

## CHAPTER VII

### The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks

DANIEL 9:24-27

The difficulty of the verses which now lie before us is evident to anyone who has even attempted a cursory examination of them. As they stand in the Authorized Version, they are more than enigmatical. Pick up almost any two commentaries from the same school of eschatology, and it is not likely that there will be agreement on the meaning of all the details of interpretation. Premillennial writers of two or three generations ago were very far apart on the details. Much of the same diversity appears in Premillennial contemporary writers.

For example, take only what is usually called the *terminus a quo* of the prophecy. Tregelles thinks it was the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the Persian king, 454 or 455 B.C. (*Remarks*, 99), and that it is the decree of Artaxerxes recorded in the second chapter of Nehemiah. Anderson advocated the same decree but set the date at 445 B.C. West, quite to the contrary, adopted the view that it was the decree of Cyrus recorded in the first chapter of Ezra and dated it tentatively at 536 B.C. (*Thousand Years in Both Testaments*, 129). Auberlen adopted still another, the seventh year of Artaxerxes, and advocated the seventh chapter of Ezra as the description of it. The same diversity of opinion prevails among Premillennial as well as other writers.

These difficulties manifest in the diversity of opinion among devout and learned men have not, however, prevented general agreement on the main significance of the prophecy. Interpreters of all schools have conceded, "notwithstanding all minor differences as to the details of this prophecy, that the central meaning of the seventy weeks was to be sought in the life of Christ; and the diversities in the interpretation of details may all be reduced to those that flow from three sources, a difference in the starting point, a difference in the chronology of the life of Jesus, a difference in the chronological methods selected by the various commentators as a basis" (Havernick, quoted by Auberlen, *op.cit.*, 92). Thus belief (with rare exceptions like Stuart in America and Hofmann in Germany) always has presented a united front against unbelief which would attempt to find the fulfillment of the prophecy in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. I caution the reader, however, not to construe these foregoing remarks to mean that this writer feels that the *terminus ad quem* of the full seventy weeks is to be found in any event near the earthly lifetime of our Lord, for such is not my opinion.

I mean to say only that the 490 years of the prophecy run at least to the lifetime of Jesus, in which case the prophecy puts to rout the unbelieving higher criticism which sees nothing of minute prediction in the book beyond the time of Antiochus Epiphanes.

In full harmony with the division of the Book of Daniel into a Gentile-slanted portion and a Hebrew-slanted portion, the division falling at the

conclusion of the Aramaic section (7:27), this oracle concerns Daniel's people and them alone. It is given in answer to the very Hebrew prayer of a Hebrew prophet in very Hebrew style. Furthermore, in the mind of the prophet it develops out of the problem of the seventy years of captivity of the Hebrew people in Babylon.

Now, as we come to the prophecy itself, we may expect that details of former oracles of the book will be enlarged and some of the mysteries cleared up. Chapter two gave the grand outline of four Gentile kingdoms to be succeeded by a fifth and last, the kingdom of God Most High. The seventh chapter developed around the same grand outline, but enlarged the revelation concerning the fourth, introducing also the final Antichrist, and presented him in conflict with God's holy nation, Israel. It also showed that Israel would have a peculiar and special place in the kingdom of the Most High. However, as chapter nine opens, the people of Israel are in dispersion and captivity under a foreign king--and their land in heathen hands, their holy city Jerusalem a heap, and their temple a ruin. It will be around the future of that land, that city, that temple, and the Hebrew people that this chapter's revelations will gather. There will be revelation concerning the immediate future, during which the temple and city will be restored to Daniel's people; there will be promise of the coming of their Prince Messiah to consummate that restoration at the end of a specified time, an enigmatical prophecy of His rejection and death, to be followed by the destruction of their city, and more remotely by an unhappy and tragic liaison between Israel and the false Prince, the Antichrist, introduced in chapter seven.

Omitting the introductory prayer and vision of the prophet, we come immediately to the apocalypse of Israel's future given by Gabriel's mouth to Daniel.

24 Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. 25 Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed one, the prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: it shall be built again with street and moat, even in troublous times. 26 And after the threescore and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and even unto the end shall be war; desolations are determined. 27 And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease: and upon the wing of abominations *shall come* one that maketh desolate; and even unto the full end, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolate (Daniel 9:24-27, A.S.V.).

It is difficult to attempt any scientific discussion of these verses in the space of a chapter in a dissertation. Many books have been written to set forth particular interpretations. Several have been written within the last

ten or fifteen years. To attempt to evaluate this literature which runs into the hundreds of volumes is impossible, and probably useless also. Therefore, my procedure will be to learn what can be learned from the Scriptures themselves, largely without reference to other works--not that the other works are without value, but because it is simply beyond the scope of this book to treat them.

