

The Seventy Weeks and the Great Tribulation – By Philip Mauro



A Study of the Last Two Visions of Daniel, and of the Olivet Discourse of the Lord Jesus Christ
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Philip Mauro



Philip Mauro

Philip Mauro (January 7, 1859 – April 7, 1952) was an American lawyer and author. He was born in St. Louis, Missouri. He was a lawyer who practiced before the Supreme Court, a patent lawyer, and also a Christian writer.

Philip Mauro almost exclusively used the Authorized Version (King James Version) unless he specifically referred to the Revised Version, the American Revised Version (later known as the American Standard Version), or even in places to the Rotherham Version to illustrate a particular point. The use of the Authorized Version was retained throughout this work.

Our object in the present series of papers is to bring before our readers some results of recent studies of the prophecy of The Seventy Weeks (Daniel 9), and of the Lord's discourse on Mount Olivet (Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21), in which He applied and expanded a part of that prophecy.

Writings and addresses on prophecy always excite interest, because they appeal to the element of curiosity which is prominent in human nature. But

such writings and addresses are of benefit only so far as they rightly interpret the Scripture. In the case of unfulfilled prophecy this is oftentimes a matter of difficulty; while on the other hand writers on prophetic themes are under constant temptation to indulge in surmises and speculations, and even in flights of imagination. Much has been put forth as interpretation of prophecy which is utterly unproven, but which could not be disproved except, as in cases where dates have been set for the coming of Christ, by the event itself.

Another fact which has been impressed upon us in this connection is that there has been no progress in the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy for a good many years. At "prophetic conferences", and in books and magazines, the same things are being repeated today, with little variation, that were said two decades ago. It would seem that, for some reason, the Lord has not been, of late, shedding fresh light upon this part of His precious Word. Our own thought about the matter is that writers on prophecy have gone so far in advancing, and the people of God in accepting, mere conjectures, unproven theories, or at best mere probabilities, as interpretations of the prophetic Scriptures, that there must needs be a surrender of our speculative ideas, and a retracing of some of our steps (which have diverged from the truth), ere there can be any real advance in the understanding of this part of the Word of God.

Having these things in mind, we purpose, in entering upon the present line of studies, to be governed by certain principles which, we believe, should control at all times those who assume to expound the Word of God to their fellow saints.

The first of these controlling principles is, neither to accept nor to give forth as settled interpretation anything that rests upon surmise or mere probability; but only what is supported either by direct proof from Scripture, or by reasonable deduction there from. We maintain that it is far better to have no explanation at all of a difficult passage than to accept one which may turn out to be wrong. For it is not easy to give up an idea when once we have committed ourselves to it.

In fact, that which chiefly stands in the way of the acceptance of fresh light and truth from the Scriptures is the strong (in some cases almost invincible) reluctance of the human mind to surrender or even to examine the ground of, opinions which possibly were originally accepted upon human authority only, and without any inquiry as to the support which can be found for them in the Word of God.

Another guiding principle is that the proof adduced in support of any interpretation should be taken from the Scripture itself. Our conviction is that, whatever information is essential for the interpretation of any and every passage of Scripture is to be found somewhere in the Bible itself. Were it not so the Holy Scriptures would not be able to make the man of God perfect, that is to say, complete, and thoroughly furnished unto every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17). We must, of course, appeal to history in order to show the fulfillment of prophecy; for it cannot be shown in any other way. But the interpretation of Scripture is another matter.

Furthermore, wherever we offer a statement or opinion to the reader for his acceptance, we feel bound to give along with it the proofs by which we deem it to be established. This should be demanded of every writer. But, most unhappily, there are now in circulation many books dealing with Bible subjects, whose authors deem themselves to be such high "authorities" that they habitually make assertions of the most radical sort without citing in support thereof any proof whatever. We earnestly caution our readers to beware of all such. It is not according to the mind of God that His people should rest upon any human "authorities" whatever. His own Word is the only authority. These papers are prepared for the benefit of "the common people". What we undertake by the grace of God to do is to make every statement and conclusion so plain, and to support it by such clear proof from the Scriptures alone, that the ordinary reader will be able both to see for himself the meaning of the passage, and also to comprehend perfectly the scriptural evidence by which that meaning is established. Thus he will be entirely independent of all human "authority".

This is an exceedingly important point. For, as matters now stand, it would be difficult or impossible to find anyone whose view of the Seventy Weeks prophecy does not rest, as to someone or more essential features thereof, upon mere human authority. In our own case, when we began these studies (about May 1921) our opinion (in regard especially to the Chronology of the prophetic period) had no better basis than that such were the views of certain eminent writers on Bible topics; and this was most unsatisfactory because we knew that there were other equally eminent students of the Bible who held an entirely different view. But now we are in no uncertainty. We have solid ground under our feet; for every conclusion rests upon the unshakable rock of God's own testimony. This is as it should be.

We wish particularly to impress upon our readers that the proofs furnished by the Scriptures for our comprehension of this great and marvelous prophecy are not hard to understand or to apply. On the contrary, they are quite simple. On a moment's reflection, it will be seen that it could not be otherwise. For the Scriptures were written, not for the erudite, but for the simple-minded. Our Lord said, speaking of this very prophecy, "Whoso readeth, let him understand" (Matthew 24:15); and it should not surprise us to find that all the materials needed for our understanding of the matter are contained in the Bible itself.

Bible Chronology

Prior to the publication of Martin Anstey's great work in 1913, all the existing systems of Bible Chronology were dependent, for the period of time embraced by the Seventy Weeks, upon sources of information outside the Bible, and which are, moreover, not only unsupported by proof, but are in conflict with the Scriptures. Anstey's system has the unique merit of being based on the Bible alone. Therefore it is capable of being verified by all Bible readers. But for the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks there is no need to resort to any system of chronology, seeing that the prophecy contains its own chronology. In fact the difficulties and confusion which have arisen in connection with this prophecy are due in large measure to the attempt to make it conform to an incorrect chronology.

A Prophecy of Transcendent Interest

The Scripture we are now about to study is one of the most marvelous and most transcendently important in the Word of God. That which is of supreme interest in it is the divinely revealed time measure, starting from the return of the Israelites out of Babylonian historical event second in importance only to the Exodus from Egypt – down to the culminating event of all prophecy and all history, even “unto Messiah,” and to His being “cut off and having nothing.”

The very nature of the things here revealed is a guaranty that, in the Scriptures themselves, will be found everything that is needed for a right and clear understanding thereof; and further that the whole matter lies within the comprehension of ordinary saints. All we ask of our readers is their prayerful attention to the Scriptures to which we shall refer. Upon that sole condition we can confidently promise them that they will be well able to understand every matter advanced, and to see for themselves whether it be supported by the Word of God or not.

Finally, we desire to say that the conclusions we have reached involve nothing (unless in respect to some minor details) that has not been pointed out by sound Bible expositors of other days. This, however, we were (in some important particulars) unaware of until our studies were completed; for while they were in progress we consulted no human authorities except Anstey's Bible Chronology, mentioned above.

If any of our readers should find themselves in disagreement as to any of the matters set forth herein, we would ask of such only a patient examination of the proofs advanced, together with that measure of kindly toleration which is to be expected in such cases amongst those who are, with equal sincerity, seeking to know the mind of God.

“Daniel the Prophet” (Matthew 24:15)

The book of Daniel differs in marked particulars from all others. The miraculous element abounds in it; and because of this it has been within recent years an object of venomous attack by the enemies of truth. Furthermore, the communications found in it are not, like other prophecies, in the nature of exhortations and warnings to the people of that time; for Daniel was not (like the other prophets), the messenger of God to the people of Daniel's own day. They are, on the contrary, in the nature of Divine revelations, given to Daniel, either in the form of visions, or of messages direct from heaven. It does not appear that they were communicated to the people of that day. Thus the book is seen to be not for the people of Daniel's own time, but for those of a later period or periods. Here is a very marked difference between the prophecies of Daniel, and all others.

Moreover, the book of Daniel has to do in a very special way with Christ; and to this feature we would call particular attention. Christ Himself is distinctly seen in it, once in earth in the midst of the burning fiery furnace, delivering the men who trusted in their God (3:25); and once in heaven, receiving an everlasting Kingdom (7:13–14). And beyond all else in

interest and importance is the fact that to Daniel was given the exact measure of time from an event clearly marked in his own day – an event for which he had fervently prayed – to the coming of Christ, and to His being “cut off”. Moreover, in this connection, God revealed to Daniel the marvelous things which were to be accomplished through the crucifixion of Christ, as well as the overwhelming judgments – the “desolations” – far surpassing anything of like nature theretofore – which were to fall upon the City, the Sanctuary and the People, in consequence of their rejection and crucifixion of Christ.

In respect to these remarkable and immensely important features, the book of Daniel stands in a class by itself.

Moreover, this book contains not only predictions that were to be fulfilled at the first coming of Christ, but also predictions relating to the end of the present age. For we have in the vision of the great image of gold, silver, brass, iron, and clay, recorded in Chapter 2, an outline of the course of human history from Daniel’s own time down to the second coming of Christ in power and glory; and the breadth of the prophecy is such that it embraces the chief political changes of the whole world.

It is doubtless because of the unique character and importance of this book that it has been so fiercely attacked within recent times, and that every attempt has been made to raise a doubt as to its authenticity; for great efforts have been made to convince the people in general that it was not written by Daniel, or in his day. Those attempts have conspicuously failed; but the efforts of the adversary to discredit this book are still to be seen in the crude interpretations, miscalculations, and fantastical views which have been poured forth in this day, now that it has become a matter of importance to “understand” these prophecies.

An intimation of the efforts that would be made to becloud the prophecy of Daniel is found in the words of Christ when, in referring directly to that prophecy, he said, “Whoso readeth let him understand” (Matthew 24:15). But those words may also be taken as an encouragement to seek a right understanding of that wonderful series of prophecies.

The chief interest of our study centers in the revelation given to Daniel in the first year of the Medo-Persian Empire, and found in the ninth Chapter; and it is to this prophecy of prophecies that we wish to direct attention at the present time. It is generally known as the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks (Daniel 9:24–27).

The setting of this prophecy should first be carefully noted. Daniel had learned, through Jeremiah 25:11; 29:10, that the period which God had set for the “desolations of Jerusalem” was just seventy years (Daniel 9:1). That period was then about to expire; for the decree, whereby the captivity was ended and the Jews were allowed (and even exhorted) to return to their land and city, was issued by, Cyrus within two years (Ezra 1:1). That this was the fulfillment of Jeremiah’s prophecy is certainly known, because it is recorded in Ezra 1:1 that the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus to issue that decree, for the express purpose that “the word of the Lord by the mouth of

Jeremiah might be fulfilled". This is surpassingly wonderful and impressive.

The effect upon Daniel of receiving this revelation was to send him to his knees in confession and prayer. His prayer should be carefully examined. It will be seen that it has to do entirely with the city, the sanctuary, and the people of God, with special reference to the "desolations" of the city. It will be seen also that these same subjects are what occupy the prophecy which the angel Gabriel brought to Daniel in response to his prayer. We call special attention to this, and also to the following points of interest:

1. God's response to Daniel's prayer was in the form of a revelation brought to him by the angel Gabriel, who stated, as the first item of information, that the seventy years of captivity were to be followed by a period of seventy sevens (of years). The word here rendered "weeks" is literally "sevens"; so there is no doubt that the period designated in this prophecy is seventy sevens of years – 490 years.
2. The decree which was to bring the captivity to an end by freeing the Jews, granting them the liberty to return to their own land and to rebuild the city and sanctuary, was to be also the starting point of the "determined" period of seventy sevens of years. This is clearly seen from the prophecy itself in connection with Ezra 1:1 and other Scriptures hereafter referred to; and it is important – indeed necessary in order to avoid being misled – that we grasp this fact and keep it in mind. So we repeat that the epoch-making decree of Cyrus in the first year of his reign (as sole king), in virtue of which the city and temple were rebuilt under Zerubbabel and Joshua, was both the termination of the 70 years captivity and also the starting point for the prophetic period of 70 sevens, which had been "determined", or measured out, in the councils of heaven, upon the people and the holy city. Where the one period was to end, the other (just seven times as long) was to begin. Again we ask that this point be carefully noted. Full proof of its correctness will be given in our next chapter.
3. Daniel had, in his prayer, confessed the sins of his people, for which sins God had brought upon them the "desolations" of their city and sanctuary. But, to his intense grief no doubt, the angel Gabriel revealed to him that a far more terrible sin, the very culmination of the sins of the people, was yet to be committed by them. This was to happen within the period "determined" by the prophecy; and moreover, in consequence thereof, a judgment far more severe was to fall upon them, even the utter destruction of the city and sanctuary, the sweeping away of the nation as "with a flood", and "desolations" of age-long duration. No wonder we find Daniel, in the third year of Cyrus, still mourning and fasting three full weeks, and lamenting that his comeliness was turned in him into corruption (10:2–3, 8). Daniel had said in his prayer, "Yea, all Israel have transgressed" (verse 11). An evident response to this is seen in the words of Gabriel, "seventy weeks are determined upon thy people to finish the transgression." With this we may compare the words of Christ, spoken to the leaders of Israel, just before the Olivet discourse: "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers" (Matthew 23:32). They did so by rejecting and crucifying Him.
4. The most important feature of the revelation brought by Gabriel to

Daniel was the precise measure of time (69 sevens, or 483 years) “to Messiah, THE PRINCE”; and the time when Messiah was to be “cut off and have nothing”. This is the wonder of wonders, the prophecy of prophecies.

