Five of Six*

Amos 8:9-10 (9) And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day:
(10) And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day.
I read a sign that contained this message; 1 of 6 face hunger, 5 of 6 can help. I perceive a famine of "hearing the word of God" to be more severe. As to what degree I cannot tell, but as a reference, reversal of the sign message to 5 of 6 face a gospel famine, 1 of 6 can help, does not seem to be out of order. God has done His part; He sent His Son as the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (1John2:2). *God gave a sign and it is amazing the accuracy of this prophecy,* I will cause the sun to go down at noon, *as on the day the Lord was crucified. The Jews counted the hours of the day beginning at daylight, about 6:00 in the morning. Thus the 3rd hour would be 9:00 am, the sixth hour would be 12:00 noon. Fulfillment of Amos 8:9 is seen in;*
Matthew 27:45-50 (45) Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.
(46) And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?
(47) Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias.
(48) And straightway one of them ran, and took a spunge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.
(49) The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.
(50) Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded

up the ghost.
The correspondence of these words with the miracle at our Lord's Passion, in that "the earth was darkened in the clear day at noon-day," was noticed by the earliest fathers since it took place at the Feast of the Passover, and, in punishment for their sin, their "feasts were turned into mourning," by the desolation of Jerusalem and the cessation of their worship and sacrifice in their temple because of it's destruction. It was to be no passing trouble, but one which should end in bitterness, an unending sorrow and destruction; and to this day their temple has never been rebuilt. Turn with me to;
Daniel 9:24-27 (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 threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.
(27) And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of **abominations he shall make it desolate**, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.
This event was referred to by Jesus as the "abomination of desolation" spoken of by Daniel the prophet. The city of David was desolated by the Roman army—for Judah's abominable

idolatrous sin. It is not without considerable interest that apparently even the Jews recognized that the destruction of the Hebrew nation was a fulfillment of Daniel's remarkable prophecy. Josephus, the Jewish historian, stated that "Daniel also wrote concerning the Roman government, and that our country should be made desolate by them." *(The Antiquities of the Jews, Book.10 Chap.11 Para. 7)*
{In A.D. 66, the Jews, who were subject to Rome, revolted against the empire. This plunged the Hebrews into several years of bloody conflict with the Romans. Titus, son and successor of the famous Vespasian, overthrew the city of Jerusalem (after a five-month siege) in the summer of A.D. 70. The holy city was burned (Matthew 22:7), and the "sanctuary" (temple) was demolished. He overran the city with his army, destroyed and plundered the temple, and slew the Jews—men, women and children—by tens of thousands. When their lust for blood had been sated, the Romans carried off into captivity all the able-bodied remnant of the Jews (for they had done away with all the weaklings and the aged), so that not a single Jew was left alive in the city or its vicinity. Only on one day in the year—the day of remembrance of the destruction of the temple—were they allowed to mourn over the city from the neighboring hill-tops. Christ had informed His disciples that the day was coming when the Jews' "house" would be left desolate (Matthew 23:38); indeed, not one stone would be left upon another; (Matthew 24:2). Significantly, only one stone from that temple, and parts of another, have been identified positively by archaeologists. (Daniel's Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks by Wayne Jackson).} *The veil of the temple was torn in twain at the death of Jesus and now with the destruction of the temple, the sacrifice and the oblation ceased, and for the overspreading of abominations made desolate, thus fulfilling the abominations of desolation spoken of by both Daniel and Jesus, turn with me to;*
Matthew 24:15-22 (15) When ye therefore shall see the

abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)
(16) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:
(17) Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:
(18) Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.
(19) And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!
(20) But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:
(21) For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.
(22) And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.
This destruction of the temple in 70 AD was only a few decades after Messiah was cut off. However the temple was destroyed a first time by King Nebuchadrezzar in the old testament, and the language is so similar it gives little doubt the abomination of desolation is speaking of the Jews and their temple, turn to;
Jeremiah 25:9-11 (9) Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations.
(10) Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle.
(11) And this whole land **shall be a desolation**, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon

seventy years.
Jeremiah 44:21-22 (21) The incense that ye burned in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, ye, and your fathers, your kings, and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the LORD remember them, and came it not into his mind?
(22) So that the LORD could no longer bear, because of the evil of your doings, and because of the **abominations which ye have committed; therefore is your land a desolation**, and an astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day.
Sinners call it liberty to live at large; but for a man to be a slave to his lusts, is the very worst slavery. They forsook God for idols. They walked not in the highway in which they might travel safely, but in a way in which they must stumble: such was the way of idolatry, and such is the way of iniquity. By this they made their land and their temple desolate, and themselves miserable. Abominations of desolation came upon them. Hear the word speak in;
2Kings 25:8-15 (8) And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem:
(9) And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great [man's] house burnt he with fire.
(10) And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.
(11) Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carry away.
(12) But the captain of the guard left of the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen.