Many Premillenarian scholars have found nothing in these verses which requires any interpretation essentially distinctive to Premillennial eschatology. To illustrate: though Amillennial Dr. Young views the weeks as symbolical periods--not specifically either days or years, Postmillennial Dr. Barnes views the weeks as of years, and Premillennial Dr. Auberlen also views the weeks as years; the three men are in general agreement as to the full scope of the prophecy. They think that the seventy weeks run their full course by the time the history of the early chapters of the Book of Acts has run its course. Auberlen thinks it was at the time of the death of Stephen or thereabouts. It was signaled by the turning of the apostolic witness from the Jews to the Gentiles. In this Barnes agrees approximately. And though Young would frequently disagree with Auberlen's Premillenarian views on other matters, he announces no essential disagreement on this score, merely expressing a rather hopeless ignorance of any event with which the conclusion of the seventy weeks may be said to occur.

There are, however, some features of this prophecy which cannot be placed in the past--there are some which are unmistakably eschatological. Dr. Keil, who certainly had no Premillennial leanings and devotes many pages to refutation of the Premillennialism of Auberlen and Hofmann, saw a prediction of Antichrist in the "prince that shall come" (v. 26).

But, while recognizing that there did seem to be an eschatological element in the prophecy, Keil could not offer a satisfactory explanation of the bearings of the whole prophecy on eschatology, though he devoted sixty-five pages of his commentary to these four verses. His contention is that the *terminus ad quem* of the seven weeks is the appearance of Christ and that the appearance of Christ is also the *terminus a quo* of the sixty-two weeks, the cutting off of Messiah (interpreted as defeat of Christianity at the close of this age) being the *terminus ad quem* of the sixty-two and the *terminus a quo* of the seventieth and last. The sixty-two weeks, then, cover the present age, except for the one week at the end, which will close with the second coming of Christ to destroy Antichrist. This, I submit to the readers, is something close to nonsense, supported neither by an objective treatment of the passage nor by judicious examination of many better explanations.

Premillennialism, and only Premillennialism, has a better explanation to offer. For long ages past there have been those who saw a better explanation of the passage, and they have been Chiliasts or, as we now say, Premillenarians.

In pursuance of the purposes of this book, I now present the features of the book which require the Premillennialism I support for a rational explanation. The presentation will take the form of five propositions.

1. The seventy weeks are 490 years, which relate wholly to the then future of Israel.

2. The seventy weeks are divided into three periods of seven, sixty-two, and one, which follow one another and run successively.

3. The first sixty-nine weeks ran out during the lifetime of Messiah and before His crucifixion.

4. The death of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem, both mentioned in the prophecy, are events which follow the close of the sixty-ninth week and precede the beginning of the seventieth week.

5. The seventieth week pertains to a seven-year relationship between the Antichrist and Daniel's people Israel, in eschatological times, and concludes with the second advent of Christ.

*(1) The seventy weeks are 490 years, which relate wholly to the then future of Israel.*

The opening words of chapter nine discover Daniel pondering on the conclusion of a matter which related wholly to the fortunes of his people Israel. He knew by studying the prophecies of Jeremiah (cf. Jer. 25:11) that the duration of the Babylonian servitude was to be seventy years. Daniel had a personal interest in this duration, for (cf. Dan. 1:1 ff.) he himself had been among the first band of captives which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem in the year 606 B.C.

He may well have wondered in this, the sixty-ninth or seventieth year (the first year of Darius was probably about 536 B.C.) of his own captivity, if God meant to begin counting the seventy years from the date of his own captivity (in 606 B.C.) or if one of two other possible dates might be intended. A king (Jehoiachin) had been taken captive with a large group, including the prophet Ezekiel, in 598 (cf. Ezek. 1:1 ff.). And it was about twelve years after this that the Judaeian kingdom came to an end with the deposing of Zedekiah and the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. If the second date were the one intended, then Daniel's and his people's release would have to wait eight or nine more years, till 528 B.C., or, if the third, till 516 B.C. One can well imagine that Daniel wondered if he might live to see the release come.

It is to be observed (if we may anticipate the details of the prophecy) that Daniel was in somewhat the same position as the saints in the years shortly before and after the birth of Jesus. If they knew the prophecy of the 490 years--483 of them to run out before the appearance of Messiah--they may well have wondered if the starting point when the command went forth to "restore and to rebuild" was the decree of Cyrus (536 B.C., Ez. 1:1 ff.), the first decree of Artaxerxes (Ez. 7:1 ff.), or the second decree of Artaxerxes (I do not choose to discuss here the identify of the king or kings) described in the first chapter of Nehemiah. The difference in time between the first of these and the last is no less than ninety years. I think this explains the quiet expectancy of Simeon (Luke 2:25 ff.) and of others at the time of Christ's birth, "looking for the consolation of Israel."

At any rate, Daniel's pondering and prayer related only to the fortunes of his people, and he was thinking in terms of a Hebrew prophecy of seventy years. No doubt--and I think there is no room to doubt it--he wondered also if the end of the seventy years would usher in the advent of the long-promised Messiah Prince to save Israel and rule the nations.

When the answer of the Lord came, by way of the mouth of Gabriel, the answer also is specifically said to relate to Israel: "Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city." No reputable interpreter would claim that Daniel's people were any other than Israel, according to the flesh, and that his holy city was other than Jerusalem, the capital of Judah. This is precisely what would be expected, as previously noted, in this the distinctively Hebrew portion of Daniel's prophecies.

