

MURRAY MCLELLAN

**A PROPHECY
OF THE CHRIST
GABRIEL'S PROPHECY OF
THE 70 WEEKS**

**A STUDY OF
DANIEL 9:24-27**

A Prophecy of the Christ

Gabriel's Prophecy of the 70 Weeks

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Grace Fellowship

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Foreword

Presented by Murray McLellan, an unworthy sinner upon whom grace unimaginable has been poured by the kindest of Kings. I do not claim to be, nor seek to be original in the following manuscript. I seek to magnify and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Unto him belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

*“Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your 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 vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.*

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.

And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;

And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined.

Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.”

(Dan. 9:24-27, NKJV)

Introduction

For years, I approached this passage of Scripture - this prophecy given to Daniel by God himself through his messenger, the angel Gabriel – through the lens of the common gap theory, which pushes the fulfillment of most of this prophecy to some time in the far distant future. However, an understanding of the seventieth week as an event yet to take place is not the only interpretation of this passage. You may not accept the view that I propose, but I hope you will examine it and see that it is indeed a very plausible interpretation. In fact, the interpretation that I will present to you fits the context of the rest of Scripture, which is centered on Jesus Christ – how he would suffer and then enter his glory (see Luke 24:25-27).

I would strongly encourage you to take the time to read the entire book of Daniel in order to study the prophecy of the seventy weeks in the context of the whole book. When you do, you will see that time and time again, God has had but one answer for Daniel's plight in the land of Babylon. For every terror, for every trial, for every impasse, God has sent word of Messiah to the weary prophet. From his youth, all the way to his old age, Daniel has been granted hope and assurance in the promise of a better day and a better One.

The saints of all the ages are a people of groaning, looking, and trusting in God - in the promise of a Seed. From Adam's first transgression, the promise

of God has echoed among the saints of the true and living God: *“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise [literally “crush”] your head, and you shall bruise His heel”* (Genesis 3:15).

Through-out the Old Testament Scriptures, God continues to open up a view of this Seed - this promised Deliverer who will come. For every wanderer, for every pilgrim, for every perplexed soul, for every grieving sinner, the answer has been the same through the ages - “Look to the promise of Jesus Christ!”

So, what should we expect as an answer from heaven, when Daniel is in the midst of great grief and prayer for his people, and cries for forgiveness and mercy, but yet another view of our Savior! How swift is our God to dispatch his angels (and his human messengers) to weary, weeping, praying, poor saints on earth, to speak comforting words of Jesus to them.

That’s what our God does in this passage. See how the ever-faithful God hastens Gabriel to Daniel’s prayer closet to give him sweet images of the Christ - so that in his sorrow, grief, and shame, he might be comforted in the promised Savior.

God has one answer for all peoples of all ages - Jesus Christ! In ages past, God’s answer was - “Wait for the Messiah!” Now, in our age of fulfillment, it is “Look to Jesus Christ! He is Lord! He has come and is soon returning!” It should be part of our daily experience, as the expectant bride, to be musing and dreaming of our beloved Lord.

As we begin our study, may the Lord give us an encouraging glimpse of himself in all his splendor.

The book of Daniel contains a grand presentation of the sovereignty of God. From beginning to end, the sovereignty of God is displayed. As we approach

this specific prophecy of the seventy weeks, given to Daniel through the messenger Gabriel, we want to establish some ground rules:

1. We do not want to accept any interpretation that rests on mere probability. We want to accept only that which is supported by direct proof from Scripture. It is far better to have no explanation at all for a difficult passage than to accept one which may turn out to be wrong. It is not easy to give up an idea when once we have committed ourselves to it, and for that reason we must be careful in what explanations we accept.
2. Any “proof” used to support any interpretation should come from the Scripture itself. Any information essential for the interpretation of every passage of Scripture is to be found somewhere in the Bible itself. We cannot take other historical writings or documents outside of the Bible and make them the foundation upon which we set the Bible in order to interpret it. We are not to “fit” the Bible to outside sources. Rather, all other sources must be looked at and judged by the Scriptures, which is the only reliable source of truth. Jesus said in his prayer to the Father, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your Word is truth” (John 17:17).

Therefore, we are not going to try to fit this passage into the history books and ask, *“How are we going to read this in light of the record of history given to us by men?”* That would make the historical writings of men the grid of truth through which we interpret the Bible. I believe it is the other way around. The Scripture is the bedrock truth. It will give us what we need to know. It will explain that which is absolutely true. Those who are enlightened by the Holy Spirit have all that is needed to interpret the seventy weeks passage, and it is found within the pages of Scripture itself.

The Time Frame: Seventy Weeks

Let's look once again at our text of Scripture.

*“Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your 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 vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the most holy.”*

[Within the time frame given - the seventy weeks - these things are going to happen.]

“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.

And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined. Then he shall confirm a covenant with many [for] one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.”

(Daniel 9:24-27, NKJV)

Note: The word “for” is set off in the above passage because there is no word “for” in the Hebrew text.

This is the prophecy of the seventy weeks. It is NOT the prophecy of four-hundred ninety years. There is a significant difference. God has established clearly that this is a prophecy of seventy weeks, not a prophecy of four-hundred ninety years. The grouping of the time periods is more significant than the total time period. The weeks mentioned here are actually weeks of years and not days. The Hebrew word that is translated weeks is simply a word that means a group of seven. Gabriel proclaims that seventy ‘seven year periods’ have been established by God to bring about the things mentioned in verse 24. Although this seems a little odd to us, it would not have been to the original hearers. The Jews kept track, not only of weeks of days as we do, but also weeks of years. They had not only sabbath days, but they had also sabbath years. The sabbath year came every seventh year. That was also considered as one week - one week of years. The Hebrew calendar then, had not only weeks of days, but also weeks of years (e.g. after seven weeks of years comes the year of Jubilee. See Lev. 25:1-22).

In the other places in the book of Daniel where Daniel uses the term weeks (e.g. Dan. 10:2 and 10:3), the Hebrew text specifically uses the statement “weeks of days.” The phrase “of days” is added, I believe, to clearly distinguish this as weeks of days as opposed to the weeks (of years) used in chapter 9.