(13) And the pillars of brass that were in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brasen sea that was in the house of the LORD, did the Chaldees break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Babylon.
(14) And the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away.
(15) And the firepans, and the bowls, and such things as were of gold, in gold, and of silver, in silver, the captain of the guard took away.
The city and temple were burnt, and, perhaps, the ark in it, for it was never seen on earth again after that. The vessels of the temple were carried away. When the things signified were sinned away, what should the signs stand for? It was righteous with God to deprive those of the benefit of His worship, who had preferred false worships before it; those that would have many altars, now shall have none. As the Lord spared not the angels that sinned, as he doomed the whole race of fallen men to the grave, and all unbelievers to hell, and as He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, we need not wonder at any miseries he may bring upon guilty nations, apostate churches, or persons. We need not wonder that; The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity. (Mat 13:41).
Rejection of the gospel of Christ, for any cause, can be considered a "famine of hearing the words of the Lord." As Messiah's manifestation is full of joy to believers, so it has an aspect of wrath to unbelievers. Thus when the Jews received Him not in His coming of grace, He came in judgment on Jerusalem, but not before the promise began to be fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out, and it was continued in the converting grace and miraculous gifts conferred on both Jews and Gentiles. Calling on God supposes knowledge of him, faith in him, desire toward him,

dependence on him, and, as evidence of the sincerity of all this, conscientious obedience to him. Those only shall be delivered in the great day, who are now effectually called from sin to God, from self to Christ, from things below to things above. Peter preached these things on Pentecost;
Acts 2:22-24 (22) Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:
(23) Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:
(24) Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.
In our first day of the week messages, little is spoken about "your daughters shall prophesy," that we read of in Acts 2:17. It is time to address that subject from God's word, because your daughters shared in the remarkable influences of the Holy Spirit. Philip the Evangelist had four daughters which did prophesy, observe;
Acts 21:8-9 (8) And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.
(9) And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.
The word prophesy is not to be understood here as implying the knowledge and discovery of future events; but signifies to teach and proclaim the great truths of God, especially those which concern redemption by Jesus Christ. It is probable also that the females of the church of Corinth partook of this gift, though they were forbidden to exercise it in public worship for it is stated, Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are

commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law (1Cor 14:34). *They may teach in private, in their own houses and families; in friends houses and families, they are to be teachers of good things, (Titus 2:3). They are to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; nor is the law or doctrine of a mother to be forsaken, any more than the instruction of a father; (Proverbs 1:8). Timothy, no doubt, received much advantage, from the private teachings and instructions of his mother Eunice, and grandmother Lois. Also women must not think themselves excused from learning what is necessary to salvation, though they must not usurp authority. There was a time when I understood little to nothing about the Bible concerning salvation. And then I met Darlene. She and her mother began to prophecy to me in private about salvation, the Church Christ built and other related subjects. As my eyes were opened, I began to understand what had been mysteries before. You Christian females must not underestimate the influence you weld,* know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you (1Cor 6:19). *Know you not that the parable of the talents is spoken to you females as well. If in private conversation, you were the only female in a group of 6 having knowledge of God's grace, would you use the talent or talents God gave to you as opportunity presented itself? Or would you hide it and then on judgment day have even that taken away. Jesus Christ withheld nothing, not the word, not even His earthly life as foretold in both the old and new.*
The sun shall be turned into darkness,.... As at the death of Christ. That the Sun is darkened when a total eclipse takes place, and that the Moon appears of a bloody hue in such circumstances, every person knows. It should be noted how that Amos 8:9-12, Acts 2:16-24 and Joel 2:28-32 have a mutual or reciprocal relation, establish an orderly connection and are complementary the one to the others. Matthew's account states; from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land

unto the ninth hour, *the sixth hour is noon, which is the exact time Amos prophesied,* I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day; *all this before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come - In the taking and sacking of Jerusalem, and burning of the temple, by the Romans under Titus, the son of Vespasian. This was a most terrible day of God's vengeance shown upon the world. There was a famine of hearing the word of God in the land, they despised the living word, rejected Him, and even hung Him on a cross. Whatever happened to 1 of 6, or 1 of 10, in that day? It is only the worldly and her children that the coming terrible day of the Lord is to be feared; to the children of God it brings redemption (Luke 21:28). Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be exempt from the lake of fire damnation. "Calling upon the name of the Lord" signifies not only the public worship of God, but inward worship also, in which the confession of the mouth is also an expression of the heart. We had given the example in the beginning that most likely 5 of 6 face a gospel famine, perhaps it should have been 9 of 10;*
Luke 17:11-17 (11) And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.
(12) And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:
(13) And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.
(14) And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.
(15) And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,
(16) And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.
(17) And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