Let the Postmillennial and Amillennial commentators look long and steadily at this fact. This prophecy is a prophecy for Daniel's people and Daniel's city. No alchemy of Origenistic spiritualizing interpretation can change that. This prophecy must be something which promised the restoration of the people to the divine favor, return to their land, revival of their capital city, and restoration of the ancient line of kings who reigned there. The specific details of the latter part of the prophecy serve only to emphasize this truth.

As to the claim, herein, that the weeks of the prophecy are weeks (lit. sevens) of years, little really needs to be said, even though volumes have been written on the subject. I have examined many commentaries on the subject and have yet to find one serious commentator who taught otherwise, unless he had some private theory to defend by interpreting otherwise.

The most untenable view of all is the one that these sevens are only symbolic periods (Keil, Young, Leupold, *et al.*). This makes the assigning of proportional lengths to the divisions into seven, sixty-two, and one mean precisely nothing, whereas I hold it to be obvious that a precise value was to be assigned. Anything else would make the Scriptures misleading to readers who expect the Bible to make sense. Even symbols should make sense--but a view (like Keil's) that lets seven equal approximately 560 years, sixty-two something more than 1900 years, and one a wholly unknown number of years, is not sense. It is nonsense.

Dr. Alva J. McClain (*Daniel's Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks*) has aptly summarized the evidence for the view that the weeks referred to are sevens of years. After pointing out that there is nothing in the passage to indicate that the "week" is a seven of days, as the English versions seem to suggest, and that the Hebrews had a "week" or "seven" of years which was just as familiar to them as the week of days, he presents the following reasons for believing that Daniel had reference to the seven of years. I quote:

In the first place, the prophet Daniel had been thinking not only in terms of years rather than of days, but also in a definite multiple of "sevens" (10 x 7) of years (Dan. 9:1,2). Second, Daniel also knew that the very length of the Babylonian captivity had been based on Jewish violation of

the divine law of the Sabbatic year. Since, according to II Chronicles 36:21, the Jews had been removed from off the land in order that it might rest for *seventy* years, it should be evident that the Sabbatic year had been violated for 490 years, or exactly seventy "sevens" of years. How appropriate, therefore, that now at the end of the judgment for these violations the angel should be sent to reveal the start of a *new era* of God's dealing with the Jew which would extend for the same number of years covered by his violations of the Sabbatic year, namely, a cycle of 490 years, or "Seventy Sevens" of years (Dan. 9:24).

Furthermore, the whole context of the prophecy demands that the "Seventy Sevens" be understood in terms of years. For if we make the "sevens" of days, the entire period would extend for merely 490 days or a little over one year. Considering now that within this brief space the city is to be rebuilt and once more destroyed...it becomes clear that such an interpretation is altogether untenable.

McClain's last argument rests on the fact that in the book of Daniel, wherein the word "week" appears in only one other passage (10:2,3), it is stated that the prophet mourned "three full weeks," the meaning is obviously weeks of days--but is indicated by the addition of days *yamim* to the word *shabhuim*, weeks. This, he rightly argues, indicates that a change from the usage in chapter nine is meant.

The arguments are valid. And, I repeat, most of the best commentators of every school recognize that whatever the problems of adjusting the seventy weeks to the facts of subsequent history, weeks of years are probably meant.

Thus a basis for exposition of the prophecy is laid in the fact that the seventy weeks are 490 years, which relate wholly to the then future of Israel.

(2) *The seventy weeks are divided into three periods of seven, sixty-two, and one, which follow one another and run successively.*

Some of the proof for this statement must of necessity await the development of the following propositions. Yet, the statement is needed at this point in the argument, if only as an observation as to the simplest and most obvious meaning of the text. Says Gabriel: "Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed one, the prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks" (v. 25). Then later he mentions that one "shall make a firm covenant with many for one week" (v. 27).

I think it is perfectly clear to the unbiased reader that Gabriel intended Daniel to know and discern that there would be two periods of the seventy weeks before "the anointed one, the prince," and one afterward. There is a comma after "seven weeks" in the English versions, indicating a break in thought. There is also an *athnach* in the Hebrew at this point, indicating (sometimes) a break in thought. But neither the comma nor the *athnach* are sufficient to require the conclusion that a complete break in thought is intended at that point. If so, then (as Keil insists) the angel meant that "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem shall be seven weeks"--period. The obvious explanation of the seven weeks, or

forty-nine years, has been recognized by hundreds of critical readers and by far the majority of evangelical commentators as the period during which, as the verse goes on to say, Jerusalem "shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troublous times." It is true that there is no precise information in the latter books of the Old Testament as to how long this period of rebuilding the city was. We do know that even after the decree of Artaxerxes to Nehemiah (the latest acceptable date for the *terminus a quo* of the prophecy) there were delays and much opposition, as we learn in the Minor Prophets as well as in Nehemiah. I, for one, in the absence of any better information, am fully prepared to assert that whenever the decree went forth, forty-nine years later the work was done. The second period of sixty-two weeks, or 434 years, then covers the period from the completion of the work on the city to "the anointed one, the prince." The terms *mashiach nagidh* are both indefinite, and could literally be rendered "Messiah, a prince." I shall not enter into the arguments for the position that this is a designation of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is so generally accepted among the class of commentators whom believing Christians accept, and so little controverted in current or past Christian literature of the believing kind, that it is unnecessary. The only real problem is to establish the event in the life of our Lord to which reference is made. It is obviously some occasion when His official claims as the anointed priest-king and ruler among the people should come officially before the people. There are only two possible occasions, it seems to me (and the commentators bear this out)--the baptism and the triumphal entry.