Though the total extent of the seventy weeks of years is four-hundred ninety years, it does not have to be a complete four-hundred ninety years. It may be, but it does not have to be. Let me try to explain.

If I stated that something would happen in the seventieth week, does it have to occur in the four-hundred ninetieth year? As long as it happens some time within the time frame of the seventieth week, it doesn’t matter whether it occurs at the very beginning of that week, the very end, or sometime in between. In the case of this prophecy, it is to be fulfilled sometime between the four-hundred eighty-third and four-hundred ninetieth years. This is the last set of seven years; the seventieth week. As long as the predicted events occurred sometime within that time frame of the final week of years, the prophecy would be fulfilled.

I hope I haven’t confused anyone yet. There is a reason why this needs to be understood, but that will come up later. I’ll try to illustrate this for those of you who are having difficulty dealing with the whole concept of weeks of years. If you have grasped the concept, just skip down to the next paragraph. If I say that I’ll be at your house in six weeks (I’m talking our normal weeks of days!), does that mean it will be in exactly forty-two days? It could be, but it doesn’t have to be. Day thirty-six begins the sixth week. Anytime within that sixth week fits the framework term “week”. If I had said that I would be at your house in forty-two days, I could arrive any time that day. I have twenty-four hours to work with. Do I have to be arriving in such a way that fills up the entire twenty-four hour period? If I arrived at 10:00 a.m., would you say, “But what about the remaining fourteen hours of the forty-second

day?" No; any remaining time doesn't matter, because I did not say hours, I said days. That would be the limiting factor. As long as I am there sometime before midnight on the forty-second day, I have fulfilled my promise.

In our passage in Daniel 9, what is the framework? It is weeks - specifically weeks of years. Gabriel declares to Daniel:

*"Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your 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 vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the most holy."*

(Literally "a holy of holies")

(Daniel 9:24 KNJV)

The messenger's choice of terms establishes the framework; these things must occur within that time frame - sometime within the span of the final (seventieth) week. They do not all have to occur at the same moment, but they do all have to be completed sometime during that seventieth week. If they all occurred at the very beginning of the seventieth week, in the very first year of that week of years, would the prophecy be accurate? Yes. Whether they happen at the beginning or the middle or the end is not stated by Gabriel. God did not say four-hundred ninety years, because the week was his framework for this prophecy.

The Setting

Daniel had learned through Jeremiah that the period which God had set for the “desolations of Jerusalem” was just seventy years: “In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans - in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem” (Daniel 9:1-2).

At this point in history, the Chaldeans (Babylonians) had just been conquered by the Medes and Persians. Daniel, through reading the Prophets (see Jeremiah 25:11-13; Jeremiah 29:10-14; and 2 Chronicles 36:20-21), saw clearly that Jerusalem was to be desolate for a determined seventy years. Jerusalem had been leveled and left desolate by the Babylonians (or Chaldeans). The temple had been destroyed and the walls of the city torn down. The remnant that survived this attack were taken and scattered among the Babylonian empire. Daniel, when he was but a youth, had been among those who were taken to Babylon. Now, nearly seventy years have passed, and the Babylonian empire has fallen. Daniel, through reading Jeremiah, has come to the understanding that the determined time of seventy years of desolation is nearly completed.

You can well imagine Daniel's excitement as Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians. What he read in the prophet Jeremiah was very clear:

'And this whole land [Israel] shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the LORD; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation. So I will bring on that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied concerning all the nations'

(Jeremiah 25: 11-13)

For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then they will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity

(Jeremiah 29:10-14)

Daniel certainly exhibited the truth of the above passage, as he humbly confessed his sin and the sin of his people in his seeking prayer (Dan. 9: 2-23).

Daniel is moved by the grace of God. He has been reading Jeremiah and can see plainly how Israel has transgressed against the Lord. He knows what they deserve. Yet this great God promises restoration and forgiveness. What grace! His prayer reveals his amazement that the holy God of Israel did not completely destroy them from off the face of the earth. Daniel knows that God saved a remnant for his own name's sake, because of his great mercies. He also realizes that this restoration comes about only because God acts for his own glory. Daniel represented and interceded for his people and sought the Lord of grace with all his heart. As promised, he found him, and the Lord sent his angel, Gabriel, to deliver this message of the seventy weeks to Daniel.

Before Israel had ever fallen to Babylon, God foretold that Babylon would lay Israel desolate for seventy years. Following that time, God would lay Babylon desolate, and when Israel humbled itself and sought the Lord, God would return them to the land of Israel, where the city and its temple would be rebuilt.

“And those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.”

(2 Chronicles 36:20-21)

The context of 2 Chronicles 36:15-19 records the historical event that Jeremiah had foretold; the fulfillment of the fall of Jerusalem to the Chaldeans (Babylonians). Jerusalem is leveled and left desolate for seventy years to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah. In this, God is giving the land

its sabbath rest, which was not done by the disobedient Israelites. Jeremiah prophesied not only of the desolation of Jerusalem, but also of its restoration and rebuilding. This, too, is recorded for us in 2 Chronicles.

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, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying,

Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up!

(2 Chronicles 36:22-23)

Darius the Mede and Cyrus the Persian were co-rulers for two years. Now, in Cyrus' first year as sole ruler, he makes a proclamation. Where did Cyrus get the idea for this proclamation? God is the one behind this proclamation that will fulfill his promise. Unlike Pharaoh of Egypt who would not let Israel go, Cyrus commands the people of Israel to go. His command, of course, is a result of the work of God.

Ezra, chapter 1, begins with exactly the same words as the end of 2 Chronicles. There is a reason that this is repeated. This is a very important command and is central to several significant prophecies. So there would be no mistake about this prophecy, and the timing of it, God has it repeated and then has Cyrus put it in writing. He then makes sure that it is recorded in the Word of God in several places. This is definitely a key event.

This knowledge, given by Jeremiah, moved Daniel to his knees in confession and prayer. Daniel's prayer was impelled by an understanding of the revealed will of God found in the Scriptures. His prayer has to do with the city, the sanctuary, the people of God, and the desolations of the city. These are the same subjects that occupy the prophecy the angel Gabriel brings to Daniel in response to his prayer.