5. The angel Gabriel, who brought these marvelous predictions to Daniel, is the same who announced the approach of the fulfillment of them to Zachariah and to Mary (Luke 1:11–19; 26).
6. The expression used by Gabriel to Daniel, “thou art greatly beloved”, is the exact equivalent of the word addressed by the same messenger to Mary – “thou art highly favored” (Anstey’s Bible Chronology, page 276). Mr. Anstey says of this expression: “It is used three times to Daniel and never to anyone else except Mary; and Gabriel is the only angel employed to make known to men the revelation of the mystery of redemption.”
7. The revelation embraces two main subjects (a) the coming and cutting off of the Messiah, (b) the destruction and “desolation” of the City and Sanctuary. It is a fact very familiar to all readers of the Bible, that Christ Jesus called this prophecy to the minds of His disciples on the eve of His being “cut off,” and definitely announced to them at that time the approaching destruction and “desolation” of Jerusalem and the Temple (Matthew 24:1–22; Luke 21:20–24). In these seven points we have the main elements for a right understanding of the prophecy.

“From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince” (Daniel 9:25)

The prophecy begins at verse 24. The angel informs Daniel that seventy sevens of years were “determined” (or marked out) upon his people, and upon his holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy (place). Here are six things which were to be accomplished within the definitely determined period of 490 years of Jewish history. Into those six things we purpose to look later on. But there is one important question that should be settled first. When does the stretch of 490 years begin? The next verse gives this needed information. We read, “Know therefore, and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks and three score and two weeks.” From this we learn that there was to be a total of 69 weeks (7 weeks plus 62 weeks) or 483 years from the given starting point unto the Messiah.

We must therefore determine with certainty the event from which the count of the seventy weeks was to begin; for it is manifest that the measuring line, notwithstanding it was given directly from heaven, and notwithstanding it is recorded for our benefit in the inspired Scriptures, will be of no use to us whatever unless the starting point be certainly known. It is equally manifest that the starting point cannot be certainly known unless it be revealed in the Scriptures and in such wise that the ordinary reader can “know and understand” it beyond a doubt. This essential matter, however, is revealed in the Word of God; and moreover the information is given in a manner so plain and so simple that the wayfaring man need not err therein. To this we will come in a moment. But first it is desirable to speak of the various and

conflicting ideas on this vital point that are found in current writings on prophecy. For, strange to say, there is the greatest disagreement and contrariety of opinion as to the particular "commandment" or "word" referred to by the angel as the starting point of the 70 weeks. There are no less than four different decrees, or royal commands, which have been brought forward as the point from which the seventy weeks are to be counted. Some able and learned expositors choose one, and others equally able and learned choose another. Yet the Word of God speaks as clearly as to this as it speaks concerning where Christ should be born.

Why then this difference of opinion? The explanation is that those who, in recent years, have turned their attention to this prophecy have gone about the interpretation of it in the wrong way. They have pursued a method which cannot do other than lead to an erroneous conclusion. This should be understood by the reader (and we will seek to make it quite clear) before proceeding further.

The right way of getting at the chronology of the prophecy is so simple and obvious that a child can readily comprehend it. All we need to do is to ascertain from the Word of God the two events specified by the angel, (1) the going forth of the "commandment" and (2) the manifestation of "Messiah the Prince." Having definitely fixed these two events (which the Scriptures enable us to do with certainty) we know from the prophecy itself that from the one to the other is just 483 years. By this method we have no need of a system of chronology.

But our expositors have proceeded in a very different way. First they have made choice of one or another of the various systems of chronology which have been compiled by various chronologists – as Ussher's, Lloyd's, Clinton's or Marshall's. Then, having assigned the correctness of the selected chronology, they have sought first for a decree of some Persian king, and second for some event in the lifetime of Christ, which would be as near as possible to 483 years apart, according to the selected chronology.

It will be clear upon the briefest consideration that, according to this method, the interpretation of the prophecy is controlled by whatever chronology the expositor may have selected; for he needs must reject every interpretation which does not agree with his assumed chronology.

Now, not only is this method of procedure fundamentally wrong in that it tries to make events of Bible history fit in with a man-made chronological scheme, but the fact is that every chronological System covering the period we have to do with (i.e., from the beginning of the Persian monarchy down to Christ) is largely a matter of guesswork. All those systems, without any exception, are based upon the "canon" of Ptolemy, that is to say, a list of supposed Persian kings, with the supposed length of the reign of each, which list was compiled by Ptolemy, a heathen astronomer and writer of the second century AD. But Ptolemy does not even pretend to have had any facts as to the length of the Persian period (that is to say, from Darius and Cyrus down to Alexander the Great). Ptolemy estimates or guesses this period to have been 205 years long. And this is what has caused all the trouble and uncertainty; for everyone who has attempted to construct a Bible chronology has based

himself on Ptolemy's estimate. In a word then, there is no chronology in existence of the period from Cyrus to Christ except in the Bible.

In order to show how great is the uncertainty as to the length of the Persian empire, we have only to mention the fact that, according to Jewish traditions in the days of Christ (which surely are as much to be trusted as heathen traditions of a later date), the period of the Persian kings was only 52 years. Here is a difference of 153 years, and that in regard to a matter which is essential to an understanding of this prophecy. Sir Isaac Newton says that "some of the Jews took Herod for the Messiah, and were called 'Herodians'. They seem to have grounded their opinion on the 70 weeks." Inasmuch as the accession of Herod was 34 years before Christ, it is evident that the opinion of the Herodians required a comparatively short Persian period. On the other hand, the opinions of certain modern expositors are based upon a Persian era of supposedly long duration.

In order that the reader may clearly understand the situation, and its bearings upon our study, we would point out that Ussher's chronology (whose dates are given at the head of the "margin" of our Bibles) makes it 536 years from the first year of Cyrus to the year 1 A.D. (four years after the birth of Christ). Add to this 26 years to the Lord's manifestation to Israel at His baptism and we have 562 years. But, according to the Word of God it was to be only 483 years from the commandment to restore Jerusalem "unto Christ." If, therefore, one begins by taking Ussher's chronology (or any of the others) as the basis of his interpretation, he is forced to select a starting point about eighty years subsequent to King Cyrus, who (according to Scripture) was the true restorer, the man whom God specially raised up, and of whom He said, "He shall build My city". (To this we will come shortly.)

But we are not left to choose between Jewish traditions and heathen traditions, or to base our conclusions upon either. For the Word of God shows us plainly what was the beginning of the prophetic period; and with that information in our possession, we know certainly that it was just 483 years "unto Christ." Therefore, we are bound to reject any and every chronological scheme, whether from Jewish or heathen sources, and any and every system of interpretation based thereon) which conflicts with the facts revealed in the Scriptures.

This important matter of the defective character of all existing chronologies is fully discussed, and the facts clearly set forth, in Martin Anstey's Bible Chronology, published in 1913, to which we must refer such of our readers as wish to study the matter exhaustively. Mr. Anstey's work commands our confidence and respect because he disregards all heathen sources, and all guesswork, and derives his information solely from the Scriptures.

Concerning the dates given in Ptolemy's table of Persian Kings, Anstey says: "They rest upon calculations or guesses made by Eratosthenes, and on certain vague floating traditions, in accordance with which the period of the Persian Empire was mapped out as a period of 205 years." And he shows, by a great variety of proofs taken entirely from the Scriptures that the period which Ptolemy assigns to the Persian Empire is about eighty years too long. It follows that all who adopt Ptolemy's chronology, or any system based upon it

(as all modern chronologists prior to Anstey do) would inevitably be led far astray. It is impossible to make the real Bible events agree, within 80 years, with the mistaken chronology of Ptolemy. This single fact makes many modern books on Daniel utterly worthless, so far as their chronology is concerned; and the chronology is the main thing.

Concerning Eclipses

An attempt has been made to call Astronomy to the aid of the defective Chronology of Ptolemy, by utilizing certain incidental references, contained in fragmentary historical records, to eclipses of the sun or moon. But such references are of no value whatever for the purpose, seeing that it is impossible to determine, in any given case, which one of a number of eclipses – within say fifty or a hundred years – was the one referred to. For example, one of the clearest of these historical references is that of the “Eclipse of Thales,” mentioned by Herodotus. This eclipse is located by one astronomer as occurring in 625 B.C.; by another as late as 585 B.C. (a difference of 40 years); and by others at different dates in between (Anstey, page 286).

We see then first that the method adopted in current expositions of the Seventy Weeks prophecy is fundamentally wrong; and second that the chronological system on which they are all based is formed largely by guesswork, and is certainly very wide of the mark as regards the length of the Persian Empire.

An accurate and complete secular chronology exists from the conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great down to the present time. It is only as regards the period from Cyrus to Alexander that there is uncertainty.

The Decree of Cyrus the Great

We will now proceed to show that the point of beginning of the seventy weeks is that great epoch-making and divinely prompted decree of Cyrus the Great, whereof a record is given in 2 Chronicles 36:22–23, and also in Ezra 1:1–4. The proof is not only clear, simple and absolutely conclusive for all who believe the Word of the Lord, but it was given under circumstances which were designed to inspire wonder and admiration at the marvelous ways of God in bringing to pass that which He has purposed and promised to perform.

Turning to Isaiah, Chapters 44 and 45, we find there God’s promise that Jerusalem should be rebuilt and its captives restored to their home, and not only so but we find that God mentioned by name the very man, “Cyrus”, by whom that promise was to be accomplished. The proof that King Cyrus was the one who should give the commandment (or word) for the restoring and rebuilding of Jerusalem, is doubly forceful and impressive, and designedly so as the Scripture itself declares, because it was spoken by the mouth of the Lord two hundred years before Cyrus came to the throne.

The passage begins with the words, “Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it” (Isaiah 44:23). Evidently God is here calling attention to a work of great importance and one in which He takes special delight. It was to be a work, moreover, by which the tokens of the liars (those who consulted omens)

were to be frustrated, and the "diviners" made mad, and the "wise men" turned backward, and their knowledge made foolish (verse 25). Notwithstanding all that opposed His will, the high walls and strong gates of Babylon, and the wisdom of the astrologers, soothsayers and Chaldeans, God would "confirm the word of His servant, and perform the counsel of His messengers"; for it was He "that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited, and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof; that saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers; that saith of CYRUS, He is My shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, EVEN SAYING TO JERUSALEM, THOU SHALT BE BUILT; AND TO THE TEMPLE, THY FOUNDATION SHALL BE LAID" (verses 26–27).

We pause at this point to call to the reader's mind that when the time for the fulfillment of this prophecy by Isaiah was at hand, the last Babylonian King, Belshazzar, was carousing with a thousand of his courtiers in fancied security behind the strong walls of Babylon, while the armies of Darius and Cyrus were besieging the city. Then appeared the part of a man's hand, tracing upon the wall those four words which declared the doom of Babylon, though the magicians and astrologers and soothsayers were confounded by them, and their wisdom turned to foolishness. Moreover, secular history has preserved for us the fact that the engineers of Cyrus' army dug a new channel for the River Euphrates which ran through the city (thus fulfilling the words, "and I will dry up thy rivers") and Cyrus entered by way of the dry bed of the stream. Thus were the "two-leaved gates" of Babylon opened to God's appointed conqueror, who was to be a "shepherd" and a deliverer to His people. The next verse of the prophecy speaks of this:

"Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings – see Daniel 5:6, where it is said of Belshazzar, when he saw the handwriting on the wall, "so that the joints of his loins were loosed" – "to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut" (Isaiah. 45:1).

Here is God's own testimony that King Cyrus, and not one of his successors, was to give the "commandment" whereby Jerusalem was to be rebuilt and its inhabitants restored. Nothing could be plainer than the words, "He (Cyrus) shalt perform all My pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built, and to the temple, Thy foundation shalt be laid." This proof cannot be overthrown. Indeed none who believe the Scriptures to be inspired will even question it. Having this to guide us we must needs decline to follow those who, with a faulty heathen chronology as their only guide, grope for some event, long after Cyrus was laid in his grave, which can be taken as "the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem."

No further evidence is needed. But in this exceedingly important matter God has been pleased to give proof upon proof. Thus in Isaiah 46:13 we have this further word concerning Cyrus:

"I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways; HE SHALL BUILD MY CITY, AND HE SHALL LET GO MY CAPTIVES."

No one who believes the Word of God will, with this Scripture before him,

dispute for a moment that it was by Cyrus that Jerusalem was rebuilt and its captives restored to it. Here are two things which God distinctly foretold were to be done by Cyrus (and this was 200 years before he came to the throne); first he was to rebuild the city, and second he was to restore the captive Jews to their home. These are the very things mentioned by the angel to Daniel; for he said, "from the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem." And the Scriptures make it plain that Cyrus made haste to fulfill this Word of God; and moreover that he knew just what he was doing, and why.

There is truth here which, with a little attention, we can get hold of, and which, when understood, will both clear all uncertainties away, and also will fill us with admiration because of the wonders and perfections of the Word of God.