Where are the nine? - The Master appears especially moved by this display. He seems to see in the thanklessness of the nine, contrasted with the conduct of the one, the ingratitude of men as a whole, as a prophetic type of what will also take place with man. Where are the numbers that from time to time have been converted to God? Are they still found praising him, with their faces in prayer, as they did at first? Alas! how many are turned back to perdition?, and how many are again mingled with the world? Art thou of this number? They are many, that are cleansed by the blood of Christ; his blood was shed for many, for the remission of sins; and by his righteousness he justifies many; and there are many who profess themselves to be cleansed by him, and yet there are but few that glorify him, by keeping close to the rule of his word, and by walking with Him in the ordinances of the Gospel. Suppose five young people driving on a snowy mountain pass in a blinding snow. In front of them, they could see a flashing light faintly, which they gladly followed as a beacon. However, upon entering a clearing in the weather and being bathed in light where they could see clearly, they were stunned by what they saw, the flashing sign read; ***DANGER EXPLOSIVES****. Five of six face a gospel famine, will the one help? Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light but he is not that lighthouse. True light cometh by Faith in Christ that is the effect of belief, and submission to baptism is the effect of that faith; the gift of salvation is given to them who first believe the testimony of God, by faith repent of their sins, confess Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and are baptized into Christ for remission of sins. This is the gospel. Today is decision day to make your election sure, or if one needs prayer for other reasons, make your request known, in either case come while we persuade with song.*

This message approved by
Jack Warford

Daniel's Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks

by Wayne Jackson, M.A.

Jesus Christ emphatically declared that the Old Testament Scriptures contained prophecies He would fulfill (Luke 24:27,44). Biblical scholars have catalogued more than 300 amazing prophecies that find precise fulfillment in the life and labor of the Son of God. One of these predictive declarations is found in Daniel 9:24-27, commonly referred to as the prophecy of "Daniel's Seventy Weeks." In this article, I would like to consider this important Old Testament oracle.

A proper analysis of Daniel 9:24ff. involves several factors. First, one should reflect upon the historical background out of which the prophetic utterance arose. Second, consideration should be given to the theological aspects of the Messiah's work that are set forth in this passage. Third, the chronology of the prophecy must be noted carefully; it represents a prime example of the precision of divine prediction. Finally, one should contemplate the sobering judgment that was to be visited upon the Jewish nation in the wake of its rejection of the Christ. Let us give some attention to each of these issues.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Because of Israel's apostasy, the prophet Jeremiah had foretold that the Jews would be delivered as captives to Babylon. In that foreign land they would be confined for seventy years (Jeremiah 25:12; 29:10). Sure enough, the prophet's warnings proved accurate. The general period of the Babylonian confinement was seventy years (Daniel 9:2; 2 Chronicles 36:21; Zechariah 1:12; 7:5). But why was a seventy-year captivity decreed? Why not sixty, or eighty? There was a reason for this exact time frame.

The law of Moses had commanded the Israelites to acknowledge every seventh year as a sabbatical year. The ground was to lie at rest (Leviticus 25:1-7). Apparently, across the centuries Israel had ignored that divinely imposed regulation. In their pre-captivity history, there seems to be no example of their ever having honored the sabbath-year law. Thus, according to the testimony of one biblical writer, the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity was assigned "until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths" (2 Chronicles 36:21).

If each of the seventy captivity-years represented a violation of the sabbatical-year requirement (every seventh year), as 2 Chronicles 36:21 appears to suggest, this would indicate that Israel had neglected the divine injunction for approximately 490 years. The captivity era therefore looked backward upon five centuries of sinful neglect. At the same time, Daniel's prophecy telescoped forward to a time—some 490 years into the future—when the "Anointed One" would "make an end of sins" (9:24). Daniel's prophecy seems to mark a sort of "mid-way" point in the historical scheme of things.

