

**THE
SEVENTY WEEKS PROPHECY
AND ITS
AMAZINGLY REMARKABLE FULFILMENT
Merle Ruth**

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It is widely acknowledged that Old Testament Messianic prophecy arrives at its zenith in Daniel 9:24-27. This marvellously comprehensive prediction, appearing four and one half centuries before the Christ event, is unique in that it pinpoints with God-like precision, the time of our Lord's redeeming death. Declaring beforehand what no human wisdom could have known, it stands, therefore, as an unshakeable monument to the divine inspiration of holy writ.

The Setting of this "prophecy of prophecies" should first be carefully noted. (The reader is encouraged to open his Bible to Daniel 9.) The prophet Daniel has learned from Jeremiah 25:11 and 29:10 that the divinely predetermined duration of "the desolations of Jerusalem," meaning the Babylonian Captivity, was to be 70 years (verse 2). Although he does not specifically mention it, he surely would also have read about Cyrus in the Book of Isaiah (44:28-45:1) where Cyrus is identified as the shepherd whom God would use to liberate His people for their return to Jerusalem. Cyrus had already come on the scene. And nearly 70 years have passed since the first group of Jews, including Daniel himself, had been taken from Jerusalem. Daniel, concerned for the restoration of his people, turns to God in fervent prayer. Making himself one with his people, he confesses their sin (vs. 3-8), acknowledges the righteousness and justice of God in His treatment of Israel (vs. 9-14), pleads with Him to turn away His wrath (vs. 15-16), and then concludes his prayer with a fervent appeal that the Lord would again redeem His people (vs. 17-19).

While Daniel is still engaged in prayer, Gabriel comes from God to make Daniel wise in understanding (vs. 20-23). A general preview of a succession of world empires had already been granted to Daniel. Now, in the passage we are about to focus upon (vs. 24-27), God supplies Daniel with a glimpse of Israel's future. For the convenience of the reader, this remarkable passage is herewith reproduced.

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. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 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, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. (Daniel 9:24-27).

This further revelation specified the time period, “seventy weeks” (verse 24), during which Israel was destined to see the fulfilment of the Messianic promises. In its entirety, the new revelation (vs. 24-27) was a prediction of the time when Christ’s advent should take place, of the work of redemption which He should accomplish, and of the further desolation that should fall upon Israel because of their rejection of Him.

This expression, “seventy weeks” can be misleading to the casual reader. The Hebrew word that is here rendered “weeks” literally means “sevens.” Seventy sevens of days would equal only 490 days, a relatively short period of time. But among the Jews, this expression could just as properly be viewed as meaning seventy sevens of years, not 490 days but 490 years. History has confirmed that this was the intended meaning. It was this same year-for-a day principle that was used in Numbers 14:34.

Because of unbelief, the Israelites were to wander for 40 years in the wilderness, a year for each day that the spies were absent searching out the land. Nearly all Bible interpreters, regardless of their eschatological view, agree with this conclusion, namely, that the seventy weeks mean a period of 490 years.

The starting point for this God-determined time period is stated in verse 25. It is given, however, not in the form of a date but in the form of an event, namely, the time of “the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem.” What commandment (word) is here in view?

The reader needs to bear in mind that when Daniel received this prophetic revelation the city of Jerusalem and the temple were in ruins. He and his people were captives in far away Babylon. But the time of their deliverance was very close at hand. Daniel had learned this from “books,” please note the plural form. In addition to the Book of Jeremiah, Daniel had undoubtedly read also from the Book of Isaiah where God, speaking of Cyrus who was yet unborn, names him as the one who would release the captive Jews and rebuild their city and temple. Note these remarkable pronouncements: “Thus saith the Lord. . . 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’” (Isaiah 44:24, 28). “I have raised him (Cyrus) up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways; he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives” (Isaiah 45:13).

And so Daniel would have known from the prophecies of Isaiah that it was Cyrus who would issue that command of which Gabriel spoke. Now Cyrus was at that time co-ruler with, and sub-ordinate to “Darius the-Mede” (Daniel 9:1). But in less than two years Cyrus became the sole ruler of the Medo-Persian Empire. Imagine how that development must have thrilled the heart of Daniel!