Observe then that, when the angel mentioned "the commandment to restore and to build," Daniel would have known from the prophecy of Isaiah (which was familiar to him, as we shall see) that it was Cyrus who would issue that command. Now Cyrus was at that time co-ruler with, and subordinate to, "Darius the Mede" (Daniel 9:1). But in less than two years Cyrus became the sole ruler; and it was in the very first year of his reign that he issued the foundations decree which gave new existence to the Jewish nation.

That Daniel knew the prophecy of Jeremiah which gives the length of the captivity is expressly stated in Daniel 9:2. But that he also knew the prophecy of Isaiah, which foretold that the captivity would be ended by the decree of Cyrus, appears by reference to the decree of that monarch, which is partly quoted by Ezra. These are the words: "Thus saith Cyrus, King of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah" (Ezra 1:2).

It is clear that this "charge" came to Cyrus, not through the book of Jeremiah, but through that of Isaiah; for it is in Isaiah that God, speaking to Cyrus who was yet unborn, charged him to build the city and temple and to release the captive Jews. It will thus be seen that God has given to Cyrus a remarkable place in His Word and in the execution of His plans.

Daniel had not learned about the ending of the captivity by a direct revelation from God, but "by books" – evidently not the book of Jeremiah only, but that of Isaiah also. We too have the same "books" that Daniel had; and we have also the book of Ezra, which contains a record of the great decree of Cyrus; and these several "books" give all the light that is needed to make the matter perfectly clear.

Concerning Cyrus

This wonderful prophecy of Isaiah concerning Cyrus, and its bearing upon the purposes of God as a whole, have not received by any means the attention this, importance deserves; and while it is not within the scope of this volume to treat it exhaustively, yet it is appropriate that we should direct attention to some of its striking features.

We note then that the restoration of the captive Jews and the rebuilding of the temple was evidently a matter of great importance in the eyes of God. The frequent references to it in the messages of the prophets are proof enough of that. But here is the extraordinary case of a distinct prophecy, in plain words, of what God purposed to do, coupled with the name of the man by whom God purposed to do it. The only like case where an action is described and the name of the man who was to perform it is given before he was born, is that of King Josiah (1 Kings 13:2, fulfilled 2 Kings 23:15–17).

When the time for the ending of the captivity (given by another prophet, Jeremiah) was on the point of expiring, God put into the hands of the man He had called by name two hundred years before, “all the kingdoms of the world,” so that he had the needed power to fulfill God’s Word and to “do all His pleasure”; and beside all that, God himself “stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing” (Ezra 1:1). And thereupon, in virtue of that command, over forty-two thousand Jews, headed by Zerubbabel, Joshua and Nehemiah, returned forthwith to Jerusalem (Ezra 2:1–6); and with them more than seven thousand servants and maids (verse 65). It was a new beginning for Israel; and Cyrus was God’s “shepherd,” chosen long beforehand, for bringing His sheep back to their proper fold.

The entire passage concerning Cyrus (Isaiah 44:23–45:14) should be carefully read. We quote a part:

“I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight. I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron.” (This refers to the defenses of Babylon.) “And I will give thee the treasures of darkness’, and hidden riches of secret places” (the treasures of Babylon), “that thou mayest know that I the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob My servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name; I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. I am the Lord, and there is none else. There is no God beside me. I girded thee, though thou hast not known me; that they may know, from the rising of the sun, and from the west’, that there is none beside me: I am the Lord and there is none else.”

In this remarkable passage God calls attention again and again to the fact that He had called Cyrus by name, long before he was born; yet this fact receives but scant attention, and its significance has been lost sight of by many who have undertaken to expound the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks. This must needs be the case with all who reject the decree of Cyrus as the starting point of the seventy weeks.

Furthermore, God speaks not about Cyrus but directly to him. From this we can understand how Cyrus would say: “The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the world, and He hath charged me”, etc.

Finally, God declares that He had “girded” Cyrus for this work in order that, from the east to the west, that is to say, in the entire world, it might be known that He is the Lord, and there is none else. Manifestly, this purpose of God, in His marvelous dealings with King Cyrus, is virtually frustrated

when, in the interpretation of the Seventy Weeks' prophecy, the decree of Cyrus is set aside, and the word of some other king is chosen as that whereby Jerusalem was rebuilt and its captives restored.

May the contemplation of God's marvelous dealings in the case of Cyrus lead us to adore Him Who is perfect in knowledge, and Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.

It was to be expected that, inasmuch as God has been pleased to give in His Word, an exact time measure from a given event unto Christ, He would also make it clear beyond a doubt what the event is from which the count of years was to begin. And this expectation is fully met.

Upon the plain and simple facts stated above it is evident that every expositor who sets aside this decree of Cyrus as the starting point of the 70 weeks, and substitutes some other event, must either be unaware of the testimony of Isaiah 44 and 45 (and of other Bible testimony to which we will refer presently) or else he prefers the guesses of a heathen astronomer (who had no means of knowing the facts which occurred over five hundred years before his time) to the evidence of Scripture.

This is a case where a mistake in regard to the starting point is fatal to an understanding of the prophecy as a whole. If we make a wrong start, we shall be in error throughout.

It is interesting in this connection to see how this matter was understood by learned Jews in ancient times. Thus we find recorded in the history of Josephus 1 that Cyrus wrote throughout all his dominions that "God Almighty hath appointed me to be king of the habitable earth" and that "He indeed foretold my name by the prophets, and that I should build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in the country of Judea." Josephus goes on to say that, when Cyrus had read the words of the prophet Isaiah, "He called for the most eminent Jews in Babylon and said to them, that he gave them leave to go back to their own country, and TO REBUILD THEIR CITY JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE OF GOD."

Josephus also gives a copy of a letter written by Cyrus to the governors that were in Syria, which letter begins as follows:

"King Cyrus to Sisinnes and Sathrabuzzanes sendeth greeting. I have given leave to as many of the Jews that dwell in my country as please [to do so) to return to their own country, and TO REBUILD THE CITY, AND TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE, OF GOD AT JERUSALEM on the same place where it was before"
(Antiquities Book XI, Chapter 1, section 1 and 3).

The proof that the rebuilding of the city was done by the commandment of Cyrus is so conclusive that Prideaux (one of the leading commentators on Daniel) frankly admits that "Jerusalem was rebuilt by virtue of the decree granted by Cyrus in the first year of his reign." Yet this learned man rejects the decree of Cyrus as the starting point of the seventy weeks, simply because he shared the mistaken idea (for which there is no proof of any sort) that 490 years would not reach from that decree to the days of

Christ. But if the fact be, as Prideaux admits, then to take any other event as the starting point is to falsify the prophecy. It is a choice between the clear statements of the Word of God and the guesses of heathen historians and astronomers. We are writing for the benefit of those who accept the Word of God as conclusive.

1 This Josephus was a priest who was born about four years after the death of Christ. He was a God-fearing man, highly gifted, and is regarded as a remarkably able and trustworthy historian. He was an eyewitness and an active participator in the Wars of the Jews which culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. We believe the annals of Josephus have been providentially preserved, whereby we have authentic records of the fulfillment of prophecy by an eyewitness who, at the time he wrote, was not a Christian. We shall have occasion to quote largely from this writer later on.

It is true that Ezra, in the very brief statement he gives of the decree of Cyrus, does not specifically mention the building of the city. But that omission affords no ground whatever for assuming that the decree of Cyrus did not provide for the rebuilding of the city, much less does it afford reason for setting aside the word of the Lord spoken by Isaiah. In fact the decree of Cyrus, under which the Jews were, one and all, permitted to return to Jerusalem, and under which over forty-two thousand did return at once, necessarily implied permission to build houses to dwell in. The building of the temple is the most important matter, and that is why it is specifically mentioned in Ezra's brief reference to the decree of Cyrus. But, according to the prophecy of Isaiah "the commandment to rebuild the city was to be joined with that to rebuild the temple. Hence when we have found the commandment to rebuild the temple we have found that to rebuild the city.

It should be observed that the words of Gabriel call for the going forth of a commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem. Those words fit the decree of Cyrus which was promulgated throughout his dominions, and which is expressly called by Ezra a "commandment" (Ezra 6:14).

Furthermore, that the building of Jerusalem did actually proceed under the decree of Cyrus, appears from the fact that, at a time when only the foundation of the temple had been laid, the adversaries complained that the Jews were "rebuilding the rebellious and bad city, and have set up the walls thereof, and have joined the foundations" (Ezra 4:12).

That statement of the adversaries was not a fabrication; for it is fully corroborated by Haggai, who (prophesying during that same period of the cessation of work on the temple) said that the people were dwelling in their own paneled-up houses, and that they ran everyone to his own house (Haggai 1:4, 7).

Moreover, it will be observed, in reading the book of Ezra that he speaks throughout of Jerusalem as an existing city and in Chapter 9:9 he gives thanks to God that He had given them "a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem." Some expositors have selected as the point of beginning for the 70 weeks the decree mentioned in Ezra 7:11-28. But that cannot be; for, in the first place, to assume it would contradict the Word of the Lord spoken by Isaiah,

which bore witness that the "commandment" to restore the captives, to rebuild the city, and to lay the foundation of the temple, should be given by Cyrus; whereas the decree mentioned in Ezra 7 was made by "Artaxerxes" (Darius Hystaspes) who was one of the successors of Cyrus.

Upon a careful reading of Ezra 6 and 7 it will be seen that what is there recorded agrees with and fully supports the Scriptures heretofore cited, showing that the work then in progress at Jerusalem, and which the enemies of the Jews sought to hinder, was based entirely upon the decree of Cyrus. For when those adversaries complained by letter to King Darius concerning the work of rebuilding the temple (which the Jews had resumed under the stimulus of the prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah), Darius caused search to be made amongst the archives in the house of rolls (Ezra 6:1), and he found the decree of Cyrus commanding that the temple be rebuilt; and upon the authority of that decree of Cyrus, his successor Darius issued the decree mentioned in Ezra 6:6-12.

It should be observed that, at that time, it was not a question of the rebuilding of the city. That had already been done, at least to an extent sufficient to accommodate those who had returned. About fifty thousand people had returned in the first company, with wives and children, and others subsequently; and of course their first occupation was to provide themselves homes. We have already called attention to the statement of Ezra 4:12 that the Jews had "come unto Jerusalem, building the rebellious and bad city, and have set up (margin, finished) the walls thereof, and joined the foundations."

The completion of the temple is mentioned in Ezra 6:14-15, and it is said that it had been done "according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius" - that of Darius being merely a reaffirmation of the decree of Cyrus, which had given the authorization for the entire work of restoration.

The decree mentioned in Ezra 7:11-28 was some years later still. It had nothing whatever to do with the rebuilding of either the city or the temple. It could not have been the "commandment" for the building of either; for that commandment had already been given. It was simply a "letter" which the king gave to Ezra, for we read that "the king granted him all his request" (Ezra 7:6). That "letter" provided, first, that all the people of Israel, the priests and Levites, who were so minded of their own free will, might go to Jerusalem; second, that they might carry silver and gold to buy animals for sacrifice, and whatsoever else might be needful for the house of God; and third, that no taxes or tribute were to be imposed upon any priests, Levites, singers, porters, Nethinims or ministers of the house of God. So far from there being, in this "letter", if any "commandment" for the building of the city or temple, its contents shows that both city and temple were already in existence.

Nehemiah's Work on the Temple Wall

We come now to the latest in date of all the supposed "decrees" which have been selected by any expositor as that to which the angel Gabriel referred as "the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem." This is the "letter"

given by the king to Nehemiah, at his request, as stated in Nehemiah 2:4-8.

This letter or written permit given to Nehemiah by the then monarch, or "Artaxerxes", being the latest in date of all, is the farthest of all from the truth. Nevertheless it is the favorite of certain learned expositors of our day, and for the very reason that it is the latest in date, and hence agrees best with the mistaken chronologies which have been derived from the canon of Ptolemy. But even so, if this "Artaxerxes" was, as Mr. Anstey shows by satisfactory proof, the same king "Darius" is mentioned by Ezra, then the twentieth year (Nehemiah 2:7) of his reign would be too early by at least fifty years to agree with any of the before-mentioned chronologies. Consequently it has been further assumed that the king of Nehemiah's day was Artaxerxes Longimanus. But that monarch's twentieth year would be approximately 100 years subsequent to the return from Babylon in the days of Cyrus; and hence it would be too close to the days of Christ to fit in with any of the existing chronologies. Therefore, to force an agreement in this case it is necessary to make the "seventy sevens" a period shorter than 490 years. The ingenuity of our expositors has been quite equal to this; for, to meet this difficulty, they have supposed, that the "sevens" were not sevens of years, but of nondescript periods of 360 days each, which are not "years" at all. Thus, the acceptance of a false chronology (instead of basing conclusions on the Scriptures alone) leads even able and learned men to adopt one false assumption after another, and thus to go further and further astray.

But we need not go outside the book of Nehemiah itself for conclusive proof that the "letter" which the king gave to that devoted man was not "the commandment" in virtue of which Jerusalem was rebuilt. Indeed, we have only to read Nehemiah 1, 2 and 3 with ordinary care to perceive that the city had been already rebuilt, with walls and gates, at the time referred to in those chapters; that the tidings brought to Nehemiah, as recorded in Chapter 1, were tidings of damage freshly done by the enemies of the Jews to the walls and gates of the rebuilt city; that the letter given by the king to Nehemiah was simply a permit to repair that damage; and that the work done by Nehemiah, as recorded in Chapter 3, was the "repairing" of the wall, and the "repairing" of the gates, and the setting up the doors; the locks, and the bars thereof. For proof of these statements it is only necessary to read the chapters referred to.