In the first year of Darius, who had been appointed king over the realm of the Chaldeans (c. 538 B.C.), Daniel, reflecting upon the time span suggested by Jeremiah's prophecies, calculated that the captivity period almost was over (9:1-2). He thus approached Jehovah in prayer. The prophet confessed his sins, and those of the nation as well. He petitioned Jehovah to turn away His wrath from Jerusalem, and permit the temple to be rebuilt (9:16-17). The Lord responded to Daniel's prayer in a message delivered by the angel Gabriel (9:24-27). The house of God would be rebuilt. A more significant blessing would come, however, in the Person of the Anointed One (Christ), Who is greater than the temple (cf. Matthew 12:6). This prophecy was a delightful message of consolation to the despondent Hebrews in captivity.

THE MESSIAH'S MISSION

This exciting context sets forth the primary purpose of Christ's mission to Earth. First, the Messiah would come to deal with the problem of human sin. He would "finish transgression," make an "end of sins," and effect "reconciliation for iniquity." That theme is developed gloriously throughout the New Testament (see Matthew 1:21; 20:28; 26:28; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:20; 1 Peter 2:24; Revelation 1:5—passages that are but a fractional sampling of the New Testament references to this exalted topic).

The advent of Christ did not put an "end" to sin in the sense that wickedness was eradicated from the Earth. Rather, the work of the Savior was to introduce a system that could provide effectually and permanently a solution to the human sin predicament. This is one of the themes of the book of Hebrews. Jesus' death was a "once-for-all" event (see Hebrews 9:26). The Lord never will have to return to the Earth to repeat the Calvary experience.

It is interesting to note that Daniel emphasized that the Anointed One would address the problems of "transgression," "sin," and "iniquity"—as if to suggest that the Lord is capable of dealing with evil in all of its hideous forms. Similarly, the prophet Isaiah, in the 53rd chapter of his narrative, revealed that the Messiah would sacrifice Himself for "transgression" (5,8,12), "sin" (10,12), and "iniquity" (5,6,11).

It is worthy of mention at this point that Isaiah 53 frequently is quoted in the New Testament in conjunction with the Lord's atoning work at the time of His first coming. Since Daniel 9:24ff. quite obviously has an identical thrust, it, too, must focus upon the Savior's work at the cross, and not upon Jesus' second coming—as is alleged by premillennialists.

Second, in addition to His redemptive work in connection with sin, Daniel showed that the Messiah would usher in an era of "everlasting righteousness." This obviously is a reference to the Gospel dispensation. In the pages of the New Testament, Paul forcefully argued that Heaven's plan for accounting man as "righteous" was made known "at this present season" (Roman 3:21-26) through the Gospel (Romans 1:16-17).

Third, the angel's message suggested that as a result of the Messiah's work, "vision and prophecy" would be sealed up. The Hebrew term denotes that which is brought to a "conclusion" or is finished (Gesenius, 1979, p. 315). It should be emphasized that the major burden of the Old Testament was to proclaim the coming of God's Son. Peter declared that the prophets of ancient times heralded the "sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow them." He affirmed that this message now is announced in the Gospel (1 Peter 1:10-12). Here is a crucial point. With the coming of the Savior to effect human redemption, and with the completion of the New Testament record which sets forth that message, the need for "vision and prophecy" became obsolete. As a result, "prophecy" (and other revelatory gifts) have "ceased" (see 1 Corinthians 13:8-13; Ephesians 4:11-16). There are no supernatural "visions" and "prophecies" being given by God in this age. [For further study, see Judisch (1978, Chapter 5), and Jackson (1990, pp. 114-124).]

Fourth, Daniel stated that the "most holy" would be anointed. What is the meaning of this expression? Dispensational premillennialists interpret this as a reference to the rebuilding of the Jewish temple during the so-called "millennium." But the premillennial concept is not supported by the facts.

Any view that one adopts regarding this phraseology must be consistent with other biblical data. The expression "most holy" probably is an allusion to Christ Himself, and the "anointing" a reference to the Lord's endowment with the Holy Spirit at the commencement of His ministry

(Matthew 3:16; Acts 10:38). Consider the following factors. (1) While it is possible that the grammar can reflect a "most holy" thing or place (i.e., in a neuter form), it also can yield a masculine sense—"Most Holy One." The immediate context tips the scales toward the masculine since the "anointed one, the prince" is mentioned in verse 25. (2) The "anointing" obviously belongs to the same time frame as the events previously mentioned, hence is associated with the Lord's first coming, not the second one. (3) Thompson has observed that the act of anointing never was associated with the temple's "most holy" place in the Old Testament (1950, p. 268). (4) Anointing was practiced in the Old Testament period as a rite of inauguration and consecration to the offices of prophet (1 Kings 19:16), priest (Exodus 28:41), and king (1 Samuel 10:1). Significantly, Christ functions in each of these roles (see Acts 3:20-23; Hebrews 3:1; Matthew 21:5). (5) The anointing of Jesus was foretold elsewhere in the Old Testament (Isaiah 61:1), and, in fact, the very title, "Christ," means anointed.