The very first year of the reign of Cyrus witnessed the issuance of the famous decree which gave new existence to the Jewish nation. Because of its significance, God made that decree a part of the divine record. “Now in the first year of Cyrus, King of Persia, that the Word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of

Cyrus, King of Persia, that he made a proclamation. . . saying, ‘thus saith Cyrus, King of Persia, the Lord God of heaven. . . hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem. . . who is there among you (Jews). . . let him go up. . . and build’” (Ezra 1:1-3). This proclamation is expressly called by Ezra a “commandment” (Ezra 6:14).

The immediate effect of the going forth of this commandment was that a large number of Israelites “went up out of the captivity. . . and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah” (Ezra 2:1, 64, 65), and other companies came later. This is precisely what Daniel was praying for and looking for.

Here then is our answer. The starting point for those 490 years was the decree of Cyrus releasing the Jewish captives to return and rebuild. That decree was issued in the year 457 B.C. (The reader may note that this does not correspond with the “received chronology” of James Usher and other similar chronologies. Those chronologies are in error, as a consequence of the acceptance of the unreliable chronology of Ptolemy in preference to the chronology of the Bible itself and of Daniel in particular. (For more on this subject, consult the book, *The Wonders of Bible Chronology*, by Philip Mauro.) That memorable year, 457 B.C. marked both the ending of the seventy year captivity and the beginning of the seventy-sevens of years announced by the angel Gabriel. The longer period begins where the shorter period ends. In effect, Daniel has been told, “the captivity has been 70 years; the period between the captivity and the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of His Kingdom will be seven times that long.” Although that day would be long in coming, it held the glorious prospect of a deliverance from the far greater spiritual captivity of sin and Satan.

Looking closer, one discovers that these seventy weeks of years are subdivided into 3 periods consisting of 7 weeks, 62 weeks, and 1 week. Translated into years, that would be the equivalent of 49 years, 434 years, and 7 years. Adding together those three figures gives a total of 490 years.

The first two of these subdivisions are in view in verse 25. The work of rebuilding occupied the first segment of seven “weeks,” that is, 49 years. This reconstruction period was indeed characterized by “troublesome times” (verse 25). These troubles are reflected in the Book of Ezra. There were adversaries who complained to the Persian overlords 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). Nevertheless, Jerusalem and the temple were rebuilt and God’s last messages to the returnees were given through Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. This first subdivision takes us then to the close of the Old Testament era leaving the second subdivision (62 “weeks,” 434 years) for that long silent stretch of years between Malachi and John the Baptist. Adding together these first two subdivisions gives a total of 483 years, the equivalent of 69 “weeks,” one “week” (7 years) short of the full seventy weeks.

Timewise, it is here predicted that those two periods, totalling 483 years, will reach forward “*unto the Messiah the Prince*” (verse 25). This surely is a reference to Christ (Christ is the exact Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word Messiah; both terms mean “the anointed one”). From a purely chronological standpoint, this remarkable prophecy, reaching into the then-distant future, brought to completion the total count of years from Adam to Christ. But more important still is the fact that it brightened, in the hearts of the faithful, the flame of holy expectation! For it spoke of the greater Deliverer, of whom Cyrus was a remarkable type.

With a prophecy like this on record, it really should not come to us as a surprise to learn that when John came baptising, “the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not” (Luke 3:15). Although he quickly denied that he was the Christ, the time for Christ’s appearance was drawing very close.