God's Response to Daniel's Prayer

Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God, yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, “*O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision: Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city...*

” (Daniel 9:20-24a)

God's response to Daniel's prayer was in the form of a revelation brought to him by the angel, Gabriel. Gabriel stated that the period of seventy years of captivity were to be followed by a period of seventy sevens (or weeks of years). The command or decree of Cyrus which was to bring the captivity to an end – freeing the Jews and granting them liberty to return to their own land and rebuild the city and sanctuary – was also the starting point of the “determined” period of seventy weeks of years: “*Know therefore and*

understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem ...” (v. 25).

Scripture clearly establishes that command as having been made by Cyrus. It was a command that originated with God. God stirred him to give this proclamation and even had it put in writing. This then is given as the starting point of Gabriel’s seventy weeks of years. The decree of Cyrus in the first year of his reign – in which the city and temple were rebuilt under Zerubbabel and Joshua – signaled both the termination of the seventy years of captivity and also the starting point for the prophetic period of seventy weeks that had been “determined” or measured out in the council of heaven upon the people and the holy city. Where the one period ended, the other – just seven times longer – was to begin.

One of the key features of the revelation Gabriel brought to Daniel was the precise measure of time (sixty-nine weeks; i.e. $69 = 7 + 62$) to “Messiah, the Prince” and the time when Messiah would be “cut off.”

It is interesting to note that the angel Gabriel, who brought these marvelous predictions to Daniel, is the same angel who announced the coming of their fulfillment to Zacharias and Mary (See Luke 1:11-17, 19-20, 26-33).

Six Things to be Accomplished

9:24

I. “to finish the transgression”

Daniel, in his prayer, confessed the sins of his people – the sins for which God had brought upon them the desolation of their city and sanctuary. However, the sins of Daniel’s people were not yet finished. In fact, in this prophecy, the angel Gabriel revealed to Daniel 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. The consequence of this sin would be a judgment far more severe than that wrought by Nebuchadnezzar. It would lead to the utter destruction of the city, the sanctuary, and the sweeping away of the nation as “with a flood” (v. 26). A greater transgression was yet to be committed which would lead to an even greater desolation. This desolation would be of age-long duration.

The definitions of the phrase “to finish” are: “to bring an end to,” “to complete,” “to fulfill,” or “to fill up.” In Numbers 7:1, it is used to refer to Moses

having “fully set up the tabernacle.” The same root word is used in 1 Kings 7:51 to indicate that Solomon had “finished the building of the tabernacle.”

For Daniel, it was disturbing news that the full measure of Israel’s transgression was yet to be completed. In his prayer, he had acknowledged, “‘Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him’” (Dan. 9:11). Their transgression had brought about this present desolation. Imagine Daniel’s grief now upon hearing this news. He had just finished pouring out his heart in confession and he is told that his people are not done their transgressing. The transgression is yet to be “filled up” or “finished” and, according to verses 26-27, the consequences of this completed transgression would be a far greater desolation than what they were presently experiencing.

In Matthew 23:31-32, Jesus makes reference to this as he speaks to Daniel’s people in his day: “‘Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers’ guilt.’” Their fathers (Israel of old) transgressed against the covenant established at Mount Sinai and thus received the curses promised to those who disobeyed (See Lev. 26 and Deut. 28). In the context of Matthew 23, Jesus has been giving the Jewish leaders a pronouncement of woes. The word woe means to be cursed.

When Israel of old transgressed, they were warned by the prophets. The prophets called them to turn from their idolatry and the sin of forsaking their God. What was the nation’s response to the prophets and their message from God himself? They sawed some in two. They threw some in pits. The prophets were stoned. They were slain with the sword. The Israelites refused to listen to the prophets. Thus, the predicted curses came upon them – the desolations.

Jesus, in Mathew 23, tells the Jewish leaders that they are proving to be sons of their fathers. “Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.” Jesus Christ has now come! God had sent his servants, but now God has sent his own Son – the Heir!

The phrase “fill up” used in verse 32 of Matthew 23, is a synonym for the Hebrew word translated “finish” in Daniel 9:24. When Jesus says, “Fill up, then, the measure of your father’s guilt,” he is telling them to bring their transgression to its complete fulfillment – its complete end (i.e. Finish the transgression begun by your fathers, who killed the prophets). They did complete the transgression. How? By rejecting and killing the ultimate prophet; the Son, Jesus Christ!

Their fathers had added to their transgression by refusing to hear and then by killing the prophets. Now, Israel did not receive God’s own Son. In fact, they performed the worst transgression imaginable – they crucified the Son of God. The creature demonstrated its hatred and self-exaltation in killing the Creator. What an abomination!

A few chapters earlier in Matthew, Jesus related a parable that set forth the entire story for those who had eyes to see.

“Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. Again he sent them other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. Then last

of all he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’ So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?’ They said to Him, “He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.” Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:

‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD’S doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?’

Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.’

(Matthew 21:33-44)

According to this parable, when they killed the heir, that did it – that finished it! That filled up the transgression and there was to be no more transgressing against this landowner. Now he would destroy them and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who would render to him the fruits in their seasons.

In Matthew chapter 23, we see Jesus telling the Israelites of his day that they are about to fulfill this parable of the vinedressers:

“Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure

of your fathers' guilt. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiab, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See your house is left to you desolate."

(Matthew 23:31-38)

Israel has continued to transgress and finishes the transgression (fills the cup, so to speak) by crucifying the Son himself. Chapter 24 of Matthew continues: "Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, 'Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down'" (Matthew 24:1-2).

Jesus speaks of a coming desolation that will be the result of the killing of the Heir – the finishing of the transgression of Israel against their God (See also Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-24; Acts 7:51-52).

Gabriel tells Daniel that this finishing of the transgression will be within the seventy weeks prophesied. In fact, that transgression and all the other promises will occur as a result of the Messiah's being "cut off" (Dan. 9:26), which occurs during the seventieth or last week of the prophecy. This, of

course, makes sense. If I said that seventy weeks are determined to accomplish something, and then I accomplished it in the first week, I would have been more accurate had I said that one week is determined to accomplish it. I wouldn't say forty days are determined, if I was going to do it in ten; I would say ten. The finishing of the transgression, along with all the rest of the six things stated by Gabriel will occur in the seventieth week.