Fifth, the Anointed One was to "make a firm covenant with many" (Daniel 9:27a, ASV). A better rendition would be: "Make a covenant firm...." The meaning seems to be: the Messiah's covenant surely will remain firm, i.e., prevail, even though He is killed. The "covenant," as E.J. Young observed, "is the covenant of grace wherein the Messiah, by His life and death, obtains salvation for His people" (1954, p. 679).

Sixth, as a result of Christ's death, "the sacrifice and the oblation" would cease (9:27a). This is an allusion to the cessation of the Jewish sacrifices as a consequence of Jesus' ultimate sacrificial offering at Golgotha. When the Lord died, the Mosaic law was "nailed to the cross" (Colossians 2:14). That "middle wall of partition" was abolished (Ephesians 2:13-17), and the "first covenant" was replaced by the "second" one (Hebrews 10:9-10). This was the "new covenant" of Jeremiah's famous prophecy (Jeremiah 31:31-34; cf. Hebrews 8:7ff.), and was ratified by the blood of Jesus Himself (Matthew 26:28). This context is a rich depository of truth concerning the accomplishments of Christ by means of His redemptive work.

THE PROPHETIC CHRONOLOGY

The time element of this famous prophecy enabled the studious Hebrew to know when the promised Messiah would die for the sins of humanity. The chronology of this prophetic context involves three things: (a) a commencement point; (b) a duration period; and (c) a concluding event.

The beginning point was to coincide with a command to "restore and rebuild Jerusalem." The time span between the starting point and the concluding event was specified as "seventy weeks." This would be seventy weeks of seven days each—a total of 490 days. Each day was to represent a year in prophetic history. Most conservative scholars hold that the symbolism denotes a period of approximately 490 years (Payne, 1973, p. 383; Archer, 1964, p. 387; cf. RSV). Finally, the terminal event would be the "cutting off," (i.e., the death) of the Anointed One (9:26). [NOTE: Actually, the chronology is divided into three segments, the total of which represents 486½ years. This would be the span between the command to restore Jerusalem, and the Messiah's death.]

If one is able to determine the date of the commencement point of this prophecy, it then becomes a relatively simple matter to add to that the time-duration specified in the text, thus concluding the precise time when the Lord was to be slain. Let us therefore narrow our focus regarding this matter.

There are but three possible dates for the commencement of the seventy-week calendar. First, Zerubbabel led a group of Hebrews out of captivity in 536 B.C. This seems to be an unlikely beginning point, however, because 486 years from 536 B.C. would end at 50 B.C., which was eighty years prior to Jesus' death. Second, Nehemiah led a band back to Canaan in 444 B.C. Is

this the commencement point for computing the prophecy? Probably not, for 486 years after 444 B.C. ends at A.D. 42—a dozen years after the death of Christ. However, in 457 B.C., Ezra took a company from Babylon back to Jerusalem. Does this date work mathematically? Indeed. If one starts at 457 B.C., and goes forward for 486½ years, the resulting date is A.D. 30—the very year of Christ's crucifixion! This is the common view (Scott, 1975, 5:364).

The strongest objection to this argument is the claim that Ezra issued no charge to rebuild the city of Jerusalem, and so the starting point of the prophecy could not date from the time of his return. Noted scholar Gleason Archer has responded to this allegation by affirming that Ezra's commission:

> ...apparently included authority to restore and build the city of Jerusalem (as we may deduce from Ezra 7:6,7, and also 9:9, which states, "God...hath extended lovingkindness unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of God, and to repair the ruins thereof, and to give us a wall in Judea and in Jerusalem," ASV). Even though Ezra did not actually succeed in accomplishing the rebuilding of the walls till Nehemiah arrived thirteen years later, it is logical to understand 457 B.C. as the terminus a quo for the decree predicted in Daniel 9:25 (1964, p. 387, emp. in orig.).

In "the midst" of the seventieth week, i.e., after the fulfillment of the 486½ years, the Anointed One was to be "cut off." This is a reference to the death of Jesus. Isaiah similarly foretold that Christ would be "cut off out of the land of the living" (Isaiah 53:8).