Now, the significant thing about this period of 483 years (seven plus 62 weeks) is that if our accepted calendars and chronologies are correct, it is *almost* exactly 483 years from the latest possible date for the beginning of the weeks (decree of Artaxerxes to Nehemiah) to the closing years of Christ's life, which brings us very close to the time of the baptism and triumphal entry. If there were no further evidence than this remarkable correspondence between the interpretation and the facts of history, there would be strong presumption of truth in its favor. However, if the reader will examine "*The Coming Prince*" by Anderson, whose mass of data is simplified in much more readable form by McClain (*op.cit.*), he will find much more precise and striking correspondence even than this. I am not personally competent to judge Anderson's scientific data, nor to say categorically that I am sure his calculations are correct--but I can say that even if Anderson is wrong on some of the fine points of his thesis--if we accept the ordinary solar year and the usual date for the decree of Artaxerxes rather than the revised dates and the prophetic year of 360 days, the correspondence is too close to be accidental and is a remarkable confirmation of the view adopted here of the division of the weeks.

The final week of the seventy is mentioned in verse 27. It appears strangely after a verse which seems to describe events not belonging to any of the weeks. The details of these verses will be treated under the propositions which now follow.

(3) *The first sixty-nine weeks ran out during the lifetime of Messiah and before His crucifixion.*

Having now seen that the sixty-nine weeks have as their point of

termination "the anointed one, the prince," more special attention must now be given to this terminal point.

Neither the A.S.V. translation nor the Authorized ("the Messiah, the prince") is wholly satisfactory. The Hebrew words are used absolutely; that is, they are without prefixes, suffixes, articles, or modifiers of any kind and are in what is called the absolute state. They stand in immediate juxtaposition, as follows: *mashiach naghidh*.

Leaving this passage, for the present, in every use of the word *mashiach*, anointed (adjective, masculine, singular), except three, it is used substantively with a pronominal suffix (that is, a possessive pronoun) or with a possessive noun. It is in all these cases "his anointed," "mine anointed," etc., or "the Lord's anointed," etc. In the three other cases the word is used attributively, and hence they do not bear on the use in our passage where the word is a substantive in use.

This being the case, it can hardly be otherwise intended than as a descriptive proper name--*Messiah*, or translated into English, *Anointed*. Priests and kings (and on at least one occasion a prophet also) were by Hebrew custom inducted into office with the anointing ceremony. Prophecy assigned to the coming deliverer of Israel all of these office. This being the case, it seems clear that the official position of Christ as the final great prophet of whom Moses spoke, the great high priest who would in his own self accomplish the work of bringing the nation to God, and the great "shoot out of the stem of Jesse" who would consummate the kingship of David's dynasty, are meant. Messiah, then, was His primary name with reference to Israel, and He gathers up all His functions in relation to that people.

The other word in the series, *naghidh* (A.S.V., the prince) is translated captain, ruler, leader, governor, prince, and is frequently used of the function of the kings of Israel, being first used of Saul. Significantly, it is seldom used of any except an Israelitish ruler of Israelites. Usually it is of "my people," "Israel," "the camp," or some other designation of Israelites. For this reason it seems likely that it applies to Messiah's supreme position among Israelites rather than to His yet future mission to judge and rule the nations.

So, the terminus of this prophecy of sixty-nine weeks is the appearing of Christ as the Messiah-leader of "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" to whom alone, in His first advent, our Lord said He came. The events of the second advent are completely out of sight still at the conclusion of the sixty-nine weeks.

As previously indicated, there are some who suppose that the event which placed our Lord before Israel as their *Messiah Nagid* was the baptism. But the baptism had no reference to the presentation of Christ to man--it was rather a self-dedication of Christ to God, and act which procured for Him the Father's approval, but since it had no reference to Israel evoked no response from them at all.



The plain fact is that at no time in His life did Christ plainly and publicly present Himself to Israel as their *Messiah Nagid*, except at the time of the so-called triumphal entry. It is the opinion of this writer that no other event fits the language of this text and the record of history (so also Seiss, Ironside, Anderson, McClain, et al.).