The tidings from Jerusalem. In Chapter 1 Nehemiah relates that, while he was attending to his customary duties in the palace of the king certain brethren came from Jerusalem with tidings to the effect that those in the province of Judah, who had been left of the captivity, were in great affliction and reproach. Further they reported, saying, "The wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire" (Nehemiah 1:1-3).

The effect of this report upon Nehemiah shows clearly that it was of a fresh and unexpected calamity they were speaking. For he relates that, when he heard those words, he sat down, and wept and mourned certain days, and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. The record makes it plain that the cause of his distress was not the condition of the Jews in the province, but the tidings of the damage which had been done to the walls and gates of the holy

city. That could not possibly have been the destruction wrought by Nebuchadnezzar, for that had taken place more than a hundred years previously. Nehemiah had known about that all his life. His brethren, when he asked them "concerning Jerusalem," could not have told him, as a piece of news, of the damage that had been done a century before. That would not have been news to him, nor would the hearing of it have plunged him into deep distress. He states that he had not been sad beforetime in the king's presence (2:7); but now his sorrow was so great that he could not banish the evidences of it from his countenance even in the king's presence. There must have been a cause for this; and nothing but unexpected tidings of a fresh calamity to the beloved city could account for his acute distress. With the walls damaged and the gates burned with fire, the city was exposed to her enemies, and the new temple itself was in danger of being again destroyed.

In this report we have an indication of the "troublesome times" foretold by the angel Gabriel (Daniel 9:25).

In Chapter 2 we have the account of Nehemiah's request to the king, and of the "letter" given to him. There is no decree, no "commandment," nothing what, ever about rebuilding the city. And how could there be in view of the word of the Lord concerning Cyrus, saying, "He shall build My city"? It is true that Nehemiah made request that the king would send him to the city of his father's sepulchres that he might "build it." But the word here rendered "build" is of very broad meaning, and would be appropriate to describe the repairing of the damage to the walls and gates, which in fact is what it does mean in this instance. Nehemiah only sought permission to restore the parts that had been freshly destroyed. This will be shown below.

What Nehemiah meant by his request appears in verses 7-8, namely, letters to the governors beyond the river to give him safe passage (in other words a passport), and also a letter to the keeper of the king's forest to supply "timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into." These requests the king granted. Manifestly those letters do not constitute a commandment to rebuild the city.

Finally, it clearly appears by Chapter 3 that the work which Nehemiah did during his stay in Jerusalem was the repairing of the wall and of the gates of the city. The word "repaired" is used over twenty times in that chapter to describe that work. It was a small work (comparatively to the work of rebuilding the city and temple) for it was completed, notwithstanding all hindrances, in the short space of 52 days, less than two months (6:15). In the third and fourth chapters of Nehemiah we find frequent incidental references to houses already existing in Jerusalem, and occupied by the owners thereof, but not a word as to any building of houses at that time. Thus we read in 3:20-21 of "the house of Eliashib, the high priest." In verse 23 we read that Benjamin and Hasshub repaired "over against their house," and Azariah "by his house." Verse 25 mentions "the king's high house." In verse 28 it is stated that the priests repaired, "every one over against his house." In verse 29 we read that Zadok repaired "over against his house."

In Chapter 4:7 the character of the work is shown by the words "the walls of

Jerusalem were made up; and the breaches began to be stopped." Verses 1, 6, 15, 17 and 21 of the same Chapter; also Chapter 6:1, 15 and Chapter 7:1 show that the work was only on the wall. The words of 6:15, "So the wall was finished in the twenty-fifth day of the month of Elul, in fifty and two days" record the completion of the entire work.

In Chapter 7:3 we read that Nehemiah appointed "watches of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, everyone in his watch, and every one over against his house." This again shows that the inhabitants of the city had houses to dwell in; though we should hardly need to be informed of a matter so obvious. The next verse appears at first glance to be inconsistent, though of course it is not. It says:

"Now the city was large and great (or broad in spaces); but the people were few, and the houses were not built." The meaning plainly is that there were yet large spaces within the walls which had not been rebuilt. Only a relatively small proportion of the population of the city had returned ("the people were few"), and hence the entire city had not yet been rebuilt.

What we gather from this verse, taken in connection with the statements of the preceding chapters, tends still further to show that the work Nehemiah was charged with was not the building of the city. The account of what he did which is quite detailed and minutes giving both the several workers and the work done by them, contains no reference at all to the city. It clearly appears that when the wall was finished in fifty-two days, the work was finished (6:15). It further appears that the people all had houses to live in (7:3). And finally, after all had been done which Nehemiah came to do, there remained yet a large part of the city rebuilt (7:4).

In order then to force the record of the Book of Nehemiah into agreement with a scheme of interpretation based upon the canon of Ptolemy, it is necessary to make the following assumptions, all of which are either unsupported by proof, or contrary thereto: first, that Ptolemy's chronology, when "corrected" according to the ideas of some modern chronologists, is right; second, that the "Artaxerxes," spoken of by Nehemiah, is Longimanus; third, that in all the century previous, since the ending of the captivity, no decree had gone forth to restore and build Jerusalem; fourth, that the "letters" given to Nehemiah were the decree going forth; fifth, that God's word concerning Cyrus was not fulfilled; sixth, that the "seventy weeks" were not weeks of true calendar years, but of periods of 360 days each. Obviously any conclusion, which rests upon these assumptions, and which would be overthrown if any one of them should be proved erroneous, is utterly worthless.

We have discussed this whole matter at length so that no question might be left unanswered; but it should be kept in mind that it is of little importance to determine when the rebuilding of the city began. For the starting point of the prophecy was not the rebuilding of the city, but the commandment to restore and to build it. That commandment was, beyond the shadow of a doubt, given by Cyrus. The Word of the Lord by Isaiah settles that beyond all controversy.

It is not necessary for our purposes to inquire which of the Persian kings was this "Artaxerxes." But it is interesting to notice, as pointed out by Anstey, that, if this Nehemiah is the same as the one who went up with Zerubbabel, and whose name appears third on the list (Ezra 2:2), then the king could not be Artaxerxes Longimanus, as supposed by certain expositors; for in that case it would make Nehemiah at least 120 years at the time he repaired the wall, and 132 at the time of Chapter 13:6.

Having made sure of the true starting point, we can now proceed with confidence to an examination of the details of the prophecy. But it will be needful, as we go on, to test every conclusion by the Scriptures, and to exercise care that we accept nothing that is not supported by ample proof.

The prophetic part of the angel's message begins at verse 24, which, in our A.V. reads as follows:

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy (place)."

Here are six distinct things which were to happen within a definitely marked off period of seventy sevens of years (490 years). These six specified things are closely related one to the other, for they are all connected by the conjunction "and."

This verse, which is a prophecy complete in itself, gives no information in regard to either the starting point of the 490 years, or the means whereby the predicted events were to be accomplished. That information, however, is given in the verses which follow. From them we learn that the prophetic period was to begin to run "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem"; also that sixty-nine weeks (seven plus sixty-two) would reach "unto Messiah, the Prince"; and further that "after the three-score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off." It was by the cutting off of the Messiah that the six predictions of verse 24 were to be fulfilled. This should be carefully noted.

Thus we have before us a prophecy of transcendent interest, a predicted stretch of time from the re-beginning of the Jewish nation and the rebuilding of the holy city, down to the culminating event of all history, and of all the ages of time the crucifixion of the Divine Redeemer. These are things which the angels desire to look into (1 Peter 1:12); and surely our hearts should move us to inquire into them, not in a spirit of carnal curiosity, and not with any purpose to uphold a favorite scheme of prophetic interpretation, but with the reverent desire to learn all that God has been pleased to reveal touching this most important and most sacred matter.

Verses 25–27 also foretell the overwhelming and exterminating judgments – the "desolations" that were to fall upon the people and the city, and which were to last throughout this entire dispensation.

The first words of verse 25, "Know therefore," show that what follows is explanatory of the prophecy contained in verse 24. This too should be carefully noted.

It is essential to a right understanding of the prophecy to observe, and to keep in mind, that the six things of verse 24 were to be fulfilled (and now have been fulfilled) by Christ being "cut off," and by what followed immediately thereafter, namely, His resurrection from the dead, and His ascension into heaven. With that simple fact in mind it will be easy to "understand" all the main points of the prophecy.

These are the six predicted items:

1. To finish the transgression The "transgression" of Israel had long been the burden of the messages of God's prophets. It was for their "transgression" that they had been sent into captivity, and that their land and city had been made a "desolation" for seventy years.

Daniel himself had confessed this, saying, "Yea, all Israel have transgressed Thy law even by departing that they might not obey Thy voice. Therefore the curse is poured upon us" (verse 11). But the angel revealed to him the distressing news that the full measure of Israel's "transgression" was yet to be completed; that the children were yet to fill up the iniquity of their fathers; and that, as a consequence, God would bring upon them a far greater "desolation" than that which had been wrought by Nebuchadnezzar. For "to finish the transgression" could mean nothing less or other than the betrayal and crucifixion of their promised and expected Messiah.

We would call particular attention at this point to the words of the Lord Jesus spoken to the leaders of the people shortly before His betrayal; for there is in them a striking similarity to the words of the prophecy of Gabriel. He said: "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers ... that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth" (Matthew 23:32). In these words of Christ we find first, a declaration that the hour had come for them "to finish the transgression"; and second, a strong intimation that the predicted desolations were to come, as a judgment, upon that generation, as appears by the words "that upon you may come."

Our Lord's concluding words at that time have great significance when considered in the light of this prophecy. He said, "Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation"; and then, as the awful doom of the beloved city pressed upon His heart, He burst into the lamentation, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," ending with the significant words, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

The terrible and unparalleled character of the judgments which were poured out upon Jerusalem at the time of its destruction in AD 70 has been lost sight of in our day. But if we would learn how great an event it was in the eyes of God, we have only to consider our Lord's anguish of soul as He thought upon it. Even when on the way to the Cross it was more to Him than His own approaching sufferings (Luke 21:28-30).

The apostle Paul also speaks in similar terms of the transgressions of that generation of Jews, who not only crucified the Lord Jesus, and then rejected the gospel preached to them in His Name, but also forbade that He be preached to the Gentiles. Wherefore the apostle said that they "fill up their sins always; for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost" (1 Thessalonians 2:15–16). For they were indeed about to undergo God's wrath "to the uttermost" in the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, and in the scattering of the people among all the nations of the world, to suffer extreme miseries at their hands. These Scriptures are of much importance in connection with our present study, and we shall have occasion to refer to them again.

It is not difficult to discern why the list of the six great things comprised in this prophecy was headed by the finishing of the transgression; for the same act, which constituted the crowning sin of Israel, also served for the putting away of sin (Hebrews 9:26), and the accomplishing of eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:12). They did indeed take Him, and with wicked hands crucified and slew Him; but it was done "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23). The powers and authorities of Judea and of Rome, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were indeed gathered together against Him; but it was to do what God's own hand and counsel had determined before to be done (Acts 4:26–28). There is nothing more wonderful in all that has been made known to us, than that the people and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor the voices of their own prophets which were read every Sabbath day, should have fulfilled them in condemning Him (Acts 13:27). Therefore, among the many prophecies that were then "fulfilled," a promise be given to that which forms the subject of our present study.

2. To make an end of sins On this item we need not dwell at length; for we have already called attention to the marvelous workings of God's wisdom in causing that the extreme sin of man should serve to accomplish eternal redemption, and so provide a complete remedy for sin for the crucifixion of Christ, though it was truly a deed of diabolical wickedness on the part of man, was on His own part the offering of Himself without spot to God as a sacrifice for sins (Hebrews 9:14). It was thus that He "offered the one Sacrifice for sins forever" (Hebrews 10:12).

We understand that the sense in which the death of Christ made "an end of sins" was that thereby He made a perfect atonement for sins, as written in Hebrews 1:3, "when He had by Himself purged our sins'" and in many like passages. It is to be noted however, that the Hebrew word for "sins" in this passage means not only the sin itself, but also the sacrifice therefore. Hence it is thought by some that what the angel here foretold was the making an end of the sin offering required by the law. That was, indeed, an incidental result, and it is mentioned expressly in verse 27. But the word used in that verse is not the word found in verse 24, which means sin or sin offering. It is a different word, meaning sacrifice. We conclude, therefore, that the words, "to make an end of sins", should be taken in their most obvious sense.

3. To make reconciliation for iniquity The word here translated "reconciliation" is usually rendered "atone", but according to Strong's Concordance it expresses also the thought of appeasing or reconciling. We

shall, therefore, assume that our translators had good reason for using the word "reconciliation." If, however, it be taken that "atonement" is the better rendering, the conclusion would not be affected; for both atonement and reconciliation were made by the death of Christ upon the cross.

The need of reconciliation arises from the fact that man is by nature not only a sinner, but also an enemy of God (Romans 5:8, 10). Moreover, it is because he is a sinner that he is also an enemy. As a sinner he needs to be justified; and as an enemy he needs to be reconciled. The death of Christ as an atoning sacrifice accomplishes both in the case of all who believe in Him. In Romans 5:8-10 these two distinct, but closely related, things are clearly set forth. For we there read, first, that "while we were yet sinners Christ died for us", and second, that "when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son".