A proper question at this point would be — what was the precise occasion in the earthly lifetime of our Lord to which this stretch of 483 years brings us? God clearly intended this prophecy to be understood for verse 25 says, “know therefore, and understand.” Just as it was possible to find the designated starting point, so it should likewise be possible to find the terminal point. A clue is supplied in the description of the Coming One. As noted before, “the Messiah” means “the anointed one.” 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 which is made prominent in all four Gospel accounts. It was at His baptism in Jordan that our Lord was “anointed” for His ministry. Returning from His baptism in the power of the Spirit, our Lord went into the synagogue at Nazareth and read those 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 4:18, 21) He thus declared Himself to be at that time, “*the Anointed One*,” that is, “the Messiah.” Further witness to this fact is borne by the apostle Peter who speaks of “how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power (Acts 10:38). When, therefore, the Lord Jesus had been “anointed” with the Holy Spirit and had been “made manifest to Israel” by the witness of John the Baptist, then the words of this phase of the prophecy — “unto the Messiah” were fulfilled. From that day, down to His death, He was constantly before the people of Israel in His Messianic character. It seems obvious, therefore, that the intended terminal point for the combined first and second subdivisions of this prophecy ($49 + 434 = 483$ years) would be the occasion of our Lord’s baptism. How does this add up date wise? Amazingly accurate! Spanning four long silent centuries, those 483 years reach down to A.D. 26, the very year of our Lord’s baptism! Significantly, God saw to it that special mention was made of the fact that Jesus was then 30 years of age (Luke 3:23). The time of His anointing could thus be pinpointed.

The above calculation takes into account the needed chronological correction. Many readers will be aware of the fact that the originator of the calendar system of the Christian era (a monk named Dionysius who completed the system in A.D. 532) intended the year A.D. 1 to correspond with the year of our Lord’s birth. But because of a miscalculation, the year A.D. 1 was fixed four years too late! In that year the Lord was already four years old. This would make his 30th year correspond to A.D. 26.

In addition to the forgoing evidence, there is this further observation: This epoch (His Baptism), and this alone, is formally dated in the New Testament Scriptures. Another writer sees in these facts, the following significance. “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. (See Luke 3:1-3). 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 noteworthy, too, 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 could well be an indication that the things which were to be consummated within the time limit of seventy “weeks” were not matters which concerned the Jews only, but were of worldwide interest having to do with the welfare of all mankind. With the appearance of John the Baptist, a new era was beginning. The change at this precise point from terms of Jewish to terms of Gentile chronology (Luke 3:1-3) is very significant.

There is then convincing evidence that 69 of the 70 prophetic weeks were completed at the baptism of our Lord and His manifestation to Israel through the testimony of John the Baptist. This leaves but “one week” (Daniel 9:27) of the total prophetic period here in view. The very manner in which that last week is set off from the rest for special and separate mention indicates its surpassing importance.

More than anything else, the happenings of the seventieth week give color and content to this whole prophecy. In preface-like fashion, six things are enumerated in verse 24 that clearly anticipate the climactic seventieth week. These six specified things appear to be closely related one to another, for they are all connected by the conjunction “and.” They give the substance of the prophecy in condensed form.

First, seventy weeks will be required “to finish the transgression.” There is a sense in which the atonement of Christ “finished” the original transgression by which sin and death came into the world. That may be the meaning here in view.

However, the context surrounding this prophecy seems to point to a different meaning. The transgression of Israel had long been the burden of the prophets. The Babylonian captivity climaxed a series of hardships that were due to their transgression. Daniel’s own prayer recorded in the forepart of this very chapter, includes this confession: “Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law. . . therefore the curse is poured upon us” (verse 11). But Gabriel is herewith informing Daniel that the full measure of Israel’s “transgression” was yet to be completed. How? By the rejection and crucifixion of their promised Messiah, Israel would within seventy weeks, “finish the transgression.” The idea is — they would bring their transgres-

sion to its ultimate climax.

In favor of this meaning is the striking similarity between the words of Gabriel and those of the Lord Jesus recorded in Matthew 23:32, 35. “Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. . . that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth.” Implied in this declaration is the fact that the time had come “to finish the transgression” and that the predicted desolations (Daniel 9:26, 27) were to fall on that generation. Divine inspiration led the apostle Paul to employ similar language when writing about the unbelieving Jews of his generation. “Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always, for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost (1 Thessalonians 2:16). That generation of Jews, having finished the transgression, did indeed experience God’s wrath “to the uttermost” in the destruction of Jerusalem and in their subsequent miseries.

