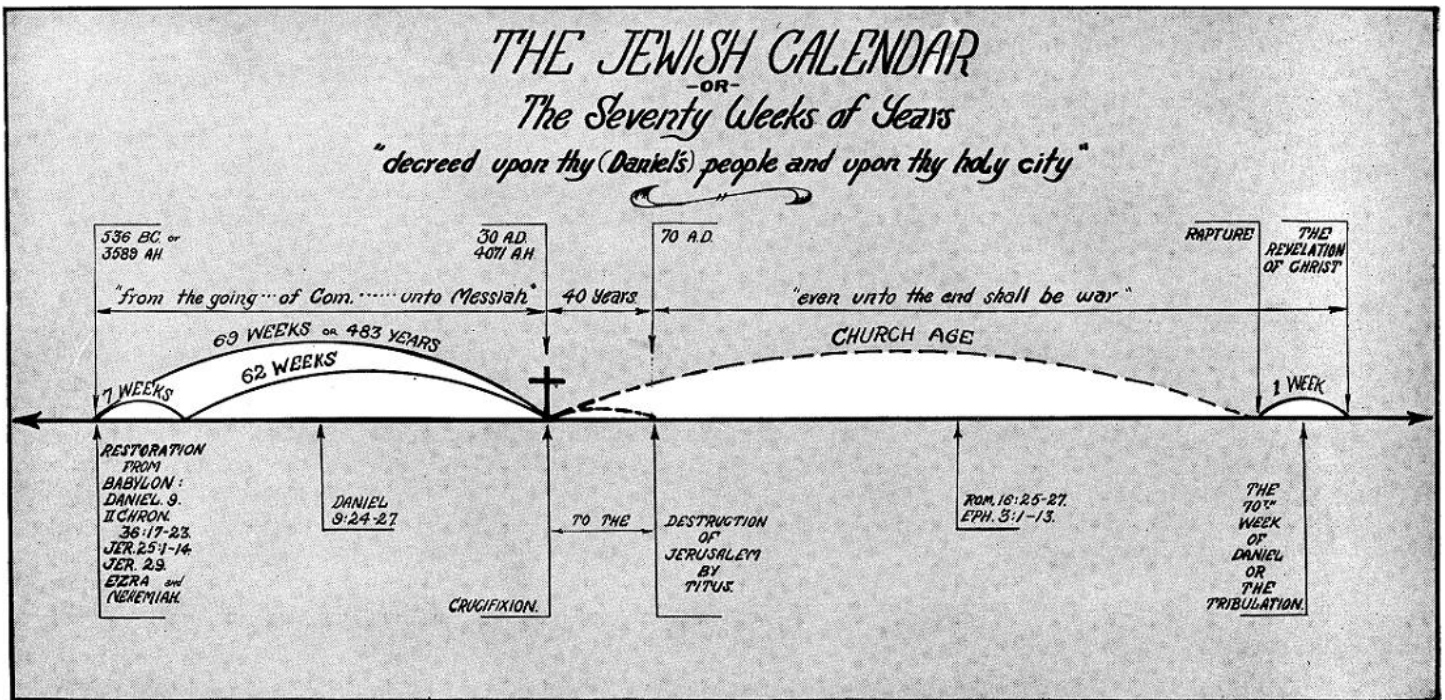
His despotic, tyrannical rule will be brought to a close by the personal appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ with the armies of heaven which follow Him. This Beast, with the false prophet and their armies, gather together in Palestine for the express purpose of coming in combat with the Lord Jesus when He appears. But he shall be conquered and his hosts destroyed. Then he and his aide will be cast into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone, where they will be throughout the thousand years of our Lord's glorious reign upon the earth. The Devil will be bound for a thousand years, and Christ, with His saints, will reign from sea to sea and from the river unto the ends of the earth. These predictions are found in the following passage.

**19** And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army. **20** And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought the signs in his sight, wherewith he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast and them that worshipped his image: they two were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone: **21** and the rest

were killed with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, *even the sword* which came forth out of his mouth: and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

**20** And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. **2** And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, **3** and cast him into the abyss, and shut *it*, and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little time.

**4** And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. **5** The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. **6** Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years (Rev. 19:19—20:6).



In the chart above is a diagram showing pictorially the time set forth in Daniel nine. As may be gathered easily from the arches and the notations, the period discussed falls into various subdivisions.

It is to be noted that the ninth chapter of Daniel deals with a prediction which pertains to the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem. This fact must be borne in mind as one studies this volume and this chart.

Chart below compares Daniel 9 and the vision of Daniel 2:21-45