Reconciliation has to do directly with the kingdom of God, in that it signifies the bringing back of those who were rebels and enemies into willing and loyal submission to God. In this connection attention should be given to the great passage in Colossians 1:12-22, which shows that, as the result of the death of Christ, those who have "redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (verse 14), are also translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son (verse 13), Christ "having made peace for them through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; and the apostle adds, "And you, who were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh, through death" (verses 20-22).

It is certain, therefore, that, when Christ Jesus died and rose again, atonement for sin and reconciliation for the enemies of God were fully and finally accomplished as a matter of historic fact. It is important, and indeed essential, to a right interpretation of this prophecy, to keep in mind that atonement and reconciliation were to be accomplished, and actually were accomplished, within the measure of seventy weeks from the going forth of the decree of King Cyrus.

It is thus seen that the prophecy has to do with the great and eternal purpose of God to establish His kingdom - and to bring pardoned and reconciled sinners into it as willing and loyal subjects of Christ, the King. And when the time drew near the kingdom was proclaimed by the Lord and by His forerunner as "at hand." The Lord's own words, when taken in connection with the prophecy of Gabriel, are very significant. He said: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15). The time whereof He spoke was that declared in this great prophecy; which is the only prophecy which gives the time of His coming. Hence His words were really the announcement of His approaching death, resurrection and enthronement in heaven, as the heavenly King of God's heavenly kingdom.

4. To bring in everlasting righteousness Righteousness is the most prominent feature of the kingdom of God. To show this we need only cite those familiar passages: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33); "the kingdom of God is righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17). One characteristic of God's righteousness, which He

was "to bring in" through the sacrifice of Christ ((Romans 3:21-26), is that it endures forever; and this is what is emphasized in the prophecy. A work was to be done, and now has been done, which would bring in everlasting righteousness – everlasting because based upon the Cross, as foretold also through Isaiah, "My righteousness shall be forever" (Isaiah 51:8). Jesus Christ has now been made unto US "righteous" (1 Corinthians 1:30); and this is in fulfillment of another great promise: "behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King reign and prosper And this is His Name whereby He shall be called JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jeremiah 23:5-6).

5. To seal up vision and prophecy This we take to mean the sealing up of God's word of prophecy to the Israelites, as part of the punishment they brought upon themselves. The word "seal up" sometimes means, in a secondary sense, to make secure, since what is tightly sealed up is made safe against being tampered with. Hence some have understood by this item merely that vision and prophecy were to be fulfilled. But we are not aware that the word "sealed up" is used in that sense in the Scriptures. For when the fulfillment of prophecy is meant, the word "to fulfill" is used. We think the word should be taken here in its primary meaning; for it was distinctly foretold, as a prominent feature of Israel's punishment that both vision and prophet – i.e., both eye and ear – were to be closed up, so that seeing they would see not, and hearing they would hear not (Isaiah 6:10).

Moreover, this very sealing up of vision and prophecy as a part of the chastening of Israel was foretold by Isaiah in that great passage where he speaks of Christ as the Foundation Stone (Isaiah 28:16). Following this is a prediction of "woe" to the city where David dwelt (29:1). So we have here a prophecy which is parallel to that of Gabriel. The latter spoke of the cutting off of Messiah to be followed by the destruction of Jerusalem; and Isaiah also spoke of Christ as God's Foundation Stone, laid in Zion (resurrection) and then of the overthrow of the earthly Zion. As to this overthrow God speaks through Isaiah very definitely saying, "And I will camp against thee round about and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and raise a fort against thee, and thou shalt be brought down" (Isaiah 29:1-4). Then the prophet speaks of a coming storm and tempest and devouring fire and also of the multitude of the nations that were to fight against the city (verses 6-9). And then come these significant words: "For the Lord God hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes, the prophets' and your rulers, the seers, hath He covered. And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed" (verses 10-11). This manifestly corresponds with Gabriel's words "to seal up vision and prophet." Moreover, the word "sealed," in Isaiah 29:11, is the same as in Daniel 9:24. These words of Isaiah also give a remarkably accurate description of the spiritual blindness of the people and their rulers in Christ's day, who, though they read the prophets every Sabbath day, yet because they knew not their voices, fulfilled them in condemning Him (Acts 13:27).

The fulfillment of Isaiah 6 also comes in here. For the Lord Himself declared that, in His day, was fulfilled the word "Go and tell this people, Hear ye

indeed but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed" (Isaiah 6:9–10; Matthew 13:14–15). John also quotes this prophecy and applies it to the Jews of his day (John 12:39–41); and Paul does the same (Acts 28:25–27).

Hence we should note with deep interest the question which this sentence of judgment prompted Isaiah to ask, and the answer he received. Evidently the prophet understood that the judgment pronounced in the words quoted above was to be one of terrible severity, for he at once inquired anxiously, "How long" the period of judicial blindness was to last. The answer was, "Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land" (Isaiah 6:11–12).

Here we have a clear prediction of that which Christ Himself prophesied when the desolation of Judea, and the scattering of the Jews among all nations (Luke 21:24).

6. To anoint the most holy place When these papers were first written and published in serial form, we were of opinion that this prediction had its fulfillment in the entrance of the Lord Jesus Christ into the heavenly sanctuary (Hebrews 9:23–24). But subsequently a copy of Dr. Pusey's work on Daniel the Prophet came into our hands, and we were much impressed by the exposition of this passage given by that great Hebrew scholar, who so ably defended the Book of Daniel from the assaults of the destructive critics. He pointed out that the word anoint had acquired a settled spiritual meaning, citing the words of Isaiah 61:1–2, which our Lord applied to Himself as He Whom God had "anointed." Dr. Pusey also pointed out that, inasmuch as the same word is used in the very next verse of Daniel "unto the Anointed, the Prince" it is to be assumed that words so closely united must be used with the same meaning. This gives the idea of an "anointing of an All Holy place" by the pouring out of the Holy Spirit thereon. Dr. Pusey cites much evidence in support of this idea; but without going into the discussion of the matter at length, we will simply state that we were led thereby to the conclusion that the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples of Christ, on the day of Pentecost, thereby anointing (see 2 Corinthians 1:21) a spiritual temple "the temple of the living God" (2 Corinthians 6:16), furnishes a fulfillment of this detail of the prophecy, a fulfillment which is not only in keeping with the other five items, but which brings the whole series to a worthy climax.

These six predicted events, which we have now considered in detail, were, according to the words of God by Gabriel, to be accomplished within the "determined" (or limited, or "marked off") period of seventy sevens of years; and we have shown – indeed it is so clear as hardly to be open to dispute – that all six items were completely fulfilled at the first coming of Christ, and in the "week" of His crucifixion. For when our Lord ascended into heaven and the Holy Spirit descended, there remained not one of the six items of Daniel 9:24 that was not dully accomplished. Furthermore, by running our eye rapidly over verses 25–26 we see that the coming of Christ and His being

“cut off are announced as the means whereby the prophecy was to be fulfilled; and that there is added the foretelling of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus the Roman “prince,” and the “desolations” of Jerusalem, and the wars that were to continue through this entire age “unto the end.”

We do not speak at this point of verse 27. That part of the prophecy will require a particularly careful examination which we purpose to give it later on.

Prophetic events are often described in veiled language and highly figurative terms, so that it is a matter of much difficulty to identify the fulfillment of them. But in this instance it seems to us we have the exceptional case of a prophecy whose terms are plain and the identifying marks are numerous. If it were possible to fix with certainty only one of the six predictions of Daniel 9:24, that would suffice to locate the entire series. But the indications given to us enable us to identify five of the six with certainty, and the other with a high degree of probability. We have no doubt then that the entire prophecy of verse 24 was fulfilled in the death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the coming of the Holy from heaven. And the settlement of the fulfillment of verse 24 carries with it the location of the seventieth week, which is referred to specifically in verse 27. This will be shown later on.

“From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks” (Daniel 9:26)

We have seen that the first part of this passage gives the starting point of the seventy weeks. The passage also gives the measure of time (7 weeks and 62 weeks, or 69 weeks in all) from that starting point “unto the Messiah”. We shall postpone to a later chapter the question why the total measure of time here mentioned is divided into two parts. The question which is of immediate importance for us to determine is, what was the precise occasion or event in the earthly lifetime of the Lord Jesus Christ, to which this stretch of 483 years; from the decree of Cyrus brings us? We will now seek the answer to this question.

Assuming, as we do, that God intended this prophecy to be understood (for verse 25 says, “Know therefore, and understand,” and our Lord said, “Whoso readeth let him understandeth we confidently expect to find both the starting point and the terminal point clearly revealed in the Scriptures. We have already found this to be the case as regards the starting point, and we shall now find that the Scriptures also indicate clearly the event to which the measure of 483 years reaches, and to which the angel referred in the words “unto the Messiah, the Prince.”

Had we followed the usual custom in beginning our study with a chronology selected from the various ones that are available, we should be forced thereby, as others have been, to pick out the event lying nearest to the 483 year mark on our adopted scale of years. We should have been obliged moreover to manipulate the materials, so far as necessary (either stretching the

measuring line, or taking up the slack, according as it was too short or too long), and then to present the best arguments we could find for the conclusions arrive at. But, being untrammelled by a chronological scheme, we are entirely free to inquire of the oracles of God as to the meaning of the Words "unto Messiah, the Prince," and as to the occasion or event to which those words specifically refer. If we can, from the Scriptures, identify that event (which, we believe, can be clearly done) then we know, from the prophecy itself, that it is precisely 69 weeks (483 years) from the going forth of the decree of Cyrus, and that but one week of the seventy remains; and we know further that the fulfillment of the six predictions of verse 24 must be found within that remaining week.

We must, of course, look to the words themselves to guide us to the information we are seeking; and those words are all we need. We are accustomed to regard the term "the Messiah" as merely a name or a title, but in fact it is a descriptive Hebrew word meaning "the anointed (one)". In Greek the word Christos has the same meaning. Therefore, we have, only to ask, when was Jesus of Nazareth presented to Israel as the Anointed One? As to this we are not left in any doubt whatever, for it was an event of the greatest importance in the life of Jesus our Lord, as well as in the dealings of God with Israel, and in the history of the world, an event which is made prominent in all the four Gospels. It was at His baptism in Jordan that our Lord was "anointed" for His ministry; for then it was that the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily shape as a dove. The apostle Peter bears witness that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power" (Acts 10:38). This is clear and explicit to the point that, when the years of Israel's history had unrolled to that marvelous day on which Father, Son and Holy Spirit were simultaneously manifested to the senses of men, it brought them "unto the Messiah." There is no day in all history like that. The event is marked in a way to distinguish it most conspicuously. The Lord's own testimony in regard to the matter is even more definite and impressive. For, after His return to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, He came to Nazareth where He had been brought up, and going into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, He read from the prophet Isaiah these striking words: "The Spirit, of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath ANOINTED Me to preach the gospel to the poor" – and after He had closed, the book He said, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:16–21). Thus the Lord declared Himself to be, at that time, the "Anointed" One, that is, "the Messiah".

The testimony of God the Father is to the same effect. For the Voice from heaven bore witness to Him, saying, "This is My Son, the Beloved." This declares Him to be the One of Whom David prophesied in the Second Psalm (verse 7). But that same Psalm sets Him forth as God's "anointed" (verse 2).

But we have a special witness in John the Baptist, who was a man sent from God to bear witness of Christ, and to make Him manifest, to Israel; for John himself declared this to be his mission, saying, "that He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water" (John 1:6–7, 31). When, therefore, the Lord Jesus had been "anointed" with the Holy Ghost and had been "made manifest to Israel" by the testimony of John the Baptist, then, the words of the prophecy "unto the Anointed One" were completely

fulfilled. From that great and wonderful event down to the day of His death, He was constantly before the people in His Messianic character, fulfilling His Messianic mission, going about, doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil, preaching the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God, manifesting the Father's Name, speaking the words His Father gave Him to speak, and doing the works the Father gave Him to do. Indeed, even before He announced Himself in the synagogue of Nazareth as God's "Anointed One," He had plainly said to the woman of Samaria (after she had spoken of "Messiah, who is called Christ"), "I that speak unto thee am He" (John 4:25-26). Moreover, to the Samaritans who came out to see Him on the woman's report, He so fully revealed Himself that they were constrained to confess Him, saying, "We have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ (the Anointed One), the Saviour of the world" (verse 42).

Furthermore, the nature, as well as the effect of John the Baptist's public testimony to the Lord Jesus, is clearly revealed by the words of those who, on hearing his testimony, followed Jesus. It is recorded that "One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him (Jesus) was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ" (John 1:40-41).

In these scriptures the Holy Spirit has caused the important fact that Jesus was the Anointed One to be stated in both Hebrew and Greek, so that the significance of it should not be missed. That "this Jesus is the Christ" is the great point of apostolic testimony (Acts 17:3); and it is the substance of "our faith"; for "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5:1, 4-5). It is likewise the rock foundation on which He is building His church (Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 3:11).

We have cited the foregoing scriptures to make it clear beyond all doubt that, from the Lord's baptism and His manifestation to Israel; He was in the fullest sense "the Messiah" or the "Anointed" of God. To this fact, the inspired records bear, as we have seen, the clearest testimony. Manifestly there is no previous event in the earthly lifetime of our Lord which could be taken as meeting in any way the words of Gabriel. And it is equally clear that no subsequent event could be taken as the fulfillment of those words; for there is no subsequent occasion when the Lord was any more "the Anointed One" than He was when the Holy Spirit descended upon Him at His baptism. Thus the Scriptures absolutely shut us up to the Lord's baptism as the terminal point of the 483 years; for it was then that "God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost, and with power."