Secondly, “To make an end of sins” was to find fulfilment within this time period. John the Baptist spoke of Christ as “the Lamb of God which taketh away (in a provisional way) the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Concerning Christ and His work, the writer to the Hebrews pays tribute in the highest possible terms. “. . . But now once in the end the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Hebrews 9:26). In the providence of God, the same act that constituted the crowning sin of Israel served also “to make an end of sins” by virtue of the perfect atonement it effected. It “perfected forever them that are sanctified” (Hebrews 10:14) so that God could say “their sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrews 10:17).

Thirdly, this divinely measured time period was to see the fulfilment of God’s purpose “to make reconciliation for iniquity.” The need for reconciliation arises from the fact that man is by nature not only a sinner but also an enemy of God (Romans 5:8, 10). As a sinner he needs to be justified; as an enemy he needs to be reconciled. This concept of reconciliation relates especially to the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Reconciliation is the means whereby one-time rebels are transformed into loyal subjects of Christ whose coming paved the way for the establishment of that kingdom on earth. It was with this note that Jesus began his public ministry. “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand” (Mark

1:15). Christ, at that moment, must have had in view this particular prophecy for only Daniel pinpoints the time of His coming. And in the reckoning of God that was destined to be the commencement of a time during which rebels would be reconciled and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son on a greater scale than ever before.

In the fourth place, before the expiration of seventy weeks, a work was to be done, and now has been done, which would "bring in everlasting righteousness." This too is one of the blessed results of our Saviour's redeeming work. "By the obedience of one (Christ) shall many be made righteous" (Romans 5:19). Jesus Christ has been made unto us ". . . righteousness . . ." (1 Corinthians 1:30). "By His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Hebrews 9:12). The everlasting covenant, which Christ came to "confirm" (Daniel 9:27), provides for an everlasting righteousness.

In the councils of heaven it was also foreseen that seventy weeks (of years) would suffice "to seal up the vision and prophecy." Here is another instance where one hesitates to be dogmatic because it is difficult to ascertain the intended meaning. We know that documents were sealed to show that they were authentic. In that sense, Christ, in fulfilling the many prophecies that were written concerning Him "sealed" Old Testament Messianic prophecy.

Another possible interpretation would follow this line. For those Jews who rejected Jesus as the Messiah, the Bible became as a closed book. They became spiritually blind — their vision was "sealed up." That judgement in this form had fallen on previous generations is reflected in the words of Isaiah 29:11. "And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed." How sad, yet how true! Wilful unbelief always produces spiritual blindness.

And now number six. Before it expires, this time frame will see the fulfilment of the divine purpose "to anoint the most holy." To what does this point? A possible answer could be found in the already-alluded-to anointing of God's Son for His mission. It would surely be fitting to refer to Him as "the most holy." It is also possible that this might envision the Pentecostal outpouring of God's Spirit upon the spiritual body of Christ, His followers. Concerning them, it is written: "the temple of God is holy,

which temple ye are.” (1 Corinthians 3:17) This latter option has in its favor the fact that it would bring the chronological sequence of these six happenings to a fitting climax. The establishment of the Church of the New Covenant was the climax of the mission of the Messiah.

These six predictions which we have now considered in some detail, were marvellously fulfilled at the first coming of Christ, and in association with His being “cut off, but not for himself” (verse 26). This surely is an allusion to our Lord’s crucifixion. The terminology is strikingly similar to that employed by the prophet Isaiah. “For He was cut off out of the land of the living” (Isaiah 53:8). It is indeed true that it was not “for himself” that our Lord was cut off. Even Pilate found no fault in Him. “Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). It was “the just (dying) for the unjust (1 Peter 3:18). There is also in this instance, as indicated in the marginal reading, an acceptable alternate reading, namely, “cut off, and have nothing.” It did indeed appear, to the natural eye, as though He had achieved nothing, as though His life ended in failure. Either rendering constitutes a true prediction.

When did this cutting off occur? It is expressly stated that He shall be cut off “after threescore and two weeks” (which followed the preceding seven weeks, making 69 weeks in all). This places the crucifixion of Christ within the third subdivision, the 70th week. The first two subdivisions of the divinely predetermined time period, totalling 69 weeks (of years), were to reach only “unto the Messiah,” to the time of His baptism, not to the time of His crucifixion.