II. “to make an end of sins”

The meaning of the phrase to make an end of is: to put away or abolish. Where but by the sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ was an end made of sins?

He [Jesus – our great High Priest] then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (Hebrews 9:26, emphasis added)

The marvelous working of God's wisdom is impressive and amazing; the extreme sin of man serves to provide a complete remedy for sin!

Gabriel tells Daniel that seventy weeks are determined and then one will come who can and will take away sins. The Levitical system provided a temporary cover, but never took sin away. *“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sin”* (Hebrews 10:4). That is not possible. But when Messiah comes, he will make an end of sins.

“And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God...”
(Hebrews 10:11-12)

Jesus sits down because he makes an end of sins through his sacrifice on the Cross. The ultimate transgression of Daniel's people will be used by our glorious God to take away sins. What wisdom!

III. “to make reconciliation for iniquity”

The word “reconciliation” here is almost always translated “atonement” in other passages. For example, Psalm 79:9 reads: “Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your name; and deliver us and provide atonement for our sins, for Your name’s sake!” The word “atonement” in this verse is the same Hebrew word that is translated “reconciliation” in Daniel 9:24.

Atonement for iniquity is promised to take place within the “determined” seventy weeks. Atonement and reconciliation are made by means of a propitiatory sacrifice. How did Christ, in his death, placate the wrath and fury of God against iniquity?

But He [Messiah the Prince] was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace [i.e. reconciliation] was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

(Isaiah 53:5-6)

The promised atonement occurred when “the LORD … laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us [Messiah was cut off], that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

(2 Corinthians 5:21)

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. (Romans 5:8-11, emphasis added)

What sweet promises for those who believe!

This atonement and reconciliation were to be accomplished, and indeed were accomplished, within the seventy weeks “from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem” by Cyrus.

IV. “to bring in everlasting righteousness”

This refers to the righteousness of God that comes from God. It is being made right with God forever. This would also occur within the time period of the seventy weeks. Where does Scripture teach that the righteousness of God is to be discovered?

For in it [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith”

(Romans 1:17)

The gospel is said to reveal the righteousness of God. Psalm 98:2 also teaches this truth: “*The LORD has made known His salvation; His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations.*”

What really revealed the righteousness of God? What explained how God was just in justifying sinners? For example, how could God maintain his integrity and accept David? How can our holy God be just and righteous and receive a sinner like David – an adulterer and a murderer? On what basis can David be received? The only ground is by the Cross of Christ – where Messiah was cut off. This was where mercy and truth met together. This is where righteousness and peace kissed. The Cross! It is there that justice is satisfied; and because justice is perfectly satisfied, God is right to forgive David. He did not overlook David’s sin. David’s sin was paid in full by his Redeemer. God’s righteousness in receiving sinners into his kingdom of light is revealed in the Cross.

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified [declared righteous and treated as such] freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness [now and forever], that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

(Romans 3:21-26)

Righteousness is the most prominent feature of the kingdom of God.

...for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

(Romans 14:17)

A work was to be done, and indeed has been done, which was to bring in everlasting righteousness.

For the moth will eat them up like a garment. And the worm will eat them like wool; but My righteousness will be forever, and My salvation from generation to generation.

(Isaiah 51:8)

But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God – and righteousness and sanctification and redemption ---

(1 Corinthians 1:30)

If you stand righteous before God in Christ, it is forever – it is everlasting.

V. “to seal up vision and prophecy”

The term “vision” is a term used of Old Testament prophecies. It was one of the ways that God spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets in the giving of the Old Testament Scriptures. For example, Isaiah starts out his

prophetic writings: “The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz...” Old Testament prophecies were preparatory and typical in nature. These prophecies then, with their fulfillment in Christ, have served their purpose (i.e. Acts 26:22-23; Heb. 1:1-2; Matt. 11:13). Therefore they are “sealed up.” This is one possible explanation for this phrase.

The other possible interpretation of this part of the prophecy is that it refers not to the closing up of the prophetic books, but to a closing up of the minds of the people to the actual spiritual reality found in Christ. Their eyes were blind to the fulfillment of these things (Acts 13:27-30; 1 Corinthians 2:7-16; Matthew 13:10-17).

We know from the Scriptures that both of the above are true (although we are not sure which explanation best recovers the author’s intent---maybe both!), and both occurred in the seventieth week.

VI. “to anoint the Most Holy”

Literally this text says, “to anoint a holy of holies.” This language would most certainly have brought specific images to mind for the Jewish reader. First of all, he would have thought of the little room within the anointed tabernacle (Ex. 30:22-33) and later within the temple. The tabernacle, all its holy utensils, including the ark of the covenant, and even the high priest were anointed with a special oil (Lev. 8:10-12). This anointing set apart the tabernacle as holy - the place where God would manifest his glorious presence. In light of where the New Testament Scriptures take us, it seems clear that this anointing with oil prefigures an anointing by the Holy Spirit. In John 1:32-33, we see the Christ (the Anointed One) anointed by the Spirit. This same event may well be what is referred to in a similar way in Dan. 9:25, with its reference to the anointing of the Prince.

When was there an anointing of a holy of holies; a most holy place for the manifest presence of God? When was the Holy Spirit poured out to anoint a temple for God's glory? First and foremost, the anointed holy place was the true tabernacle - Christ himself in human flesh (see John 1:14 where the word "dwelt" is literally "tabernacled" to show Jesus Christ's fulfillment of the type). Jesus is the true temple. Not only does the entire temple point to Christ, but each of its parts also. In particular, the most holy place, that little room where the annual sacrifice and sprinkling of blood on the mercy seat for sin was made, provides an incredible picture of Christ as the "place" (his flesh) where a once-for-all sacrifice was made. As such, Jesus makes reference to his death and resurrection as a destruction and resurrection of the true temple of God, which is his body (John 2:19-22; Rev. 21:22).