Another fact which has an important bearing on this part of our study is the great particularly with which the date of the beginning of John's ministry is given in the Gospel by Luke (3:1-3). There we read that the preaching of John the Baptist began in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod (Antipas) tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea, Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, and Annas and Caiaphas being high priests. Thus the new era, which was that of the Messiah-God manifest in the flesh - is marked with extraordinary precision. And this is the more remarkable because it is the only event whereof the date is thus recorded in the New Testament.

This is highly significant; for just as the date of the decree of Cyrus, marking the beginning of the Seventy Weeks, is stated with great definiteness, so likewise the preaching of John, which marked the termination of the 483 years, is stated with extraordinary minuteness. It is a reasonable inference that God has given prominence to these dates in His Word because they mark the beginning and the ending of this prophetic period.

It is also worthy of special notice that the dates of both these events are given by reference to the reigns of Gentile rulers. One is given as Occurring "in the first year of Cyrus, King of Persia," the other "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar." This is an indication that the things which were to be consummated within the time limit of 70 weeks were not matters which concerned the Jews only, but were of worldwide interest, having to do with the welfare of all mankind. God's dealings, therefore, had been matters of Jewish history. But now, beginning with the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," a new era was beginning, one in which God's dealings were to be matters of world history. It is appropriate, therefore, that we should find at this point in the Word of God (Luke 3:1-3) a change from terms of Jewish to terms of Gentile chronology.

The prophets had foretold the ministry of John the Baptist in words which show that his appearance was to mark the beginning of a new and wonderful era, the preparation for the coming of Christ and His gospel (Isaiah 40:3-11; Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6). Moreover, just as the prophets had pointed forward to John's ministry as the beginning of this new era, so likewise the apostles pointed back to it. Thus, when one was to be chosen to fill the place of Judas, it was required that the choice should be limited to those who had companied with the apostles all the time that the Lord Jesus had gone in and out among them, "beginning from the baptism of John" (Acts 1:21-22). Again, when Peter preached to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius, telling them of "the word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ," he declared that the preaching of this message (or "word"), which was "published throughout all Judea," had begun "from Galilee after the baptism which John preached" (Acts 10:36-37). And Paul likewise, in proclaiming the fulfillment of God's great promise of a "Savior" to Israel, referred to John's preaching as the beginning of the era of this fulfillment (Acts 13:24).

It is clear, therefore, in the light of Scripture that the 483 years "unto the Messiah" terminated at the Lord's baptism, when His ministry as "the Messiah" began. Moreover, the prophecy itself furnishes a means whereby we can check up our conclusions thus far, and test their correctness. To this we will refer later on. The terms of the prophecy make it plain that the expiration of the sixty-ninth week would bring the fulfillment, of the greatest of all promises, the manifestation of Christ to Israel; and we have now shown that the records of the New Testament mark the era of His manifestation with the utmost precision.

Thus we have the coming of Christ plainly announced, and the time of His manifestation to Israel definitely fixed by the measure of years from His decree to restore and build Jerusalem. But for what purpose was He to come? And what was He to accomplish for the deliverance and welfare of His people

Israel? The Jews would, of course, look for an era of triumph over all their foes, of great national prosperity and glory, and of supremacy for them over all the nations of the world. In the light of their expectations the prophecy would seem most strange. It would be utterly irreconcilable with their hopes in regard to what their promised Messiah was to do for them. For the only thing Said of Him was that He would be "he cut off and have nothing"; and while there was some hope in the promise that He should "confirm the covenant with many," yet there was also the dreadful prediction of a prince whose people should destroy the rebuilt city and sanctuary, and the further prophecies that the land should be devastated as by a flood, and that to the end there should be wars land desolations. A more depressing prophecy, Or one more in conflict with the Messianic expectations of the Jews, could not well be imagined.

But, our immediate concern is not with the character of the message but with the time of the several events foretold in it. The chief thing said of the Messiah is that He should "be cut off and have nothing" (Daniel 9:25); and this was to be "after the threescore and two weeks." Thus we have our attention focused as it were upon the cutting off of the Christ. That transcendent event, the Cross, is thus made the central feature of the Prophecy. And this feature becomes the more grandly prominent when we take notice of the facts: (1) that it was by the cutting off of the Messiah that the six predicted things of verse 24 were to be accomplished; (2) that it was by the cutting off of the Messiah that the covenant with many (verse 27) was to be confirmed and the sacrifice and oblation caused to cease (as will be shown later on); and (3) that it was because of the cutting off of the Messiah that the devastating judgments foretold in the prophecy were to fall upon the city, the temple, and the people.

Thus it is seen that the prophecy is one of marvelous unity, and that all its details center around the Cross.

Now as to the time of this transcendent event, it is expressly stated that it was to be "after the threescore and two weeks." That part of the determined period was to bring us only "unto the Messiah." None of the predicted events were to happen within the sixty-nine weeks. The expiration thereof left only "one week" (verse 27) of the appointed seventy. Hence, within that one remaining week Messiah must be cut off if the predictions of verse 24 were to be fulfilled within 490 Years from the beginning of the prophetic period. For it should be carefully noted, in view of certain interpretation which have been put forth within recent years, that, we have not yet come to the fulfillment of any one of the six things foretold in Daniel 9:24. The expiration of the 483 years has brought us only "unto" the One in Whom those six things, which involve the whole purpose of God in redemption, were to be accomplished. Sixty-nine weeks of the determined seventy have passed. Only one week remains. It follows, therefore, of necessity, that the predictions of verse 24 must be fulfilled in that week. Within the next seven years the transgression of Israel must be finished, reconciliation must be made for iniquity, and everlasting righteousness must be brought, in, else the prophecy would utterly fail.

But this is just what might, have been understood from verse 24 alone. The

words "seventy weeks are determined" are enough to inform us that the seventieth week was the one which would see the accomplishment of the predicted events; for if they, or some of them at least, were not to fall in that last week, then the prophetic period would not have been announced as one of seventy weeks, but as one of a lesser number. In fact, the very manner in which the prophecy is given to us – the last week being set off from the rest for special and separate mention indicates the exceptional importance of that, week. And this is easily seen; for if we look attentively at the terms of the prophecy we perceive that our Lord's personal ministry lay entirely within the seventieth week. We ask our readers to lay firm hold of this fact. The prophecy plainly says there should be 69 weeks "unto the Anointed One." Then, to make this clear beyond all doubt, it says, "And after the threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off." This definitely places His whole ministry within the seventieth consecutive week from the decree of Cyrus. This is of the highest importance to an understanding of the prophecy.

In this connection, and by way of anticipation of what we propose to consider more fully hereafter, we briefly call attention to several points which bear directly upon this part of our study:

1. It is clear from what is recorded in John's Gospel (and this has been often pointed out from the earliest days of our era) that our Lord's ministry was approximately, if not exactly, three years and a half in duration. Hence from His anointing to His death would be half a "week?" and His crucifixion would be "in the midst of the (70th) week."

2. Glancing now for a moment at Daniel 9:27 we note the words "and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." If, as we expect to show hereafter by ample proof, the "he" of this verse is Christ, and the words quoted refer to His causing the sacrifices of the law to cease by His offering of Himself as a sacrifice for sin once for all, then we have a perfect agreement, in the finished work of Christ, with all the terms of the prophecy, and particularly in regard to the length of time assigned to His earthly ministry both by the prophecy and by the Gospel according to John. We need to exercise much care in this part of our study, because it has to do with matters regarding which there has been great uncertainty and wide difference of opinion. The difficulties, however, have been largely imported into the subject. They tire due in great measure to the wrong method which has been pursued (as we have shown in a previous chapter), and to the choice of a wrong starting point. For manifestly, the consequences of a mistake at the beginning will appear all along the way. On the other band, it will be easy to keep from error and confusion if we bear in mind these simple facts (1), that, at the baptism of Christ 69 weeks had elapsed; (2) that the beginning of His ministry was the beginning also of the 70th week; (3) that His entire mission lay within the compass of that last week; and (4) that in that week we must needs look for the accomplishment of the six predictions of Daniel 9:24.

We have not thus far referred to the latter part of Daniel 9:25. It merely tells that the street and wall (of the city) were to be built again "even in troublous times." The period of "seven weeks", mentioned in the verse, was no doubt the measure of those troublous times. This will serve to explain why

the entire period of 70 weeks was divided into three parts – seven weeks, sixty-two weeks, and one week. In the first portion (7 weeks), the rebuilding of the city and temple took place, and God's last messages to Israel were given through Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Then follows a long stretch of 62 weeks, which period was uneventful, so far as this prophecy is concerned. Chapter 11, however, (as we shall show later on) foretells the principal events of this period, which brings us "unto the Messiah," and then comes the last and most momentous "weeks," which appropriately stands by itself, for in it occurred the most stupendous events of all time.

The Prince

The fact that the angel Gabriel, in speaking of the Messiah, gave Him the title "Prince" (Daniel 9:25) suggests an inquiry, which, when pursued, is found to yield fruitful results.

Two of the great visions which Daniel records give an outline of the history of human government,, from the time of the vision to the very end of world government in the hands of men; and in both of these visions it, is shown that the last of the world kingdoms will be followed, and the whole system of human rule will be displaced, by the Kingdom of God. The vision of Chapter 2 shows this kingdom as a stone, carving itself out of the mountain without the agency of hands (this being a special feature of the vision), smiting the great image (which represents human rule in its entirety) upon its feet, demolishing the whole image, and finally becoming itself a mountain which fills the whole earth. Daniel, in expounding the vision, said that this stone represented "a kingdom" which "the God of heaven" would set up, and which should "stand forever" (Daniel 2:44). Plainly the Lord Jesus had this Scripture in mind when, in warning the Scribes and Pharisees that the Kingdom of God was to be taken from them (for the promise of the Kingdom, along with all other promises, had been given to the Jews), He spoke of "the Stone which the builders refused," and declared that whosoever should fall upon it (then, at His first advent) should be broken; but on whomsoever it should fall (at His second coming in power) it should grind him to powder (Matthew 21:42-44).

The companion vision (Daniel 7) reveals further details concerning this Kingdom of God. Particularly does it show that it was to be conferred in heaven upon One like the Son of man, to whom was to be given "dominion, glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion and His Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:13-14).

In view of these two preceding visions which speak so definitely of a kingdom, it might be expected that the angel in announcing in the vision of Chapter 9, the coming of the Anointed One, who, of course, is the One Who is to receive the kingdom, would have referred to Him as "Messiah the King." And indeed, if His coming to which the Seventy Weeks was the determined measure of time had been with a view to setting up a kingdom which would forthwith displace the earth rule of man, then the title "King" would be the appropriate one to use. But, in view of the actual purpose for which Christ was to come at that Lintel and of the work He was then to accomplish, there is a wonderful suitability in the title "Prince." And not only so, but this

title serves as a connecting link with certain New Testament Scriptures, referred to below, in which His work for this age is set forth in a comprehensive way.

For the title "Prince" is given to the Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit, four times; whereas He was not once proclaimed by Heaven's authority as King, at His first coming. (He was referred to as the King by the Gentile Magi, by Nathaniel when he first met Him, by the excited multitude at His last entry into Jerusalem, when their nationalistic expectations had been raised to a high pitch by the miracle of the raising of Lazarus, and by Pilate in derision. He was not so styled by John the Baptist, by Himself, or by His immediate disciples and apostles. These latter called Him "Master" and "Lord".)

The four New Testament passages to which we refer are these:

1. Acts 3:15: "And killed the Prince of life, Whom God hath raised from the dead."

2. Acts 5:31: "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins."

3. Hebrews 2:10: "For it became Him, for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain (Prince) of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

4. Hebrews 12:2: "Looking unto Jesus, the Author (Prince) and Finisher of faith, Who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Taken together, these four scriptures present a wonderful view of the work of the Anointed One at His first advent. To begin with it should be noticed that in each passage His sufferings are made prominent. Peter says to the Jews at Jerusalem, "Ye denied the Holy One and The Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life." Again, in Acts 5:30, he said: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree, Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour." In the third scripture we read that it became God, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Prince of their salvation perfect through sufferings. And finally, we read that as the Prince of faith, the One to Whom we must trustfully look while running the race set before us, He endured the Cross, despising the shame. It is needless that we should point out how perfect is the agreement in all this with the one thing foretold of Messiah the Prince in Daniel 9:25-26) namely that He should be cut off and have nothing. All these Scriptures then agree in their testimony that this Anointed "Prince" was, for the accomplishment of His mission, to suffer and to die.

Again, viewing these scriptures together, we see in them God's fourfold objective in sending forth His Son in the likeness of man, and in anointing Him with the Holy Ghost and with power. It was (1) that He might be the Prince of life, thus to meet the deepest need of His perishing people, for he came "that they might have life"; (2) That He might also be the Prince and

Savior empowered to grant repentance and forgiveness of sins; (3) that He might be the Prince or Leader of the salvation of God's many sons, to bring them all safe home to glory; and (4) that He might also be the Leader as well as the Finisher of that faith whereby God's people are to run (and without which none can possibly run) with endurance the race which is set before them, This fourfold object of the purpose of Christ's mission at His first advent seems to present a comprehensive setting forth of His work.