The crucifixion it could not be. Important in time and eternity as that event was, it certainly was not a presentation of Christ as the *Messiah Nagid* of Israel--and all the attention given by some writers to Pilate's inscription on the cross does not make it so. The fact that settles this is the language of our prophecy. The terminus of the sixty-nine weeks is described as *Messiah Nagid* in verse 25. It is clearly some presentation of a person that is meant--not an era within the sixty-nine weeks. Then verse 26 plainly goes on to say, "And after the threescore and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing." These words have been interpreted in various ways. Some think that the cutting off refers not to the death of Christ, but to His loss of that which was rightly His as Messiah (so Keil) and is equivalent to "shall have nothing" in the same verse. This may very well be true, but if so the crucifixion was merely the final step in that loss, if such it is. With the majority of the commentators, therefore, and also in harmony with the first meaning of *Karath* to "cut off," which usually specifies a violent kind of death, I take it to refer to the crucifixion.<sup>1</sup> Note that this death of Christ was to take place "after the threescore and two weeks" (v. 26). There can be no honest difference of opinion about that--the cutting off of *Messiah* is "after" the sixty-two weeks. It is not the concluding event of the series of sixty-two weeks. Neither is it said to be the opening event of the seventieth. It is simply after the seven plus sixty-two weeks. The Hebrew *weachare* (and after) does not designate how long after--it could be immediately afterward or a thousand years afterward--but it must be after.

It should not be necessary to discuss whether the *Messiah Nagid* of verse 25 and the Messiah of verse 26 are the same. By any fair consideration of the obvious meaning of the passage, they cannot be otherwise, as most agree.

(4) *The death of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem, both mentioned in the prophecy, are events which follow the close of the sixty-ninth week and precede the beginning of the seventieth week.*

It will not be necessary to repeat the evidence for stating that the death of Christ was to take place after the conclusion of the sixty-ninth week.

Attention must now be directed to the statement following the reference in verse 26 to Messiah's being cut off. The whole statement is as follows: "And after the threescore and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary."

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<sup>1</sup> The word *Karath* is used almost without exception of one of two things: either the making (cutting off) of a covenant or of the violent death of man or beast. There is no sound reason for departing from the usual idea of violent death here. A different word *gazar* "cut off," but with nearly identical meaning, is certainly used of the death of Christ in Isaiah 53:8, where it is said, "He was cut off (*nighzar*) from the land of the living."

It is of utmost importance to see that whatever is meant by the destruction of the city and sanctuary, it is joined in time with the cutting off of Messiah as "after the threescore and two weeks." Dr. Keil labored at length to prove that the sixty-two weeks began with some event in the earthly life of Christ and that they end with the last strokes of victory for the church in this present age, the church being the "city" which the angel predicts will be built. Leupold, reflecting an interpretation common in his church, holds the same view. However, Young, Amillennial in his theology like Keil and Leupold, rejects this interpretation of the prophecy as untenable and frankly admits that the seven plus sixty-two weeks come to an end before the death of Christ and maintains that the death of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem described in verse 26 take place in the seventieth week.

But the language of verse 26, both in the Hebrew and in the English of the American Standard Version, clearly specifies that the cutting off of Christ and the destruction of "the city" by "the people of the prince that shall come" not only follow the close of the sixty-ninth week but precede the beginning of the seventieth.

I do not feel called on to labor at length the view that the destruction of the city is that of Jerusalem by the Romans in the first and second centuries A.D. It has been always the prevailing interpretation.

Neither is there any difficulty with our Amillennial friends over the identity of "the coming prince," or, as the version has it, "the prince that shall come." Keil and Leupold recognize him as the final Antichrist, said to be "coming" because already selected for prophecy in *direct language* in chapter seven as "the little horn," and in *type* in chapter eight as "the little horn." Young thinks otherwise, but is outweighed on his own "team."

That the opening of the seventieth week is subsequent to the events of verse 26 is manifest by the text itself. The seventieth week is not picked up for mention till verse 27 is reached. When that point is reached, it is introduced by a *waw consecutive*,<sup>2</sup> indicating that the contents of verse 27 are subsequent and consequential in relation to verse 26. All attempts to place the events of verse 26 (the cutting off of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem) in either the period of the sixty-two weeks (Keil and Leupold) or in the seventieth week (Young and a host of writers in the past) stumble and fall on the simple language of the text itself. There is but one natural interpretation--and that is the one which regards the events of verse 26 as belonging to a period between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks, when God has sovereignly set aside His people Israel, awaiting a time of resumption of covenant relationship in the future, after Israel has been restored to the land.

This writer cannot help but reflect on the possible explanation for a man like Dr. H. C. Leupold, who issued a lengthy, and in many respects valuable, commentary on the Book of Daniel in 1949 without so much as a reference to this

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<sup>2</sup> *Waw consecutive* is the conjunction "and" prefixed to a verb in such a way as to indicate a close consequential relation to a preceding verb.

"gap," "hiatus," or "intercalation" in this prophecy. Surely he knows that some of the greatest names in Biblical study in Germany, England, and America are listed among the advocates of these things. I think of Nathaniel West, Samuel Tregelles, Joseph Seiss, Sir Robert Anderson (who merits this distinction)--if we are to ignore the host of popular writers who have given these views currency in the last several generations. One feels moved to suggest courteously to Dr. Leupold that there are some writers outside the Lutheran fold who have written worth-while treatments on Biblical questions, and that at least a few of them were more versed in English than in his beloved German. He could profit by giving them some attention.