Secondly, the church is identified as the temple of God through her union with Christ. He is the true temple and we, as his body, are also the true temple. In the New Covenant, beginning at Pentecost, the church is anointed by the Spirit as the new holy of holies. We are the anointed. We are the temple. God is in his people (Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:5; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

Pentecost occurred fifty days after the resurrection. On that feast day, the Holy Spirit anointed a new holy thing --- the church --- to be the new holy of holies.

Who sent the Spirit? Jesus Christ. The resurrected and ascended Jesus, now seated on his throne, begins building a house for God (Acts 2:29-36; 2 Sam. 7:11-13; 1 Chron. 17:10-14; John 7:39). The Old Covenant was finished. The veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom as the old holy of holies was finished as the place of the manifest presence of God. At Pentecost, the anointing of the new holy of holies came – as the Spirit was poured out upon the church of God – to be his new temple.

These glorious events must be accomplished within the seventy-week period established by God and foretold by Gabriel. They all must happen within seventy weeks from the time of the decree by Cyrus.

All of these six predicted events were to be accomplished within the determined or marked-off period – and God did fulfill his promises! All of these things were accomplished in the final or seventieth week, which began with the anointing of the Prince, his being “cut off”, his resurrection and ascension, and the giving of the Holy Spirit to anoint a new holy of holies – the church of Jesus Christ. All has been accomplished!

The 70th week – past or future?

Many people read a gap of time between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks of years and thus, push the fulfillment of the predicted events to a time far into the future. However, as we have seen, this does injustice to the prediction. In the second part of the prophecy, the explanatory part, there is a distinction between the first group of weeks (“seven weeks”), and the next group of weeks (“sixty-two -nine weeks”), and the final week (“one week”) . This does not make a gap of time between the groups necessary; it could simply indicate some differences in what marks each grouping. The separation may not be one of time, but rather one of kind. We will examine this more closely in sections 8 and 9 of this article. There is no compelling reason from the prophecy itself to decide on a gap of time between the two groups of weeks, unless one is trying to make the fulfillment fit predetermined conclusions.

Gabriel told Daniel that seventy weeks were appointed (or determined) and laid out until the filling up of Israel’s transgression and the cutting off of Messiah, which would lead to an ultimate desolation. Who determines that there is a gap? Would a gap be honest? It is pretty easy to predict anything by that means. You can make anything fit your system if you play with numbers like that.

Let's say I told my wife that I would take her to Hawaii in seventy days. After sixty-nine days she is packed and ready to go. However, day seventy comes and goes and no Hawaii. If, when reminded of my promise, I tell her, "Yes, I am going to take you on the seventieth day. It's just that there is a gap of many years between my sixty-ninth and seventieth days. The seventieth day is far in the future, disconnected and separated from the first sixty-nine," I don't think she'd really take it well. I wouldn't blame her. To put a gap in there does not do justice to what I stated. In order for my communication to be meaningful, the time must be consecutive, because that is how we normally reckon time. If I intend to reckon time in an unusual manner, I must indicate that in order for there to be understanding on the part of my wife.

If I told a traveler that the next gas station was seventy miles ahead, would that mean that there could be a two-thousand mile gap between the sixty-ninth and seventieth miles? Of course not. The miles would be consecutive, because that is how we normally reckon distance. In addition, anywhere along the seventieth mile would fit my determined distance. Unless I have let my hearers know in advance that I am changing our usual practice of tracking time or distance, they have no reason to figure in anything other than conventional terms.

Just imagine if Jeremiah's prophecy of seventy years of captivity was really twenty-five hundred years, because there was a gap of time between the sixty-ninth and seventieth years! No, the captivity lasted for seventy consecutive years. Were Abraham's descendants strangers in a foreign land for a time period of four-hundred consecutive years? Were the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine as foretold by Joseph consecutive years? Could they have had a gap? No, he would have been stoned as a false prophet! Were the forty years of Israel's wandering for unbelief forty consecutive years? What if, after three days, Jesus did not rise? Could his disciples claim there is a huge gap between the second and third days? Could they say that the third day is

many years in the future? No, that would not be honest. That would not be a prediction at all.

When Gabriel says that seventy weeks of years are determined for these things to be fulfilled, they must be consecutive weeks of years. Why then do people create a time gap between the weeks of this prophecy by Gabriel in Daniel chapter 9?

They do so because they are trying to fit this prophecy into the mold of their understanding of history and prophecy.

Most ancient timelines used today are based on Ptolemy's record of time. Ptolemy was a Greco-Egyptian mathematician and astronomer who lived some seven-hundred years after the Persian Empire, around A.D. 90-168. He estimated the Persian Empire to have lasted two-hundred five years and to have been ruled by ten kings. However, when we compare that with Josephus, an earlier writer (A.D. 37-c.100), we find that he estimates the duration of the Persian Empire at fifty-two years and says there were six kings. Where do we find the truth, especially in light of the fact that in early documents there are no established dates to connect with our calendar? What do the Scriptures say with regard to this matter? We are forced to reject both Ptolemy and Josephus as the ultimate authority, for neither of them was there. We are compelled to look to God, who was.

In Daniel 10:1, Daniel is given another message by Gabriel. This is "in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia." Cyrus is the second king of Persia. He is the sole ruler at this time, after the death of Darius the Mede (Daniel 9:1). In Daniel 11:2, we, along with Daniel, are told by Gabriel, "And now I will tell you the truth: Behold, three more kings will arise in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than them all; by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece." The following verses introduce the

man we know as Alexander the Great and the four generals among whom his kingdom is divided. From Gabriel, we get the truth about the duration and number of kings of the Persian Empire. There would be a total of six Persian kings: Darius the Mede, Cyrus, three more, and then the fourth (counting from the time viewpoint of the prophecy--fourth from the time of Cyrus: counting from the first ruler, Darius, the sixth overall) rich king. Thus, we see that Ptolemy's estimate of the number of kings is wrong. This would make his guess at the approximate length of the Persian Empire also inaccurate.