In these Scriptures then we view Him as the Prince of life exalted by God's right hand; as the Prince and Savior, granting repentance and pardon, and giving the Holy Spirit "to them that obey Him" (for He will accept only willing obedience); as the Prince of the complete and final salvation of God's "many sons" whom by death, He has delivered from him who has the power of death, that is the devil (verses 14-15); and lastly as the Prince and Completer of a faith which triumphs through all difficulties, and sustains us to the end of the race.

To summarize: The first passage has to do with the birth of the children of the kingdom; the second with their pardon and justification; the third with their protection and safety while on their journey to the glory; and the fourth with the perfecting of their faith for the endurance of all the trials of the way. Taken altogether they give us the character of that kingdom which we have received through grace, and which is described in Hebrews 12:28 as "a kingdom which cannot be moved."

"And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and have nothing" – Daniel 9:26)

The first clause of verse 26 focuses our attention upon the greatest of all events. It tells us definitely that Christ was to be "cut off, and have nothing" (the marginal reading, "and have nothing" is undoubtedly correct). He was to have no people, no throne, no place even, on earth. But to the Israelites the words "cut off and have nothing" would convey the meaning of dying without posterity, without a "generation," with none to perpetuate his name. This was regarded by them as the greatest of all calamities; and there was a special provision of the law whereby, in case a man should die, leaving no seed, his brother or near kinsman should "raise up the name of the dead" (Deuteronomy 25:5-6; Ruth 4:10). But here is the astonishing statement that the long promised and ardently looked for Messiah was to be completely "cut off!"

There is, in these words, a striking agreement with the prophecy of Isaiah, which contains the following: "And who shall declare His generation? For He was cut off out of the land of the living" (Isaiah 53:8). There could seemingly be no "generation" for one who was "cut off." Yet with that marvelous prophecy runs the apparently contradictory promise, "He shall see His seed" (verse 10).

Considering now the statement, "And after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off," the unity of the prophecy is seen in this, that the words, "after three score and two weeks," bring us to the last of the

"Seventy Weeks," that is, to the period referred to in verse 24; and the words, "Messiah shall be cut off," declare the means whereby the six predictions of that verse were to be fulfilled. Every part of this prophecy is thus firmly bound to every other part. It all has to do with the coming of Christ and what He was to suffer at the hands of His people; and it includes also a foretelling of the judgments that were to befall them for putting Him to death.

We would, therefore, fix our attention for a little while upon this special period of time, this three years and a half from the anointing of the Lord at His baptism to His crucifixion. That period is frequently referred to in the Gospels as the "time" or "this time," meaning the time of the Messiah. Thus, when our Lord said, "The time is fulfilled" (Mark 1:15), He doubtless had reference to the time revealed to Daniel, the time when Christ was to be made manifest to Israel. Again, in Luke 12:56, where he asked, "How is it that ye do not discern the time?" and in Luke 19:44, where he said, "Because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation," we may properly conclude that He had in mind the same "set time," which had been definitely marked off in the unchangeable counsels of God and which He had communicated to Daniel, the man who was greatly beloved. The last mentioned passage (Luke 19:41-44) is very closely related to the prophecy of the seventy weeks, for it is itself a prophecy by Christ of the same destruction of Jerusalem which is foretold in the prophecy of the seventy weeks.

Surely there was no "time" like that, when God's blessed Son, in lowly human form, went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. Many prophets and kings had desired to see those things, and the angels desire to look into them. We should therefore be greatly impressed by the fact that God had, hundreds of years before, foretold that "time," had given the measure of it, and had declared how it should end.

But more than this, the Lord made frequent reference also to a particular "hour," calling it "My hour." The "time" was that of His personal ministry in Israel, according to this prophecy; and the "hour" was that of His being "cut off," according to the same prophecy.

We would call to mind some of those passages, which must ever awaken love and praise in the hearts of those for whose sake he endured the agonies of that awful and mysterious "hour." Thus, when certain Greeks desired to see Him, their interest being prompted by the great commotion caused by the raising of Lazarus, and when crowds were thronging to see Him and Lazarus also (John 12:9), He referred to the approaching "hour" when He, being lifted up from the earth, should draw "all men," Greeks as well as Jews, unto Him, and said, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified"; and again, "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father save me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour" (John 12:20-27). Also in John 17:1 we read His words, "Father, the hour is come." And a little later that same evening He prayed in the garden, asking "that if it were possible the hour might pass from Him" (Mark 14:35). It is plain that, in these passages, He was speaking of the hour when He should be made a sacrifice for sin upon the Cross - the hour when Messiah should "be cut off and have nothing."

The Judgment. "The Prince That Shall Come".

The verse we are now considering (Daniel 9:26) foretells not only the crowning sin of Israel in putting their Messiah to death, but also the great and terrible judgment that was to follow the perpetration of that unspeakable deed. There is a direct logical connection between the two events, which will account for the fact that the chronological order is not strictly followed.

There are differences of opinion among competent scholars as to the proper translation of the latter part of verse 26. In the text of the A.V. it reads:

"And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."

The R.V. makes clearer the meaning of the last clause. It reads: "and unto the end shall be war; desolations are determined."

Notwithstanding, however, the differences of translation, it is not difficult to gather the meaning of the passage. Indeed, so far as we are aware, all expositors agree that it foretells the exterminating judgment of God, which in due time was executed by the Roman armies under Titus, by whom the city was overwhelmed as "with a flood" (a figure often used for an invading army), and the city and the land were given over to the age long "desolations," which had been "determined" in the counsels of God. Doubtless the Lord had this very passage in mind when, speaking of the then approaching siege and destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, He said: "For these be the days of vengeance, that all things that are written may be fulfilled" (Luke 21:22). The "things that are written" were the things foretold in this verse of the prophecy (Daniel 9:26), which were "fulfilled" at that time. The Lord's words recorded in Matthew 23:32-36, and Luke 19:43-44, also refer to the calamities foretold in Daniel 9:26 as will be clearly seen by turning to those passages.

The following then is the meaning we derive from the text of the A.V. and R.V.: That the people of a "prince" (i.e., a leader or commander), who was to come with arms against Judea and Jerusalem, would utterly destroy both the city and the temple; that the destruction thereof should be as if a flood had swept everything away; that to the end there should be war; and that "desolations" for the land and city were definitely "determined."

Thus the entire prophecy of the Seventy Weeks embraces in its scope the rebuilding of the city and the temple, and the final destruction of both. It covers the stretch of time from the restoration of the people to their land and city in the first year of Cyrus, down to their dispersion by the Romans among all the nations of the world.

In this connection we would again call the reader's attention to the striking agreement between this part of the prophecy and the word of God to Isaiah (Chapter 6:9-13).

Who is "The Prince That Shall Come"?

At this point we are confronted with a question which very seriously affects

the interpretation of the prophecy. Taking the words according to their apparent and obvious meaning (which should always be done except where there is a compelling reason to the contrary) it would seem quite clear that "the prince," whose people were to destroy the city and the sanctuary, was Titus, the son of the then emperor Vespasian, he (Titus) being the "prince" or "leader" who was in actual command of those armies at the time. In fact we are bold to say that the words of the prophecy, which are the words of God sent directly from heaven to Daniel, do not reasonably admit of any other interpretation. Nor, so far as we are aware, was any other meaning ever put upon them until within recent years, and then only by those belonging to a particular "school" of interpretation. According to the "school" referred to, the words "the prince that shall come" do not mean the prince who did come, and whose armies fulfilled this prophecy by destroying the city and the temple, but they mean some other "prince," who in fact has not yet come, and who (of course) could have nothing whatever to do with the subject of the passage, to wit, the destruction of the city and the temple.

According to the view we are now considering, the passage is taken to mean that there is a "prince" who is to "come" at some unknown time yet future, which prince will be of the same nationality as the people (the Roman armies) by whom the city and the Sanctuary were to be destroyed. It is further assumed, and taught with much confidence, that this "coming prince" will be in league with Antichrist, if indeed he be not Antichrist himself. This is a very radical idea, one which changes the entire meaning of this basic prophecy, and affects the interpretation of all prophecy. It transfers the main incidents of the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks from Christ to Antichrist, and removes them bodily from the distant past to the uncertain future, thus separating them far from all connection with the period of seventy weeks to which God assigns them. This manner of dealing with Scripture is, so far as our experience goes, without parallel or precedent in the field of exegesis. Is it sound and sober interpretation of Scripture, or is it playing pranks with prophecy?

For, with all due and proper respect for those who hold this view, we are bound to say that it does the greatest possible violence to words which are not at all obscure or of uncertain meaning. There is no conceivable reason why any prince (i.e., commander) should be mentioned in this passage except the one whose armies were to accomplish the destruction of the city and temple, that being the subject of the passage. The words are appropriate to convey one meaning and one only. It is simply unthinkable that the destroying agency would be identified by reference to some prince who was not to come upon the scene for several thousand years, or that the Romans of the first century could be called his "people." Nor would anyone who possessed the slightest understanding of the use of language employ the words of the text in order to convey the information that the people, by whom the city was to be destroyed, would be of the same nationality as some "prince" who was to "come" (without saying whence, or whither, or for what) at some remote and unspecified time. And finally, even if it were supposable that such an utterly foreign subject as a prince, who was to come many centuries after the event prophesied, would be lugged into such a passage, then it would have been made to say not "the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy

the city," but that a prince of the people who destroyed the city shall come.

Furthermore, we know that the armies of prince Titus did destroy the city and temple, and that to this day the seven-branched candlestick, which was carried in his triumphal procession, is sculptured on the arch which was erected at Rome in his honor. But we know nothing of any Roman prince who is to "come" (come where?) in the future. The term "Roman" pertains to nothing now except the papacy.

And besides all this, if any "prince" should hereafter "come" (it matters not whence or whither) it could not properly be said that the people who destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70 were his people. The plain and simple words of the prophecy are "the people of the prince who shall come." Those words can only mean the man who was the prince or leader of the people at the time they destroyed the city and temple. Those Roman legions and auxiliaries were the people of prince Titus. But in no sense are they the people of some prince who may arise several thousand years later. The French armies which invaded Russia were the people of Napoleon their commander; but in no proper sense were they the people of General Foch. They were all dead long before he was born.

This prophecy has nothing whatever to do with any future Roman prince; nor is there, so far as we are aware, any ground for saying that a Roman prince will arise to play a part in the time of the end of this age. During the centuries that have now elapsed such changes have taken place that no potentate of the approaching end times could be described as the prince of the people by whom Jerusalem was destroyed.

The prophecy of the Seventy Weeks is manifestly an account, given beforehand, of the second period of the national existence of the Jewish people. They were to last as a nation only long enough to fulfill the Scriptures, and to accomplish the supreme purpose of God, in bringing forth the Messiah, and putting Him to death. The time allotted for this was 490 years. This being accomplished, God had no further use for Israel. His dealings thenceforth were to be with another people, that "holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9), composed of all who believe the gospel, and who "receive" the One Who was rejected by "His own" (John 1:11-13).

Yet the predicted judgment did not immediately follow; for Christ prayed for His murderers in His dying hour, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). In answer to that prayer the full probationary period of forty years (A.D. 30 to A.D. 70) was added to their national existence, during which time repentance and remission of sins was preached to them in the Name of the crucified and risen One, and tens of thousands of Jews were saved.

The perfect accuracy of Scripture is seen in this, that while it was definitely stated that the six things of Daniel 9:24 were to be accomplished within the determined period of seventy weeks, and while the destruction of the rebuilt city and temple was also predicted, that event is not among the things which were to happen within the seventy weeks.

In this connection it is important to observe that, while the predicted events of verse 24 were to happen within the measured period of seventy weeks, and the events of verse 27 were to happen in the midst of the last week of the seventy, the time of the predicted judgments is not specified. Thus the prophecy left room for the exercise of mercy even to that evil generation.

“And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease” (Daniel 9:27)

We come now to the last verse of the prophecy, which verse is of surpassing interest and importance. It has to do specifically with the seventieth week of the prophecy. The expiration of 69 weeks brought us “unto Christ,” but not to His crucifixion, nor to that which is the great subject of all prophecy, “the sufferings of the Christ” (1 Peter 1:11). Particularly it should be kept in mind that the six things of Daniel 9:24 depended for their accomplishing upon His atoning death, His resurrection, and His ascension into heaven. All these events were “after the threescore and two weeks.”

When Moses and Elijah appeared with Christ in glory on the Mount of Transfiguration, they “spake of His exodus which He should accomplish at Jerusalem” (Luke 9:31). His “exodus” or “way out” of this world was the consummation of the purposes of God, the climax of all prophecy, the supreme event of all the ages. Thereby he accomplished eternal redemption, opened a fountain for sin and for uncleanness, scaled the everlasting covenant, and set aside forever the sacrifices appointed by the law.

The first part of Daniel 9:27, quoted at the head of this chapter, is quite clear except for the words “for one week,” which will be explained later on. The meaning of the clause (apart from those three words) is, we believe, easily discerned in the light of the New Testament scriptures. “To confirm” the new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31–34; Hebrews 8:6–13; 10:1–18), that is, to make it sure, was the great purpose for which the Son of God came into the world in the body of flesh prepared for Him (Hebrews 10:5). Moreover, it was by His death as a sacrifice for sin that He displaced and abolished the sacrifices of the law, thus causing them “to cease.” God had had “no pleasure” in these because they “could never take away sins,” whereas “it pleased the Lord to bruise Him”, making “His soul an offering for sin” (Isaiah 53:10).