(5) *The seventieth week belongs to a seven-year relationship between Antichrist and Daniel's people Israel in eschatological times, and concludes with the second advent of Christ.*

This is required by the language of the last verse of this prophecy, verse 27, which reads as follows:

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

To develop this proposition in full would require a book at least as great in bulk as this book. The reader who is informed in eschatological matters will recognize that here the writer must for the sake of brevity deny himself the privilege of following the theological trails very far beyond the strict limitations of the text before us. Indeed, it is not necessary to go beyond the verse itself to demonstrate the truth of this proposition.

In the *first* place, the ordinary rules of grammar establish that the leading actor of this verse is the Antichrist--the great evil man of the end-time. "He shall make a firm covenant" etc.--thus the verse opens. A more literal reading of *wehighbir berith* is: "And he shall cause to prevail a covenant." If the pronoun "he" were present in the Hebrew, a case might possibly be made for the introduction of an entirely new personality into the story at this point. However, there is no pronoun--only the third masculine singular form of the verb indicating that an antecedent is to be sought, and that of necessity in the preceding context. There is only one antecedent admissible, according to the accepted rule that the last preceding noun which agrees in gender and number and agrees with the sense is the antecedent. This is unquestionably the *naghidh habo*, "the coming prince" of verse 26. He is a "coming" prince, that is, one whom the reader would already know as a prince to come, because he is the same as the "little horn" on the fourth beast of chapter seven. He is a Roman prince because he is of the people who destroyed Daniel's city after the restoration of the first seven weeks, and also because the "little horn" of chapter seven can be only a Roman prince. He is Antichrist, because Paul and John clearly identify this personage of Daniel's prophecy as a final evil personage--the final Antichrist.

In the *second* place, the parties with whom the Antichrist of this verse deals can be identified only as Daniel's people Israel. His dealings are *larabbim*, literally, "with the many." It is significant that this word *rabbim* is used in Isaiah 52:14 of the Jewish nation which rejected Christ at his first coming, and in Isaiah 53:12 of the same Jewish nation whose sins He bore. But even aside from this evidence, which, of course, is not conclusive in itself, the opening words of Gabriel's prophecy remain--these seventy weeks were decreed on Daniel's people Israel, and on Daniel's city of Jerusalem. Furthermore, this evil prince is presented in chapter seven as persecuting the "people of the saints," who have already been identified in this paper as Israelites, for a period of "a time, times, and half a time." The correspondence of this period (which easily could be interpreted as three and one-half years) with the three and one-half years of this verse (second half of the week) during which this prince shall be not a blessed anointed prince but an abomination, is too close to be accidental. They unquestionably point to the same thing--persecution of Israel by Antichrist.

In the *third* place, this verse places a certain blasphemous act of Antichrist in the seventieth week, which act is elaborated in II Thessalonians and in the Revelation and definitely placed in an eschatological setting. I have in mind the word *weal kenaph*, rendered in the common English version, "and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate." The American Standard Version renders it, "and upon the wing of abominations shall come one that maketh desolate." Leupold renders it, "and upon the wing of abominable idols shall the destroyer come." Young translates it, "and upon the wing of abomination (is) one making desolate."

The record of discussion of the translation of these words is simply tremendous. The translation which appeals best to me recognizes the same person, Antichrist, as the subject of all the verbs in the verse down to the last clause, and which would then translate the whole verse: "And he shall cause to prevail a covenant with the many for one week, and at the middle of the week he shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease, and upon the wing of detested things desolating, even unto consummation, and that determined shall be poured out on the desolator." More will be said of this translation later.

The important thing to know is that almost every reputable commentator of every school, and that includes even the unbelieving higher critics, discovers an act of desecration of the Jewish temple either specifically prophesied or shaping the form of language used. There are almost no exceptions. The Greek translations, both of the Seventy and of Theodotian, whose translation has for many centuries replaced the version of the Seventy in the Greek Old Testament, plainly imply the same. The Greek of the Seventy is *epi to hieron bdelugua tes eremoseos*, rendered by Boutflower, "over the temple there shall be an abomination of desolations." Theodotian is the same except for the singular number of the last word. Furthermore, this is connected immediately in the verse with an act of Antichrist said to take place in connection with Antichrist's causing "sacrifice and oblation" to cease.

Now, it should be clear to everyone that such acts as these cannot take place except that Jewry be worshiping in a rebuilt Jewish temple under some

kind of an arrangement or league with Antichrist. It also seems clear that just such an arrangement is predicted in the words of our text: "And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week."

Now will the reader observe that the future existence of a Jewish temple is predicted in Revelation 11:1,2; that the same passage also predicts that for forty-two months (the three and one-half years of Daniel 9:27) the holy city shall be trodden under foot. The correspondence with this prophecy can hardly be accidental. Furthermore, in a passage whose interpretation cannot be questioned, Paul predicts that just before his destruction by Christ at his second advent, Antichrist shall sit "in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God" (II Thes. 2:4).