Additional support for this conclusion is supplied in verse 27. A clue is here supplied that pinpoints even more closely the time of the long foreseen death of the Son of God. “In the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.” What an amazingly accurate prediction! Half way through the last “week” (the 7 years corresponding to the span between year 483 and year 490 of this prophecy) would take us 3 ½ years beyond our Lord’s baptism. Those 3 ½ years are familiar to every Bible student, for that, as shown from the Gospel according to John, was the approximate, if not the exact duration of the ministry of our Lord. Accordingly, from His anointing to His death would be half a “week,” and His crucifixion would then occur “in the midst of the (70th) week.”

Here then is a prophecy that predicted not only the time of the appearance of the Messiah but also the time of His death. There was a definite time in the plan of God when Jesus would die. When finally Jesus did begin His ministry, He spoke repeatedly of an approaching “hour” that was uniquely “His hour.” Furthermore, He appeared to be grieved by the fact that His own people, having access as they did to this prophecy, were still so uninformed and unaware of the fact that they were living in a time of unprecedented importance. Jesus is reported to have said as He wept over Jerusalem. “thou knewest not the time of thy visitation” (Luke 19:44).

As the book of Hebrews amply shows, Christ caused “the sacrifice and oblation to cease” by becoming the final sacrifice. That “one Sacrifice for sins forever” brought the Levitical system of sacrifices to an end. This result was dramatically depicted by the action of God in rending the temple veil, Although the Jews put it back together and until 70 A.D., continued their sacrificial ceremonies, it was all to no avail. In the reckoning of God, that once divinely sanctioned system was taken away and replaced by “a sacrifice of nobler name and richer blood.”

Another aspect of the work of Christ alluded to in verse 27 is His confirming the covenant. “He shall confirm the covenant with many.” The covenant here in view is the New Covenant foretold by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:31-34) and “the many” with whom it was confirmed consisted of the believing remnant in Israel. This use of the word “many” occurs in other similar passages. “My righteous servant shall justify many” (Isaiah 53:11). Again, “This Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel” (Luke 2:34). 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 shedding of His blood upon the Cross.

The very words of this clause were used in Christ’s institution of the Communion ordinance in the upper room when He spoke of His blood of the New Testament being shed “for many.” The word “testament” here and the word “covenant” are translations of the same Greek word.

The expression “for one week” can be misleading because in the original there is no preposition “for.” This “one week” indicates not a limited time for which the covenant was to last, but rather the period within which the covenant was to be confirmed with the remnant of Israel, namely, the

one remaining week of the seventy.

We come now to the darker aspect of this many-sided prophecy. This appears in the fact that it not only foretells the crowning sin of Israel, the putting to death of her Messiah; but it also speaks of the great and terrible judgment that was to follow as a consequence. The first intimation of this occurs in the middle of verse 26. "And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." Again, the correspondence between prophecy and history is strikingly accurate! This prediction was most certainly fulfilled in the capture and destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Roman general Titus and his army in 70 A.D. 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 councils of God. It is highly probable that the Lord Jesus had this very passage in view 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). Included in the "things that are written" were the things foretold here (Daniel 9:26), about the coming desolations.

There is an obvious parallel between verses 26 and 27 (of Daniel 9). The forepart of both verses speak of the Messiah, while the latter parts, although somewhat obscure, speak of desolations determined (decreed) by God. The Jewish nation, by the time of the latter half of the first century A.D., had filled their cup of iniquity full. They had killed the Messiah and persecuted those He subsequently sent unto them. What Jesus said in the parable of the marriage feast perfectly fits the divine judgment that fell upon Jerusalem. They rejected the King's invitation and killed the messengers He sent unto them. Consequently "when the King heard thereof; he was wroth, and he sent forth His armies and destroyed those murderers and burned up their city" (Matthew 22:7).