If we take the pronoun “He” as relating to “the Messiah” mentioned in the preceding verse, then we find in the New Testament scriptures a perfect fulfillment of the passage, and a fulfillment, moreover, which is set forth in the most conspicuous way. That pronoun must, in our opinion, be taken as referring to Christ, because (a) the prophecy is all about Christ, and this is the climax of it;

(b) Titus did not make any covenant with the Jews; (e) there is not a word in

Scripture about any future "prince" making a covenant with them. Other reasons in support of this conclusion will appear later on. But the foregoing are sufficient. There are three points in the passage we are now studying, and each of them is completely fulfilled in the inspired accounts of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ given in the New Testament. Those three points are:

1. Confirming the covenant with many;
2. What happened in the midst of the week;
3. Causing the sacrifice and the oblation to cease. We will briefly examine these three points in order.

1. Confirming the covenant with many

We ignore for the present the words "for one week," which words would seem to limit the duration of the "covenant" to the short period of seven years. It will suffice for now to say that there is no preposition "for" in the text, and that the words "one week" do not refer to the duration of the covenant, but to the time when it was confirmed; for that covenant was confirmed by the shedding of the blood of Christ (Hebrews 9:14–20) in "the one week," the last of the seventy which had been "determined." This will be clearly shown later on.

As to the fulfillment of this important feature of the prophecy we have a clear announcement from the Lord's own lips. For when, in the institution of His memorial supper, He gave the cup to His disciples, he uttered these significant words, "This is My blood of the new covenant, shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). In these words we find four things which agree with the prophecy: ONE – "the One" who was to confirm the covenant, Christ; TWO – "the covenant" itself; THREE – that which "confirmed" the covenant, the blood of Christ; FOUR – those who receive the benefits of the covenant, the "many." The identification is complete; for the words correspond perfectly with those of the prophecy, "He shall confirm the covenant with many." There could not be a more perfect agreement.

It is to be noted in this connection that the prominent feature of the new covenant is the forgiveness of sins (Jeremiah 31:34; Hebrews 10:1–18). Hence the significance of the Lord's words, "for the remission of sins." His mission in coming into the world was to "save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). That is the prominent feature of His gospel (Luke 24:47; Acts 10:43).

It is further to be noted that, although the promise of the New Covenant was made to the entire "house of Israel and house of Judah," not all of them entered into its benefits. Those who rejected Christ were "destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:23). They were, as branches, "broken off" (Romans 11:17). We see then the accuracy of Scripture in the words of the prophecy "with many," and those of the Lord Jesus "shed for many."

This use of the word "many" is found in other like scriptures. Thus, in a similar prophecy it is written: "My righteous Servant shall justify many" (Isaiah 53:11). Again, "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God" (1:11, 16). This was said by the same heavenly messenger, Gabriel, when he announced to Zachariah the birth of his son. And yet again –

this time from the lips of Simeon – “This Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel” (Luke 2:34). And yet once more, in the words of the Lord Jesus, “For the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). In each of these scriptures the word “many” applies to those who receive by faith the benefits of the New Covenant which Christ made sure by the shedding of His blood upon the Cross.

2. In the midst of the week

These words are important in helping to identify the fulfillment of the prophecy. Considering the supreme importance of the death of Christ, upon which depended not only the six predictions of verse 24, but all the purposes of God; and considering also that the prophecy gives the time when the Lord’s ministry as “the Messiah” was to begin, we should expect to find in it a statement when His ministry was to end by His being “cut off.” This information is given in the words “in the midst of the week”, that is the seventieth week. The expiration of 69 weeks brought us “unto the Messiah.” Only “one week” of the seventy remained; and in the midst of that last week He was crucified.

We have here (as already indicated) a valuable means of checking up our conclusions and testing their correctness. For, as has been often pointed out since very early times, the Gospel of John contains information by which it appears that the ministry of Christ lasted three and a half years. In fact, Eusebius, a Christian writer of the fourth century, is quoted as saying: “It is recorded in history that the whole time of our Savior’s teaching and working miracles was three years and a half, which is half a week. This, John the evangelist will represent (i.e. will make known) to those who critically attend to his Gospel.

Thus the length of our Lord’s ministry, as disclosed by the Gospel of John (half a week), strikingly confirms the prophecy, which gives 69 weeks unto the beginning of the Lord’s ministry, and fixes the ending thereof “in the midst of the week” following.

3. He shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease

No one will dispute that, when Christ suffered and died on the Cross, thus offering “one sacrifice for sins forever,” he then and there caused the sacrifice, and oblations of the law to cease as a divine appointment. Even when in full vigor they were but the shadows of that perfect and all-sufficient sacrifice which he, as the Lamb foreordained before the foundation of the world, which was to offer in due time. Hence they were completely displaced when Christ, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God.

Neither can there be any question that the removal of those sacrifices (which could never take away sins) was a great thing in the eyes of God, a thing so great and well-pleasing to Him, to warrant its having a prominent place in this grand Messianic prophecy. In proof of this important point we direct the attention of our readers to Hebrews, chapters 8, 9 and 10. In those chapters the Spirit of God puts before us in great detail, and with solemn emphasis, the setting aside of the Old Covenant, with all that related to it, the

“worldly sanctuary,” the priesthood, the “ordinances of divine service,” and particularly those many sacrifices (by which a remembrance of sins was made every year); and he puts before us also the confirming of the New Covenant, with its heavenly sanctuary, its spiritual priesthood, its sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, all based upon the atonement of Christ. The great subject of this part of Hebrews, as of the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks, is the Cross.

Hebrews 10 dwells largely upon the sacrifices which were “offered by the law,” emphasizing the imperfection and insufficiency thereof to purge the conscience of the offerers, and declaring that, for that reason, God had no pleasure in therein. It was because of this (“wherefore”) that the Son of God said, “Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God” (verse 7). This relates the passage directly to the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks, which has for its subject the coming of Christ into the world and the purpose for which He came. How full of significance then, and how conclusive for the object of our present study, are the words which follow!

“Above when He said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin Thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; then said He, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second” (Hebrews 10:8–9).

This is the climax of the whole matter. “He taketh away” those sacrifices and oblations wherein God had no pleasure! What perfect agreement with the words of the prophecy, “He shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease”! And when we find, both in the prophecy (Daniel 9:27) and in Hebrews 10, that this setting aside of the sacrifices of the law is connected directly with the confirming of the New Covenant, we are compelled to conclude that the passage in Hebrews is the inspired record of the fulfillment of this Prophecy.

We ask careful attention to the fact that in Hebrews 10:12 it is expressly stated that Christ took away the sacrifices of the law when He offered Himself as the “one sacrifice for sins forever,” ere he “sat down on the right hand of God.” Those sacrifices, therefore, ceased to exist in God’s contemplation from the moment Christ died. From that moment God regards no longer the sacrifices of the law. It is impossible; therefore, that the words “he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease” could refer to any event subsequent to the crucifixion of Christ. To this we purpose to return. But at this point we would simply raise the question, where shall we look for a fulfillment of the prophecy, if we reject that recorded in Hebrews 10:9?

“For One Week”

We come now to the words “for one week” (Daniel 9:27), which have been the means of leading astray some who have undertaken to explain this prophecy.

Manifestly those words are utterly inconsistent with the view that the covenant spoken of is the New Covenant, since that is “everlasting” (Hebrews 13:20). But it is hardly conceivable that any covenant – particularly one of such importance as to have a prominent place in this prophecy – would be

confirmed for such a brief term as seven years Even if we suppose, as some do (though with no proof whatever to support them), that the prophecy refers to some agreement which the supposed "prince" of the future will supposedly make with "many" Jews, permitting them to resume the long abolished sacrifices of the law, can we conceive that such a covenant would be limited to the insignificant term of seven years?

In view of the difficulty presented by the words "for one week," we consulted a Hebrew scholar, asking him if there were any preposition "for" in the original text, or anything to imply it. His reply was that there is no "for" in the text, or anything to imply it. This information removed the chief difficulty; but it left still unsettled the meaning to be given to the words "one week." That further information, however, was supplied by the same Hebrew scholar (formerly a Jewish Rabbis but now a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ), who gave us the English rendering of the Septuagint Version of Daniel 9:27. This Septuagint Version is a translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, made nearly three hundred years before the birth of Christ. It has a claim on our acceptance as an authoritative version, because our Lord and His apostles frequently quoted from it.

Particularly do we ask attention to the fact that when our Lord, in His prophecy on Mount Olivet, quoted from the latter part of Daniel 9:27, He used the words of the Septuagint version, namely, "the abomination of desolation" (Matthew 24:15). Therefore we have a special warrant for following the sense of the Septuagint. We give the English translation of the entire verse as it appears in the Septuagint.

"And one week shall establish the covenant with many; and in the midst of the week my sacrifice and drink offering shall be taken away; and upon the temple shall be the abomination of desolation; and at the end of the time (the age) an end shall be put to the desolation."

From this wording the meaning of the first clause is easily grasped. It is a common form of speech to say for example, "the year 1776 established the independence of the American colonies"; "the year 1918 restored Alsace and Lorraine to France," etc., which is a figurative way of saying that such or such an event took place at the time specified. This form of expression is used when it is desired to call special attention to the year, or other period, in which a certain event occurred. So here, the previous verses having accounted for 69 of the total of 70 weeks, it was most appropriate to emphasize that last week; and especially so for the reason that the last week was not only to fulfill the six predictions of verse 24) but it was to be the climax of all the ages.

The sense of the passage then is this: That the one remaining week would witness the confirming of the covenant (which could only mean the promised New Covenant) with the many; and that, in the midst of that last week, Christ would cause the entire system of sacrifices appointed by the law to cease, by the offering of himself in the all-sufficient sacrifice for sins.

This gives to the last week of the seventy the importance it should have, and which the prophecy as a whole demands, seeing that all the predictions of verse 24 depend upon the events of that last week. On the other hand, to make this last Week refer to a paltry bargain between Antichrist (or a supposed Roman prince) and some apostate Jews of the future, for the renewal (and that for a space of only seven years) of those sacrifices which God has long ago abolished forever, is to intrude into this great scripture a matter of trifling importance, utterly foreign to the subject in hand. and to bring the entire prophecy to an absurdly lame and impotent conclusion.

"My Sacrifices and Drink Offering"

In further elucidation of the sense of verse 27 we would call special attention to the words of the Septuagint Version, "my sacrifice and drink offering shall be taken away." Before the death of Christ the sacrifices of the law were God's. But he would never call His the sacrifices which apostate Jews might institute under agreement with Antichrist. This we deem to be conclusive.

Subsequently to the first appearance of these papers we have had access to Dr. Wm. M. Taylor's excellent book entitled, Daniel the Beloved, in which the above rendering of verse 27 is confirmed. Dr. Taylor gives Dr. Cowle's version of that verse, as follows: "One seven shall make the covenant effective to many. The middle of the seven shall make sacrifice and offerings to cease," etc.

We quote also from Dr. Taylor's comments, which afford confirmation of the conclusions we had already reached:

"It is well known by those acquainted with chronology that Christ was born four years earlier than the first of the era which we call by His name. Therefore, at the year 26 A.D. our Lord would be really thirty years of age; and we know (Luke 3:23) that His baptism, or public manifestation to the people, took place when He 'began to be about thirty years of age'.

"Further, at the end of half a seven of years, or in the middle of the heptad, Messiah, according to this prediction, was to cause the sacrifice and offerings to cease. Now, if we suppose this to refer to the fact that Christ's death, being a real and proper sacrifice for sin, virtually abolished all those under the law, which were only typical, we have here a date harmonizing with that of the Crucifixion. It is as near as possible demonstrable from the Gospel by John that our Savior's public ministry lasted three years and it half (see Robinson's Harmony of the Gospels, Appendix); and this is corroborated by the parable of the barren fig tree (Luke 13:69) which seems to indicate that three years of special privilege to the Jews had run their course, and that a fourth, or a portion of a fourth, was to be given them. Here again, therefore, we have a coincidence of date between the prediction and the history.

"The exposition we have given of this section of Daniel's prediction, find of the manner of its fulfillment is fitted to stir the heart even of the most indifferent. For myself, I feel awed by the sense of the nearness of God,

which comes over me when I read these verses and when I remember how they have been confirmed by the events of which Calvary was the scene. God is in this history of a truth. But let us not forget that it differs from ordinary history only that here we are permitted to read out of the Book of Divine purpose and prescience; whereas in other cases that record is hidden from our eyes. God is in, all history as really and as much as he was in this. How solemn, yet how reassuring also is the thought!"

In view of all this, we would ask, how can any sober minded expositor of the Scriptures set aside the perfect and heart satisfying fulfillment of this wonderful prophecy, so clearly to be seen in "the events of which Calvary was the scene," and propose instead a contrived fulfillment, in a supposed covenant (whereof the Scriptures say not a word) between Antichrist and the Jewish people of the last days, relating to the imagined revival of the long abolished sacrifices of the law?

Therefore we conclude that the modern interpretation which takes Christ and the Cross out of the last verse of the prophecy, where it reaches its climax, and puts Antichrist and his imaginary doings into it, does violence to the Scripture and serious wrong to the people of God.

(To be continued)