If one uses Ptolemy's figures, there is no way to get from Cyrus' proclamation to any time in the life of Christ at all! Using Ptolemy's estimation, historians have placed Cyrus' death around 530 B.C. Seventy weeks of years (up to four-hundred ninety years) from that point puts the fulfillment of the prophecy at about 40 B.C. This does not reach the fullness of time when "God sent His Son, born of a woman" (Gal. 4:4). Remember our point in Part One: the prophecy must be fulfilled within the seventieth week, which consists of the time period that encompasses the four-hundred eighty-third through four-hundred ninetieth years. All interpretations of Daniel's prophecy of seventy weeks recognize that Christ must be there at the end of the sixty-ninth week. He is to be "cut off" after seven and sixty-two weeks (sixty-nine in all). Some try to aim at his birth and some at his death. However, if we stick to Ptolemy's numbers, we cannot make the sixty-ninth week occur at any time within the life of Christ.

Some, to reconcile the time discrepancies, say that the command to rebuild Jerusalem is not Cyrus' but Artaxerxes' (which means 'chief ruler' – a title – not a name). They then play around with years which consist of three-hundred sixty days (calling them "prophetic years") and such and "make" it fit to the time of Christ. Some will put a time gap between the first group of seven weeks and the remaining group of sixty-two weeks to make it fit. However, if you have to create a gap to make it fit, that's not a prophecy at all.

In all these cases, the starting point is man's chronology, and the Bible is made to fit it.

Let us let the Bible speak. If you want to know what is true; look at exactly what Gabriel told Daniel is true. It is fine to look at history and the events recorded there, but do not interpret the Bible in light of history. Interpret history in light of what the Scripture says.

The Command of God's Anointed

“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem...”

(Daniel 9:25)

Gabriel tells Daniel to “*Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem*” (which we saw clearly in the Scriptures to be the command of Cyrus). The going forth of the command is clearly the beginning of the seventy weeks. Gabriel does not say at the restoring and building but from the going forth of the command to do so. Read Ezra 1:1-2, and 2:1 for confirmation of this.

In Isaiah, we have an incredible passage.

Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and He who formed you from the womb: “I am the LORD, who makes all things, Who stretches out the heavens all alone, Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself; Who frustrates the signs of the babblers,

and drives diviners mad; Who turns wise men backward, and makes their knowledge foolishness; Who confirms the word of His servant, and performs the counsel of His messengers [messengers like Isaiah and Gabriel!]; Who says to Jerusalem, ‘You shall be inhabited,’ To the cities of Judah, ‘You shall be built,’ and I will raise up her waste places; Who says to the deep, ‘Be dry! And I will dry up your rivers’; Who says of Cyrus, ‘He is My shepherd, and he shall perform all My pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, “You shall be built,” And to the temple, “Your foundation shall be laid.”’ “Thus says the LORD to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held -”

(Isaiah 44:24-45:1)

What is so incredible about this passage is that Isaiah lived and prophesied this more than one-hundred years before Cyrus was even born! Isaiah declares plainly that it would be Cyrus who would make the proclamation.

Look at Isaiah 45:13, where Isaiah continues to talk of God's anointed – Cyrus:

“I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways; he shall build My city and let My exiles go free, not for price nor reward,’ says the LORD of hosts.”

(Isaiah 45:13)

Cyrus, God's anointed, will issue the command. The time from the command of that anointed one, Cyrus, until the greater Anointed One, Messiah, will be sixty-nine weeks. In the seventieth week, the greater Anointed One will also issue a command to build a city – the New Jerusalem, and set the exiles free!

Seven Weeks of Troublesome Times Chapter 8

“There shall be seven weeks... the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.”

(v25)

When we read the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, we learn of the rebuilding of the city, its wall, and the temple “*even in troublesome times*,” as stated by Gabriel in Daniel 9:25. This rebuilding would be completed in the first seven weeks of years (forty-nine years).

Ezra, chapter 3 through the end of chapter 4 chronicles the early history of the returned exiles, the start of construction on the temple, and the troublesome adversaries who “*troubled them in building, and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus King of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia*” (Ezra 4:4b-5). These adversaries eventually sent a letter to King Artaxerxes saying: “*Let it be known to the king that the Jews who came up from you have come to us at Jerusalem, and are building the rebellious*

and evil city, and are finishing its walls and repairing the foundation" (Ezra 4:12). This led to the halt of the work of rebuilding until the second year of the reign of King Darius of Persia (Ezra 4:23-24). Chapter 6 opens with Darius' decree to find the scroll with the record of King Cyrus' command to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem. After its discovery, the rebuilding begins anew, and in verse 15 of this chapter, we read that the temple was finished on the third day of the month of Adar in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius. The rest of the chapter records the celebration of the dedication of the temple, the observance of Passover, and the keeping of the week-long Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Chapter 7 opens with an introduction to Ezra the scribe, and his arrival at Jerusalem in the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes. A copy of the letter Ezra brought with him from the king, along with a list of the people who accompanied him, and a brief description of their journey comprise the rest of chapter 7 and chapter 8. In chapter 9, troublesome times arise from within the community of the exiles; intermarriage of Israelites with the "peoples of the lands," leading to the adoption of pagan rites that were an abomination to the Lord. Ezra's prayer of repentance (vv. 6-15) indicates that at this point, the temple, the city, and even a wall had been rebuilt (see verse 9). The people repent and promise to put away their foreign wives; and the account penned by Ezra concludes.

Nehemiah narrates the next account of the history of the exiles. He picks up the account in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes. A visitor from Judah is with Nehemiah, the king's cup-bearer, and when asked, informs his host of more trouble for the post-exilic Israelites in Jerusalem. The rebuilt walls have been broken down, and its gates are burned with fire (Neh. 1:1-3). Nehemiah is in great distress, and mourns and fasts and prays. This would hardly have been his response if this was old news--if his visitor was simply reciting the well-known condition of Jerusalem as it had been since the initial destruction

by Nebuchadnezzar many years earlier. Nehemiah has specifically asked for news of the state of Jerusalem in the times of those who had survived the captivity (v.2). When he takes the king his wine, Artaxerxes asks for the reason for Nehemiah's downcast countenance. He explains, asks for and receives permission to go to Judah with letters of safe passage and requisitions for lumber to rebuild the gates, the city wall, and a personal dwelling (2:1-8). This cannot be the "command to rebuild" that Gabriel has spoken to Daniel; it is simply permission and provision. The rest of chapter 2 through to the end of the book contains the account of the repairing, continuation and eventual completion of the rebuilding of the walls and the city through continued "troublesome times".

