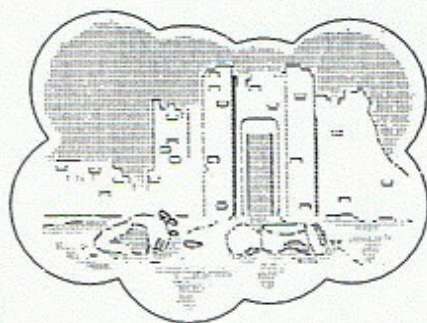


Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy

***An exposition based
on the Hebrew text***



Herman Goldwag

Preface

I first heard an interpretation of this prophecy, as recorded in Daniel 9:24-27, many years ago, and I have been uneasy with the explanation of it prevalent among many leading evangelists at the present time.

Having a good knowledge of Hebrew, I discovered that the general interpretation of this important prophecy is not completely correct as it does not tally with the original Hebrew text. I have been led to make a thorough investigation into the real meaning as to when the 70 weeks began and ended. After spending a great deal of time in checking my work, I have decided to prepare the material for publishing it myself, with some help of my family. I also felt it necessary to deal with the related subject of the Nativity of Christ at the same time.

Although I consider the King James version to be the one which most closely conveys the spirit of the original text, nevertheless there are some discrepancies and it so happens that this particular passage contains some inconsistencies which can be prone to misunderstanding, as my booklet points out. But I am encouraged to learn that many Messianic Jews share my belief that the 70 weeks were completely fulfilled at Christ's first Advent.

Yours sincerely in our Messiah,

Herman Goldwag

Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy

An exposition proving that the 70th week
(the last) took place at Christ's first Advent

And

The Nativity of Jesus Christ

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All Bible quotations are taken from the Authorised King James Version unless otherwise indicated.

FULFILLED PROPHECIES IN DANIEL 9: 24-27

- Verse 25 Arrival of "Messiah Ruler" at the time prophesied.
Jerusalem 'restored and rebuilt' after the return from Babylon.
- Verse 26 Crucifixion of Christ.
Second destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.
Devastation of the Roman Empire.
- Verse 27 Christ's mighty strengthening of the Covenant.
Termination of the "sacrifice and offering" by Christ. Desecration of the Temple by the Roman army.
- Verse 24 Restraint of transgression.
Christ's atonement for sin.
Righteousness imputed to followers of Christ.
Anointing of the most Holy.
Sealing (guaranteeing fulfilment) of the prophecies and the completion of Holy Writ. Exclusivity of grace to Israel expires at the end of the 70th week of years.

DANIEL 9:24-27

This great prophecy, revealed to Daniel by the angel Gabriel, was a response to Daniel's "prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes" (Dan. 9:3).

Daniel was one of the many Jewish exiles in Babylon after King Nebuchadnezzar's army destroyed the Temple and left Jerusalem in ruins. His ardent pleas were: "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled" (Dan. 9:5), "To the Lord our God, belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him" (Dan. 9:9), "0 Lord, ... because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us" (Dan. 9:16), "0 Lord, hear; 0 Lord, forgive; 0 Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, 0 my God; for the city and thy people are called by thy name" (Dan 9:19).

In answer, the angel Gabriel reveals to Daniel (v. 25) that Jerusalem "will be restored and rebuilt, street and moat, but in troubled times". But, more importantly, Gabriel reveals to Daniel (v. 24) that from eternity, God, in His immeasurable mercy and love, proposed to provide a means of restraining transgression, and an everlasting atonement for the iniquity of the people of Israel. This would be accomplished by Messiah Ruler, whose exact time of coming is revealed in verse 25, the sole mention in Scripture.

We should be aware that this prophecy was disclosed to Daniel several hundred years prior to its actual fulfilment.

The Hebrew text of Daniel 9:24-27:

כד שְׁבַעִים שָׁבָעִים נְחֻתָד עַל-עֲמֻדָּה וְעַל-עִיר
קִדְשָׁהּ, לְכִלָּא ¹ הַפֶּשַׁע וּלְהַתִּים חֲטָאת וּלְכַפֵּר ²
עֹז, וּלְהַבִּיא, צֶדֶק עַל־מִים; וּלְחַתֵּם ³ חֲזוֹן וְנָבִיא,
וּלְמַשִּׁחַ קֹדֶשׁ קִדְשִׁים. ⁴

כה וְתִדַּע וְתִשְׁכַּל מִן-מֶצֶא דְבָר, לְהָשִׁיב וּלְבָנוֹת
יְרוּשָׁלַם עַד-מָשִׁיחַ ⁶ נָגִיד ⁷ שְׁבַעִים, שְׁבַעֲהָ; ⁸
וּשְׁבַעִים שָׁנִים וּשְׁנִים, תָּשׁוּב וְנִבְנְתָה רְחוֹב
וְחָרוֹץ, וּבְצוֹק, הֶעֱתִים. ⁹