Now a few words about that very obscure expression: "for the over-spreading of abominations" (verse 27). The Septuagint translation gives this rendering, "abomination of desolation." When our Lord, in His Olivet discourse refers to this prophecy of Daniel, He employs the Septuagint rendering. "When ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth un-

derstand) then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains” (Mark 13:14). Compare this with the parallel statement in Luke. “When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh” (Luke 21:20). The only possibly correct deduction from this comparison is that the Roman army, which was to accomplish the desolation of the city and the land as predicted in Daniel 9:26 and 27, was “the abomination of desolation.”

In the minds of some, this exposition may seem to leave 3 ½ years, the remainder of the 70th week, unaccounted for. We would ask such persons to bear in mind that in this prophecy the unit of time measure is a heptad (a seven), not a year. If one thinks of the seventieth “week” as a period of seven years, then it may appear as though there are 3 ½ unaccounted for years. On the other hand, if one takes the prophecy as it is given, not in terms of years but in terms of heptads, then it can readily be seen that *all the seventy heptads are accounted for*. It first accounts for 69 heptads (which reach unto the Messiah) and then it accounts specifically for the one remaining heptad by telling what was to happen in the midst of it. Every part of the prophetic period is thus accounted for. For further clarification, suppose a prophecy should call for the happening of a certain event on a specified day, and the thing were to happen about noon of that day. Would not the prophecy be regarded as fulfilled? Concerning His approaching death, our Lord declared that “in three days” He would rise again, had He arisen during the first hour of the third day, His prediction would have been fulfilled. The remaining hours of that day would have been without significance for the purpose of the prophecy. Thus it is with the Seventy Weeks prophecy. It does not necessarily call for a specific event to mark the end of the Last week.

It is nevertheless true that the remaining 3 ½ years did constitute a special period and that their termination was seemingly the signal for a very marked change in God’s program. For there are definite indications that the time span during which the Gospel was preached exclusively to the Jews measured 3 ½ years. During that time many thousands of Jews were saved including “a great company of the Priests” (Acts 6:7). But by that time there had been a hardening of unbelief among the nonbelieving Jews. They had rejected both the Messiah and that Spirit who came with Pente-

costal power and grace. Although the missionary policy of the Apostolic church continued to be “to the Jew first,” there did occur at that time, a very definite changeover to an effort to reach the Gentiles. Perhaps the most definite indication of this new direction was the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. He was God’s “chosen vessel” to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles. Significantly, many sources give A.D. 33 as the year of his conversion. That was seven years after the baptism of Jesus and would mark the end of the 490 year period of God’s special favor upon Israel. One brother stated it well when he wrote thus: “The Seventy Week’s were a period of time at the end of which the Jews would no longer have a favored position in the plan of God.”

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. Neither is the time of the predicted judgment specified. Thus the prophecy left room for the exercise of mercy even to that evil generation.

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God? How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!” (Romans 11:33)

“Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:18).

One writer has made this interesting observation. The same angel, Gabriel, through whom Daniel received this profound revelation, was the heavenly messenger who announced the approach of its fulfilment to both Zacharias and Mary (Luke 1:11-19, 26)

There yet remains much that God has “determined” to do. “Yet a little while and He that shall come will come” (Hebrews 10:37). The time of the First Advent could be known. The time of the second, cannot. “Be ye therefore ready.” (Luke 12:40)

PART TWO

Many readers will recognize that the foregoing exposition finds in this passage no allusion to the complex endtime eschatological system envisioned by the popular prophecy teachers of our day.

Many claim that the six things foretold in verse 24 have not yet been fulfilled; that the 70th week is separated from the former 69 weeks by a gigantic gap of an as-yet-undetermined length; that the postponed 70th week will be the time for “The Great Tribulation;” that the “he” of verse 27 instead of being Christ, is the supposed end-time Antichrist; that the “confirming the covenant with many,” instead of being a reference to Christ and His establishing of the New Covenant, has in view the making of covenant with the Jews by the Antichrist after the rapture of the Church; that “causing the sacrifice and oblation to cease,” instead of being the past glorious achievement of the Lamb of God, will come about through the instrumentality of the Devil as the Antichrist breaks a covenant he supposedly will make with the Jews, and that instead of envisioning only the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D., the prophecy also has in focus a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem along with a restoration of animal sacrifice. That, in brief, and allowing for some variations, is the futurist “interpretation.”