Sixty-two Weeks of Silence

“...and sixty-two weeks ...”

(v. 25)

At the end of the seven weeks of years, we have the last prophet, Malachi (until John the Baptist appears on the scene to bear witness of the Light of the world). Following the time of Malachi's last prophetic words, sixty-two weeks of years will pass until the Anointed One. In fact, listen to the last words of Malachi:

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”

(Malachi 4:5-6)

This prophecy ends the Old Testament Scriptures. Sixty-two weeks of years pass (silent years, with no word from the Lord), following the seven weeks of rebuilding the temple, the city, and its walls in troublesome times. Then, on the stage of history, comes the voice of one crying in the wilderness, to bear witness of the true Light – the Messiah. The silence is broken! (Luke 1:16-17; John 1:6-9, 19-34) Jesus said of John the Baptist, “*If you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come*” (Matthew 11:14).

Until Messiah the Prince

“... Until Messiah the Prince ...”

(v. 25)

This is the goal toward which the chronology of the Bible has been moving. From the going forth of God’s anointed, Cyrus, until the greater Anointed One – the greater Deliverer – the greater Restorer who would build the fallen tabernacle (see Acts 15:14-18!) – there would be a stretch of sixty-nine weeks of years.

The word Messiah is equivalent to the word Christ. It means ‘the Anointed.’

Where, in the earthly life of our Lord, was he anointed and presented to Israel as the Anointed One – as Messiah the Prince? Verse 25 of Gabriel’s prophecy to Daniel began with the statement, “Know therefore and understand.” Therefore we can expect the Scriptures to clearly reveal to us both the starting point (the command to restore and build Jerusalem) and the culmination of this prophecy (until Messiah the Prince). We know that was certainly true of the starting point. We will now see that the Scriptures clearly establish the time of “Messiah the Prince,” and that last week when all will be fulfilled.

Let us see from Scripture when an Anointed One is revealed.

“The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ – He is Lord of all – that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.”

(Acts 10:36-38)

What did Malachi said would come? He promised a forerunner – John the Baptist – who would preach and prepare the way for the Messiah. When was Jesus anointed? He was anointed when he was baptized by John. It is here that Jesus is anointed with the Holy Spirit. It is here, sixty-nine weeks of years from Cyrus' command to restore and build Jerusalem, that God's anointed Prince is manifest.

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?”

But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him.

When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting

*upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying,
“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”*

(Matthew 3:13-17)

Here, at Jesus' baptism, he is anointed and proclaimed to be the Son of God by the Father himself.

And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned.” From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

(Matthew 4:13-17)

Jesus begins his ministry after he is anointed.

When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, “You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.”

Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph...

(Luke 3:21-23)

Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”

Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

(Luke 4:14-21)

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.... The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.’ I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.” And John bore

witness, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”

(John 1:6-7, 29-34)

Before his anointing, not even John the Baptist recognized the Messiah. Now, at around thirty years of age, Jesus is revealed to Israel as the Messiah – the Anointed One!

Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciple. And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God!” The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.... One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ).”

(John 1:35-36, 40-41)

(See also John 4:25-26; Acts 1:22; and Acts 10:36-38.)

Jesus was anointed at his baptism, sixty-nine consecutive weeks of years after the proclamation of Cyrus – thus beginning the last and seventieth week! That seventieth week began when Jesus was baptized and anointed by the Holy Spirit and presented to Israel as the Messiah! The times are clearly given to us in the Scriptures in reference to the reigns of Gentile rulers. The time frame begins in the first year of Cyrus, King of Persia. Jesus is baptized in

the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar (Luke 3:1). This is the only dated event in the New Testament. I believe that is significant. There is no time date given in regard to the census or the birth of Christ or other events. However, we are given the time of the baptism of Jesus by John – the time of his anointing.

The Climax of the Prophecy

“And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself”

(v. 26)

Now we reach the climax of the prophecy – the seventieth week – in which the most stupendous event of all time occurred. It is in that week that God, manifested in human flesh, made atonement for the sins of his people and the kingdom of heaven was opened to all believers! We see that this would occur after the second grouping of weeks---the sixty-two weeks. Thus it would be in the seventieth week that Messiah would be “cut off, but not for Himself.”

*But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.... He was **cut off** from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken. ... He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied.*

*By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify **many**,
for He shall bear their iniquities.”*

(Isaiah 53:5, 8, 11, emphasis added)

This “cutting off” accomplished the predicted events of Daniel 9:24. We start counting from the time of Christ’s anointing, and we know that before that week of years is over (seven years), he is going to die. In that last week of years, all those predictions given by Gabriel must come about.

Jesus was cut off – bearing the sins of “many.” As a result of this “finishing of the transgression,” – the cutting off of Messiah – the city of Jerusalem and the temple would be desolated. “... And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined” (Dan. 9: 26).

The city and temple, of which Daniel had been told, that would be rebuilt during seven weeks of troublesome times, would be destroyed. This would come about as a result of Israel’s cutting off their Messiah – showing indeed that they were sons of their fathers (Matt. 23:31-32; Acts 7:51-52). Gabriel’s prophesy does not state that this destruction is to occur in the seventieth week, but as a result of what did occur then. In fact, this desolation came about in 70 A.D. when Rome, under the direction of the Roman general Titus, surrounded the city of Jerusalem. There was a great slaughter and the city and its temple were destroyed. In fact, not one stone of that temple was left upon another as the soldiers pried apart every burned block to retrieve all the gold they could get (Matt. 24:1-2; Luke 21:5-6, 20-24).

“Then He shall confirm a covenant with many, one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.”

(Dan. 9: 27)

Note again that there is no word “for” in this verse in the original Hebrew text. It is supplied in the English text. One Hebrew rabbi translated the text into English for me this way: “During one week, He will make a firm covenant with many.”

The Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament Scriptures which Jesus used) reads: “And one week shall establish the covenant with many.”

One week would witness the confirming of the New Covenant with many. The covenant does not last for one week. It is made during one week.

