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About the Time of the End, a body of men will be raised up who will turn their attention to the Prophecies, and insist upon their literal interpretation, in the midst of much clamor and opposition.

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INTRODUCTION

The very brief but famous prophecy of the Seventy Weeks, recorded in Dan. 9:24-27, has always been a focus of interest to interpreters of the Word, regardless of their theological bias. But today more than ever, in the face of significant tendencies both in the world and the professing church, the passage is attracting fresh attention, especially from those who still believe in the reality of "predictive prophecy." Probably no single prophetic utterance is more crucial in the fields of Biblical Interpretation, Apologetics, and Eschatology.

In the first place, the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks has *an immense evidential value as a witness to the truth of Scripture*. That part of the prophecy relating to the first sixty-nine weeks has already been accurately fulfilled (as I expect to show), and in this remarkable fulfilment we have an unanswerable argument for the divine inspiration of the Bible. It is, in fact, nothing less than a mathematical demonstration. For only an omniscient God could have foretold over five hundred years in advance the very day on which the Messiah would ride into Jerusalem and present Himself as the "Prince" of Israel. Yet this is precisely what has been done in the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks.

Again, this great prophecy is *the impregnable rock upon which all naturalistic theories of prophecy are shattered*. These theories deny the possibility of any "predictive element" in prophecy. And since the Book of Daniel did forecast many well attested historic events, the critics have sought to save their theories by denying to Daniel the authorship of the book and moving its date down to a point subsequent to the events described, thus making the unknown author a mere historian who pretended to be a prophet. In this rather easy and summary fashion, they hoped to get rid of the troublesome specter of "predictive prophecy." But no critic has ever dared to suggest a date for the Book of Daniel as late as the birth of our Lord. Yet Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weeks predicts to the very day Christ's appearance as the "Prince" of Israel. Therefore, when the critics have done their worst, no matter where they place the date of the book, the greatest time-prophecy of the Bible is left untouched. And on this prophecy, the whole case of the critics goes to pieces. For if even so much as *one* predictive prophecy is established, there remains no valid a priori reason for denying the others.

Finally, with reference to its importance, I am convinced that in the predictions of the Seventy Weeks, we have *the indispensable chronological key to all New Testament prophecy*. Our Lord's great prophetic discourse recorded in Matthew and Mark fixes the time of Israel's final and greatest

trouble definitely within the days of the Seventieth Week of Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:15-22; Mark 13:14-20). And the greater part of the Book of Revelation is simply an expansion of Daniel's prophecy within the chronological framework as outlined by the same Seventieth Week, which is divided into two equal periods, each extending for 1260 days, or 42 months, or 3 1/2 years (Rev. 11:2-3; 12:6, 14; 13:5). Therefore, apart from an understanding of the details of the Seventy Weeks of Daniel, all attempts to interpret New Testament prophecy must fail in large measure. This point will be discussed fully in Parts II and III.

The prophecy of the Seventy Weeks was given to Daniel under circumstances which were most remarkable. Daniel and his people had been carried away captive into the land of Babylon. The armies of Nebuchadnezzar had utterly desolated the city of Jerusalem (II Chron. 36:17-21). According to an earlier prophecy uttered by Jeremiah, these "desolations" were to last for a period of seventy years (Jer. 25:11). The ninth chapter of Daniel opens with a reference to this very prophecy (9:1-2). The prophet Daniel, now a man grown old in the service and courts of the Babylonian kings, understands from his study of the "Books" that the period of divine judgment must be nearing its close; and he prays to the God of Israel for light as to the future of his "city" and his "people" (9:3-19). It is a marvelous prayer, but unfinished; for while the petitioner "was speaking in prayer" an angelic messenger came with the answer of God (21-23). And since the divine reply contains a prediction of the First Advent of Christ, it is wholly appropriate that the messenger should have been Gabriel, the same angel who several hundred years later would announce His birth of the Virgin Mary (Luke 1:26). Thus it was the angel, not Daniel, who first uttered the great prophecy of the Seventy Weeks. The passage appears as follows in the Common Version, with the exception of a few changes selected from the American Standard Revised Version and indicated by brackets:

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

25. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

26. And after [the] threescore and two weeks shall Messiah 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].

With the prophecy now before us, we shall begin the study with a careful analysis of its main features. Because of their importance, and as an aid to the interpretation of the passage, the reader should note carefully and keep in mind the following points:

1. The entire prophecy has to do with Daniel's "people" and Daniel's "city," that is, the nation of *Israel* and the city of *Jerusalem* (24).
2. Two different princes are mentioned, who should not be confused: the first is named *Messiah the Prince* (25); and the second is described as *the Prince that shall come* (26).
3. The entire time-period involved is exactly specified as *Seventy Weeks* (24); and these *Seventy Weeks* are further divided into three lesser periods: first, a period of *seven weeks*; after that a period of *threescore and two weeks*; and finally, a period of *one week* (25, 27).
4. The beginning of the whole period of the *Seventy Weeks* is definitely fixed at "*the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem*" (25).
5. The end of the *seven weeks and threescore and two weeks* (69 weeks) will be marked by the *appearance of Messiah as the "Prince" of Israel* (25).
6. At a later time, "after the threescore and two weeks" which follow the first seven weeks (that is, after 69 weeks), *Messiah the Prince will be "cut off," and Jerusalem will again be destroyed* by the people of another "prince" who is yet to come (26).
7. After these two important events, we come to the last, or *Seventieth Week*, the beginning of which will be clearly marked by the establishment of a *firm covenant* or treaty between the *Coming Prince* and the Jewish nation for a period of "one week" (27).

8. In the "midst" of this Seventieth Week, evidently breaking his treaty, the coming prince will suddenly *cause the Jewish sacrifice to cease* and precipitate upon this people a time of wrath and desolation lasting to the "full end" of the Week (27).

9. With the full completion of the whole period of the Seventy Weeks, there will be ushered in a *time of great and unparalleled blessings for the nation of Israel* (24).