From whence is all this derived? What are the supposed grounds for these assertions? What degree of validity lies behind these deductions?

The first and most obvious difficulty with this “interpretation” is its seemingly deliberate oversight of the implications of those very significant words, “after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off” (verse 26). When then did that occur? By what possible logic can one escape the inevitable conclusion? But to admit that it occurred in the 70th week is to admit that the 70th week is already history (fulfilled prophecy). This admission, however, cannot be made without undermining the whole dispensational structure. But honest interpretation requires that the facts be faced even though it does require giving up a pet theory.

Note again that three things are said to occur after 69 weeks had expired: 1.) The Messiah would be off, 2.) He shall confirm the covenant with many and 3.) He shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease. These things occurred during the 70th week. For it is specifically stated

that His causing the sacrifice to cease would occur in the midst of the week, meaning, the 70th week. How then can it possibly be viewed as not having yet begun even now?

To some readers of these lines this thought may arise: “Yes, but are there not differences of opinion about the starting date for these seventy weeks? Can you be real sure that all the calculations you alluded to were correct?” This is a true observation and a fair question. However, the fact we are looking at now is not dependent on a correct starting date. If an event is said to occur *after* sixty-nine weeks, its occurrence is *after* sixty-nine weeks *regardless of when they begin*.

Those who admit this fact but still maintain it did not occur in the seventieth week create for themselves this problem. Not only do they arbitrarily insert into God’s measured timeline an unmeasured gap of time, but they also give the crucifixion of our Lord (the most important event in God’s redemptive program) no place whatever in any of the weeks of this divinely-given timeline. On them rests the burden of explaining why an event of such magnitude would find no place in any of the seventy weeks.

Another look makes it apparent that the futurist theory distorts the meaning of that clause in verse 26; “and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.” This remarkably accurate prediction obviously had its fulfilment in 70 A.D. when the Roman army under Titus (the prince of verse 26) destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. The advocates of the theory now in focus, while admitting the undeniable, that Jerusalem was then destroyed, emphasize that the destruction was wrought only by “the people of the prince” (the Romans), *insisting that the prince himself is still to appear*. Supposedly Titus was not this prince; supposedly this prince should be identified as the endtime Antichrist. Thus they separate the prince from his people by a period that has already grown to nearly 2000 years. But the passage does not say nor even imply that the people were to come at one time and their prince at another.

Support for this theory has been drawn from the clause “the prince that shall come,” as though the use of the word “shall” points to his yet future appearing. It is indeed true that the coming of the prince was future in Daniel’s time, but so was also the destruction of the city and the sanctuary. No one with proper historical perspective should take a statement that was

future when written, and on that basis alone, millenniums later, insist that it is yet future.

Dispensationalists appear to be so determined to ignore the fact that this part of the prophecy was fulfilled in 70 A.D. that they must not only find a future prince to fulfill it, but must provide also an empire for that prince, and thus must teach the revival and reconstruction of the ancient Roman Empire.

As already implied, the futurist view now under examination severs the predictions of verse 27 from Christ and arbitrarily transfers them to some future antichrist. This necessitates identifying the “he” of verse 27 (“he shall confirm the covenant”) with the “prince” of verse 26 (“the prince that shall come”). As already explained, the covenant named in verse 27 is the New Covenant which for seven years was confirmed with the believing remnant — for 3 ½ years by the Messiah in person, then for 3 ½ years by His apostles. Laying all this most logical interpretation aside, many prophecy teachers contend that the person here in view is not Christ, and the covenant here named is not the New Covenant. *On this slender thread* is built the widely proclaimed and widely believed “fact” that the Antichrist will make a covenant with the Jews for seven years (allowing them to make sacrifices in a rebuilt temple at Jerusalem) and then half way through the seven years (the supposed 70th week) he will break his agreement with them.