The word “confirm” carries the idea of a victory achieved by great power and strength. The Hebrew word is usually translated “prevail.” Remember Isaiah 53? “... He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities.”

There are some who would claim that the “He” of verse 27 is the “prince who is to come.” However, grammatically this does not fit. Who is the subject of verse 26? Clearly the subject is “Messiah” (“Messiah shall be cut off”). The subject of the next sentence is “the people” (“the people of the prince who is to come”). “People” is a plural noun, and does not take the singular pronoun ‘he’. “Of the prince” is a prepositional phrase that modifies or distinguishes the “people” mentioned. “Prince” is the object of the preposition. If you cross out all the prepositional phrases, you find out who or what the sentence is about. The subject and the focal point of this whole prophecy is the Messiah.

The only person referred to as the subject of the previous sentence to the “He” of verse 27, is “Messiah.”

If grammar rules confuse you, I’ll illustrate my point this way: If I stated, “Blair, the son of Murray, went to Saskatoon. He...” You know that the “he” that begins the next sentence refers to Blair. Why? Blair is the subject of the previous sentence. Murray just identifies whose son he is. Murray is simply the object of the preposition. In the same way, the “He” in verse 27 must refer to the Messiah of verse 26.

It is the Messiah who will confirm a covenant with many. This will happen during one week – the seventieth week of the prophecy. It happened when he was “cut off.” Listen to the words of Jesus in Matt. 26:28: “For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

In the above context, Jesus is about to go to the Cross. He had just previously foretold his coming crucifixion in John 12:23-24, where he said,

“The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.”

There is a set time and hour when Jesus is going to establish a covenant with many. How is he going to do it? He is going to be “cut off,” but not for himself – for the many! He is going to establish a New Covenant whereby sinners can receive the remission of sins and enter into reconciled communion with the holy and true God through a new and living way.

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High

Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

(Heb. 10:19-22)

One week would witness the confirming of the New Covenant with many, whereby the sacrifices and offerings of the Old Covenant are brought to an end!

“Then He shall confirm a covenant with many, one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.”

(Dan. 9:27)

We are told that in the middle of the seventieth week, Messiah “shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.” If we follow along in the book of John, we can see that the time period from the baptism of Jesus until the crucifixion was just over three years. The crucifixion was in the middle of the last week of years!

Before then, Jesus had continued to state that it was not his time – his hour had not yet come. But in the middle of the week, at a particular Passover, he said, “My hour has come!” It was this Passover for which he was waiting and aiming. He fervently desired to partake of that final Passover, where he would establish the New Covenant Passover (Luke 22:14-20); thus putting an end to sacrifice and offering.

*He [Christ] then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to **put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.** And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was **offered once to bear the sins of many.***

(Hebrews 9:26-28, emphasis added; see the entire context of Hebrews Chapters 7-10)

Jesus is not like the old high priests – for then he would have to suffer often. But Jesus, by his one perfect sacrifice and offering of himself, has brought an end to all the sacrifices and offerings of the old which could never take away sins.

Previously saying, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the law), then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He takes away the first that He may establish the second.”

(Hebrews 10:8-9)

When it says in the above verses that Jesus “takes away the first,” what is the first? The sacrifice and offering of bulls and goats which could never take away sin – those burnt offerings in which God had no pleasure. What is the second? Hebrews 10 continues: By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Hebrews 10:10). All the other sacrifices are taken away with the establishment of the new.

*For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,” then He adds, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” Now where there is remission of these, **there is no longer an offering for sin.***

(Hebrews 10:14-18, emphasis added)

We see then that this taking away of sacrifice and offering is directly related to the establishment of the New Covenant – exactly as Gabriel stated in Daniel 9:27. It was “in the middle of the week” that Christ was crucified!

Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the gospel.”

(Mark 1:14-15)

Jesus has been baptized and anointed and he begins his ministry in Galilee. What is the first thing he says? “The time is fulfilled.” What time? What time has ever been given? Gabriel gave a time . . . sixty-nine weeks until Messiah the Prince. The only time prophecy about the Messiah ever given was in Daniel, chapter 9. The time determined by God and foretold by Gabriel has been fulfilled. This was the time appointed by the Father (Galatians 4:2).

In Luke, we see Jesus anticipating the desolation that would come as a result of Israel’s not recognizing this time and thus rejecting the Anointed of God.

“Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, ‘If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surrounding you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.’” (Luke 19:41-44) (Compare the desolation of Daniel 9:26-27.)

How could they have possibly known the time of the visitation? The prophet Daniel recorded that time!

Then He also said to the multitudes, “Whenever you see a cloud rising out of the west, immediately you say, ‘A shower is coming’; and so it is. And when you see the south wind blow, you say, ‘There will be hot weather’; and there is. Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it you do not discern this time?”

(Luke 12:54-56)

*“Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your 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 vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.*

(Daniel 9:24)

Seventy weeks were appointed for the people of Israel and then there would be a New Covenant. In the first phase of Israel's history, they were laid desolate for a time because of their disobedience and unbelief. They had demonstrated their heart-rebellion by utterly rejecting, and even killing, the prophets of God. However, that desolation lasted only seventy years. Then Israel was restored, and Jerusalem and the temple were rebuilt. How long would the restored Israel have? They would have seventy weeks of years. Following that time, there will be a new people. After that time, God will establish a new nation. After that time, God will establish a New Covenant. His Son will build a new temple built with living stones. After that time, all things will be new, old things will pass away (2 Corinthians 5:17).

In this glorious New Covenant, God's dealings are with a holy nation composed of all who believe the gospel and receive the one who was rejected by "His own" (John 1:6-13). This spiritual nation is redeemed by a greater Deliverer in a far grander display of power than that at the Red Sea - the Cross in the prophesied seventieth week of years. The seventieth week as foretold to Daniel was the greatest week of all time. In the midst of that week, Jesus confirmed the New Covenant with his people from every tribe and tongue and people and nation – all gathered together into one flock with one Shepherd. Our glorious Shepherd gave his life for the sheep as the ultimate Passover Lamb. "Him God has exalted to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31). Praise and glory to Messiah the Prince!

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