But why are the "seventy weeks" of Daniel's prophecy divided into three segments—seven weeks, 62 weeks, and the "midst" of one week? There was purpose in this breakdown. (1) The first division of "seven weeks" (literally, forty-nine years) covers that period of time during which the actual rebuilding of Jerusalem would be underway, following the Hebrews' return to Palestine (9:25b). This was the answer to Daniel's prayer (9:16). That reconstruction era was to be one of "troublous times." The Jews' enemies had harassed them in earlier days (see Ezra 4:1-6), and they continued to do so in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. [For further discussion of this circumstance, see Whitcomb (1962, p. 435).] (2) The second segment of sixty-two weeks (434 years), when added to the previous forty-nine, yields a total of 483 years. When this figure is computed from 457 B.C., it terminates at A.D. 26. This was the year of Jesus' baptism and the beginning of His public ministry. (3) Finally, the "midst of the week" (3½ years) reflects the time of the Lord's preaching ministry. This segment of the prophecy concludes in A.D. 30—the year of the Savior's death.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF REJECTING CHRIST

No historical revisionism can alter the fact that the Lord Jesus was put to death by His own people, the Jews (John 1:11). This does not sanction any modern-day mistreatment of the Jewish people; it does, however, acknowledge that Israel, as a nation, suffered a serious consequence as a result of its role in the death of the Messiah.

Daniel's prophecy depicted the Roman invasion of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Jewish temple. The prophet spoke of a certain "prince that shall come," who would "destroy the city and the sanctuary" like an overwhelming flood (9:26b). All of this was "determined" (see 9:26b, 9:27b) by God because of the Jews' rejection of His Son [Matthew 21:37-41; 22:1-7; see Young (1954, p. 679)].

The interpretation of this portion of the prophecy is beyond dispute. Jesus, in His Olivet discourse concerning the destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:1-34), talked about "the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet" (24:15). The Lord was alluding to Daniel 9:27. The "abomination that makes desolate" was the Roman army,

under its commander, Titus ("the prince"—9:26b), who vanquished Jerusalem in A.D. 70. [NOTE: The "prince" of verse 26a is not the same as the anointed "prince" of verse 25a. The "prince" of verse 26 comes after the anointed Prince has been cut off.]

The historical facts are these. In A.D. 66, the Jews, who were subject to Rome, revolted against the empire. This plunged the Hebrews into several years of bloody conflict with the Romans. Titus, son and successor of the famous Vespasian, overthrew the city of Jerusalem (after a five-month siege) in the summer of A.D. 70. The holy city was burned (cf. Matthew 22:7), and the "sanctuary" (temple) was demolished. Christ had informed His disciples that the day was coming when the Jews' "house" would be left desolate (Matthew 23:38); indeed, not one stone would be left upon another (Matthew 24:2). Significantly, only one stone from that temple, and parts of another, have been identified positively by archaeologists (Frank, 1972, p. 249). J.N. Geldenhuys summarized this situation by noting that Titus

> ...overran the city with his army, destroyed and plundered the temple, and slew the Jews—men, women and children—by tens of thousands. When their lust for blood had been sated, the Romans carried off into captivity all the able-bodied remnant of the Jews (for they had done away with all the weaklings and the aged), so that not a single Jew was left alive in the city or its vicinity. Only on one day in the year—the day of remembrance of the destruction of the temple—were they allowed to mourn over the city from the neighboring hill-tops (1960, 3:141).

This event was referred to by Daniel as the "abomination of desolation" because the city of David was desolated by the Roman army—an abominable force because of its idolatrous fabric. It is not without considerable interest that apparently even the Jews recognized that the destruction of the Hebrew nation was a fulfillment of Daniel's remarkable prophecy. Josephus, the Jewish historian, stated that "Daniel also wrote concerning the Roman government, and that our country should be made desolate by them" (Antiquities, X.XI.7).

CONCLUSION

Daniel's inspired record regarding the "seventy weeks" is a profound demonstration of the validity of scriptural prophecy. It foretells the coming of the Messiah, and details His benevolent work. The prophecy pinpoints the very time of Jesus' crucifixion. Finally, it reveals the disastrous consequences of rejecting the Son of God. How thankful we should be to Jehovah for providing this rich testimony.

[NOTE: For a more thorough analysis and refutation of the premillennial-dispensational view of Daniel 9:24ff., see my extended essay on this subject, available in the Apologetics Press Research Article Series.]

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