These predictions of Paul and John can hardly be wrested from their obvious relationship to Daniel 9:27, and I say this demonstrates the truth of our proposition that the seventieth week belongs to a seven-year relationship between Antichrist and Daniel's people Israel in eschatological times.

A *fourth* reason for this view is that the last events of the seventieth week are said to be: "even unto the full end, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolate." A better translation of the last phrase is "upon the desolator." If the first translation be adopted, a full end of idolatry and persecution of God's people is specified; if the second, then the final destruction of Antichrist. In either case, the concluding event of the week must be the coming of Christ in glory to destroy Antichrist and to rescue his people.

A *fifth* reason, not based on my own fallible interpretation of the text, nor on the tracing of a connection of this text with similar events in the eschatological portions of Paul's and John's inspired writings, but upon what appears to be the interpretation of Christ Himself, is this: that our Lord interpreted the event which marks the mid-point of this seventieth week to be in the period of time immediately preceding His own advent in power and glory.

The Septuagint translation of this passage, as already noted, contains the expression *bdelugma ton eremoseon*, intended quite evidently as a translation of *shiqqutsim meshomem* in the Hebrew text. It is not a very good translation, it must be admitted, but it does not distort the essential meaning of the text, which is evidently a reference to some consummate act of sacrilegious idolatry. Now, our Lord made reference to this phrase in His Olivet discourse and quoted it almost exactly as it appears in the Septuagint. It is true that Daniel contains the same expression in the Septuagint rendering of 12:11. But I see no reason for asserting that Daniel referred to one of these in particular (as Tregelles does), for it seems quite obvious that the reference is to the same event in both cases. The taking away of the regular sacrifices is connected with the setting up of this abomination of desolation in both passages. I think he had both texts in mind.

The important thing may easily be lost in the confusion about the translations. But it need not be, for it is as obvious as can be. Jesus simply said in this, the most extensive of his eschatological discourses, "When

therefore ye see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place...." (Matt. 24:15). He said this to indicate that the appearance of this abomination of desolation would be a sure sign of the immediate end of the age and of His coming in glory. He had just said, "But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto the nations; and then shall the end come" (v. 14). In such a context, I repeat, the setting up of the abomination must be understood as a sign of the immediate end of the age. This is further emphasized in the words which follow. These verses (16-28) describe a time of tribulation and persecution for God's people. Verse 22 adds that the time will be shortened, that is limited. (This must have reference to the fact that it will extend for only the three and one-half years of Daniel's prophecy.) Then verses 29 and 30 add, "But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the son of man...coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

I regard this as incontrovertible evidence that Jesus placed the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy in the last seven years of this present age, thus specifying that it would be the last seven years of human history before His own return in power and glory.

The *sixth* and final reason for believing that the seventieth week is yet future and ends coincidentally with the coming of Christ in His kingdom is that the scope of the prophecy set forth by Gabriel (Daniel 9:24) requires that the last week terminate no earlier than the coming of Christ in His kingdom at the second advent. I mean to say it presupposes the rule of God among men and the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth.

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

There are six infinitive clauses: (1) to finish transgression, (2) to make an end of sins, (3) to make reconciliation for iniquity, (4) to bring in everlasting righteousness, (5) to seal up vision and prophecy, (6) to anoint the most holy.

Three common views have been adopted among believing commentators concerning the scope of these six clauses. The least acceptable one, advocated notably by Stuart, is that which views all six of these blessings as following the conclusion of the seventy weeks, which conclusion is said to be in the events connected with the destruction of Antiochus Epiphanes. The idea is that the seventy weeks specifically concern the remaining years of Israel's submission to and persecution by Gentile power. This is thought to terminate with Antiochus. The six blessings are then said to be simply the Messianic Kingdom, conceived in a Postmillenarian fashion. Another, championed notably by Barnes among the Postmillennialists, by Young and Mauro among the Amillennialists, and by Auberlen among the Premillennialists, regards the

seventy weeks as terminating shortly after the death of Christ and the six blessings as being conferred within the seventy weeks. These men feel that "it was by the cutting off of Messiah that the six predictions of verse 24 were to be fulfilled" (Mauro, *The Seventy Weeks*, 43,44). Mauro states the view succinctly: "When our Lord ascended into heaven and the Holy Spirit descended, there remained not one of the six items of Daniel 9:24 that was not fully accomplished" (*ibid.*, 53).

A third position, adopted by Thomson (Daniel, *Pulpit Commentary*) among the Postmillennialists, by Keil and Leupold among the Amillennialists, and by almost all the Premillennialists of the past seventy-five years (West, Anderson, Gaebelien, Kelly, Tregelles, Seiss, Ironsides, McClain, Cooper, Brooks, Larkin, Chafer, Bauman and many others) is that these six blessings arrive in full only at the termination (immediately after) of the seventieth week. These men generally recognize that the *basis* was laid in the grand providence of God which took place at the death of Christ but contend that the full effecting of these blessings comes only at the second advent.

The following considerations settle the matter in the favor of the third view.