But by what rule of interpretation can the “he” of verse 27 be identified with a yet future antichrist? How can the introduction of the Antichrist into this passage be substantiated? The context does mention a “prince” that was to bring his armies and destroy the city and the sanctuary, but such could not possibly refer to some yet future leader for history abundantly shows that the armies that destroyed Jerusalem and the temple were the Roman armies under the direction of Titus in 70 A.D. There is in this passage no allusion whatever to an end-time Antichrist!

The Messiah is the subject around which the entire passage revolves. The repeated “he” of v. 27 is clearly a reference to Him. The chain of thought follows this natural sequence: “Messiah shall be cut off . . . He shall confirm the covenant . . . He shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease.” The one great unifying theme of verses 26 and 27 is Christ and His

work. Let us not take away from Christ the glory of the fullness of His redeeming work.

Lastly, the futurist view now being examined stands condemned because of the way it tampers with God's measuring line. As indicated in v. 24, the declared purpose of the prophecy was to foretell the exact time the occurrence of certain things which are of supreme importance to mankind. Consequently it contains a measuring line of "determined" length. The full length of that line was declared to be 490 years.

It is universally acknowledged that the events predicted for the first 7 "week" period and the second 62 "week" period have taken place. Yet in many circles it is denied that the events of the 70th "week" have followed those of the 69th. But all the other "weeks" followed each other in sequence as continuous, consecutive weeks. Why put a time gap between the second and third subdivisions when it is readily acknowledged that there was none between the first and second subdivision? Why separate the 70th week the 69th by a gap of roughly 2000 years? Since when doesn't 70 logically follow 69?

There is no authority in Scripture for the assumption that the 70th "week" is still in the future. Nevertheless, dispensationalists have arbitrarily inserted that gap because they view the Church as existing during "a great parenthesis" in God's program. Support for their "postponement theory" is nowhere to be found, so they have arbitrarily extracted that support from this passage. But in so doing they have destroyed the chronological sequence and value of the prophecy. For to "postpone" the 70th week to a humanly unknowable time in the yet distant future changes God's measuring line from one of "determined" length to one of indeterminate length. Instead of a measuring line of 490 years, we have one which already is over 2400 years in length and is growing longer every day! This writer fears that some who allow for this insertion of a huge time gap between the 69th and 70th week do so without realizing that they are accepting a major item in the dispensational package.

One means of attempting to justify the insertion of this gigantic gap into God's "determined" measuring line is by reference to the "stopped-clock" theory. It is claimed that God's prophetic clock stopped ticking

when Christ was crucified and will not start ticking again until God resumes His program for Israel. The ticking clock supposedly represents “Jewish” time. The so-called “mystery parenthesis” is “time out.”

Scofield, a foremost disseminator of the leaven of dispensationalism, put it like this: “Now there is great principle concerning prophetic chronology. God never reckons time with the Jews when they are out of their land. Then there is always an interlude. With Israel out of the land, God’s Jewish clock stops. It begins again when Israel is back where Israel ought to be.”

But is it true that God only counts prophetic time when the Jews are in their own land? No! Daniel from his study of prophetic writings understood that the length of Babylonian Captivity would be 70 years. At that time, the Israelites were “out of their land.” Yet obviously the prophetic clock had not stopped ticking for the captivity did end after 70 years just as was prophesied. And to some such persons it seemingly never occurred that Israel was still in the land for nearly 40 years after the clock supposedly stopped ticking at the time of the crucifixion of Christ (from 30 to 70 A.D.).

The passing of the years has further demonstrated the unreliability of this theory. On May 15, 1948, a state of Israel was formed in Palestine. Israel was now back in its own land. Since the stopped-clock was the only thing that kept the final seven years of Daniel’s prophecy from being fulfilled, then the ticking clock and the 70th week should have started May 15, 1948. By now it is obvious that someone’s reckoning was wrong.

Let us then beware of breaking the obvious intended continuity of the Seventy weeks. Imagine yourself cutting off a yard stick at the 35th inch mark and then attaching a piece of elastic to the two pieces. You could then stretch it to your own liking. But by so doing you would destroy the measurement of a yard. It is lamentable that many otherwise good men are taking this kind of liberty when they handle this passage and its marvellous prophetic revelation.

Merle Ruth
Annville, PA 17003