In the first place, the seventy weeks are preserved throughout the verse as a *singular* subject of all the infinitive clauses. *shabuim shibim*, "seventy weeks" is indeed plural, but the verb, *nechtakh* (simple degree, passive voice, third person, masculine gender, *singular* number), translated "decreed," shows that Gabriel regarded the seventy weeks as a *single* unit in the divine determination. *Seventy weeks IS [not are] determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city*. This being the case, if the accomplishment of one of these six can be fixed at the second coming of Christ, the full accomplishment of them all awaits the same event.

In the second place, it can be shown that at least the last of these six awaits its accomplishment at the second advent of Christ. Keil devotes five pages to proof of this point. Leupold also give much attention to the same point. The promise is "to anoint the most holy," or, according to the American Standard Version margin, "to anoint a most holy place." The Hebrew, *limshoach qodesh qadashim*, is literally "to anoint a holy of holies."

Now, Young disposes of all of Keil's weighty and cogent argument, as well as the linguistic evidence, with a single stroke of the pen. But this cannot rightly be done. The simple fact remains, as Keil demonstrates, that the American Standard Version marginal reading gives the sense of the passage: "to anoint a most holy place," that is, a temple of Jehovah God of Israel. The linguistic evidence is unquestionably in this direction. In only one passage in the entire Old Testament (I Chron. 23:13) can these Hebrew words be used of any other than the temple or some one of its parts. It would be exceedingly strange for Gabriel to depart from the usual meaning here in a passage so closely tied in thought to the rebuilding of Solomon's temple.

And "if thus the anointing of a most holy is here announced, then by it there is given the promise, not of the renewal of the place already existing

from of old, but of the appointment of a new place of God's gracious presence among His people, a new sanctuary....Since this statement is closely connected with those going before, and they speak of the perfect setting aside of transgression and of sin, of the appearance of everlasting righteousness, and the shutting up of all prophecy by its fulfillment, thus of things for which the work of redemption completed by the first appearance of Christ has, it is true, laid the everlasting foundation, but which reach their completion in the full carrying through of this work of salvation in the return of the Lord" (Keil, *op.cit.*, 348,349).

As an Amillennialist, Keil's views of the course of events after the second advent naturally differ from mine. But his arm and pen are mighty in proof of the essential contention here, namely, that the blessings of these seventy weeks promised in the passage arrive at the conclusion of the series of seventy, a conclusion which is marked by the second advent of Christ in power and glory.

For these six reasons, furnished almost entirely by the language of the text of Daniel itself, it is evident that our proposition is correct, that, indeed, the seventieth week belongs to a seven-year relationship between Antichrist and Daniel's people Israel, in eschatological times, and concludes with the second advent of Christ.

## SUMMARY

In summation on the prophecy of the seventy weeks, five facts appear: that (1) the seventy weeks are 490 years, which relate wholly to the then future of Israel; (2) the seventy weeks are divided into three periods of seven, sixty-two, and one, which follow one another and run consecutively; (3) the first sixty-nine weeks ran out during the lifetime of Messiah and before His crucifixion; (4) the death of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem, both mentioned in the prophecy, are events which follow the close of the sixty-ninth week and precede the beginning of the seventieth week, and (5) the seventieth week pertains to a seven-year relationship between Antichrist and Daniel's people Israel, in eschatological times, and concludes with the second advent of Christ.

In support of the crucial fifth of the propositions cited above, six arguments have been set forth, as follows: (1) the grammar of the passage indicates that the "*prince*" of verse 26 is none other than the Antichrist of end-time prophecy, and it is he who makes a covenant, thus associating the prophecy with eschatological events. (2) The "*many*" with whom this prince makes a covenant are shown to be none other than Daniel's people Israel, thus placing that ancient people in an eschatological situation. (3) The blasphemous act of the prince in desecrating the temple, described in the words, "For the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate," is placed by Paul (II Thes. 2:4) and John (Rev. 11:1 ff.) in an eschatological setting. (4) The prophecy specifies that the seventieth week will end forever (v. 27) Jewish idolatry and persecution, or, on the basis of an alternate



translation, with the final undoing of Antichrist--neither one possible short of the second coming of Christ. (5) Our Lord Himself interpreted this prophecy as a prediction of events at the close of this age (Matt. 24:15); and (6) finally, the scope of the prophecy which is said (cf. v. 24) (a) to finish transgression, (b) to make an end of sins, (c) to make reconciliation for iniquity, (d) to bring in everlasting righteousness, (e) to seal up vision and prophecy, and (f) to anoint the most holy, requires that it include end-time events.

Finally, it appears that only a Premillennial system of eschatology can approach a full explanation of the details of this prophecy or utilize all the facts of it. Postmillennialism fails because of its wholly wrong view of the course of this age. Amillennialism fails because it does not wish to recognize the peculiarly Israelitish flavor of the prophecy, which promises a rich future for Israel *after* the return of Christ in glory, and the *rôle* of Israel in conflict with Antichrist during the last years of this present age. On the other hand, our doctrines of Antichrist, of the restoration of Israel, and of the Great Tribulation find not only support but [also] their chronological unraveling in this prophecy.