כו וְאַחֲרֵי הַשְׁבַּעִים שָׁנִים וּשְׁנִים, ¹⁰ יִכָּרֵת מָשִׁיחַ
וְאֵין לוֹ; ¹¹ וְהָעִיר וְהַקֹּדֶשׁ יִשְׁחִית עִם נָגִיד הַבָּא,
וְקִצּוֹ ¹² בְּשֹׁטֶף, וְעַד קֵץ מְלָחָמָה, נִחָרֶצֶת שְׁמִמּוֹת

כז וְהַגִּבִּיר ¹⁴ בְּרִית לְרַבִּים, ¹⁵ שָׁבוּעַ אֶחָד; ¹⁶
וְחֲצֵי הַשָּׁבוּעַ יִשְׁבִּית זָבַח וּמִנְחָה, ¹⁷ וְעַל כָּנָף
שְׁקוּצִים ¹⁸ מְשֻׁמִּם, וְעַד-כָּלָה וְנִחָרֶצָה, תִּתֵּן עַל-
שָׁמַם

The King James version of 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

The English text of Daniel 9:24-27 (KJV with my amendments):

24. Seventy weeks have been decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to restrain¹ the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to atone² for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal³ vision and prophet, and to anoint Holy of Holies.⁴
25. Know, therefore, and understand, that from emergence of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem until⁵ Messiah⁶ Ruler⁷ (shall be) seven weeks⁸ and sixty-two weeks, and she will be restored and rebuilt, street and moat, but in troubled times.⁹
26. And after the sixty and two weeks¹⁰ shall Messiah be cut off, and he is not¹¹, and the city and the sanctuary will be destroyed by nation of the future ruler, and its end¹² shall come with flood-like devastation,¹³ and until end of war, desolations are determined.
27. And (he) shall mightily strengthen¹⁴ covenant for many¹⁵ one week,¹⁶ and in the midst of this week (he) shall terminate sacrifice and offering,¹⁷ and abominations on wing shall cause desolation,¹⁸ until total extermination be decreed on desolator.

1. 'Lechale' in Hebrew: to restrain, withhold, imprison

2. 'Lechaper' in Hebrew: to atone (KJV 'to make reconciliation' is incorrect).
3. 'Lachtom' in Hebrew: to sign, to seal, to stamp, etc. (KJV 'to seal up' is misleading).
4. Most Holy.
5. 'Ad' in Hebrew: 'until' (KJV 'unto' is inexact).
6. 'Mashiach' in Hebrew: Christ (Christos in Greek) - both mean Anointed One.
7. 'Nagid' in Hebrew: ruler, leader.
8. The seven weeks (49 years) mentioned most likely refers to the time of rebuilding the city and the Temple after the return from Babylon.
9. Opposition of the local people to the rebuilding of the city and the Temple mentioned in the records of Ezra and Nehemiah.
10. Actually, after sixty-nine weeks (483 years), after adding the previous seven weeks mentioned in verse 25.
11. 'Ve ein lo' in Hebrew: literally 'and he does not have', but here rendered 'he is not', as Hebrew commentaries confirm (KJV 'but not for himself' is misleading).
12. 'Vekitzo' in Hebrew: 'and his end' — refers to the

nation — 'am' in Hebrew (masc.).

13. This could refer to the devastation of the Roman Empire by the barbarians.
14. 'Vehigbir' in Hebrew: 'And (he) shall mightily strengthen' — (KJV 'And he shall confirm' is not precise).
15. 'Larabim' in Hebrew: 'for many' or 'to many' (mistakenly translated 'with many' in KJV).
16. The KJV reads 'for one week' (seven years), but there is no 'for' in the Hebrew text. The 'one week' should be understood to mean during the week. It is obvious that this is the last (70th) week.
17. 'Zevach umincha' in Hebrew: 'sacrifice and offering' — refers to the Old Testament sacrificial system in its entirety.
18. Desecration of the Temple by the Roman army after the siege of Jerusalem (Josephus' The Wars 6.6.1).

This prophecy recorded in Daniel 9:24-27 is often mentioned nowadays by preachers, but I cannot fully reconcile to Scripture the exposition of the majority of them after my serious study of the Hebrew text, especially concerning the 70th week (the last), in which Messiah was crucified (verse 26) and in which he mightily strengthened the covenant (verse 27). Furthermore, the events at Messiah's first Advent fully correspond to the Hebrew text of verse 27.

The first part of verse 27, which clearly refers to Christ, is interpreted as speaking of Antichrist, (seemingly "the future ruler" mentioned in verse 26), who supposedly will make a peace treaty in the Middle East for seven years in the near future. According to this interpretation, the 70th week will come to fulfilment some two thousand years after Messiah's crucifixion.

These four prophetic verses so perfectly fit the events known to us about Christ's first Advent that taking the first part of verse 27 out of context and applying it to Antichrist, is like taking the heart out of this outstanding prophecy. As far as I can see, the seventy-week period was fulfilled in one uninterrupted sequence. The Hebrew text and the historical events conclusively support this. However, if this part of verse 27 is mistakenly interpreted (partly due to the translators' failing to follow closely the Hebrew text) as referring to other than Christ, this remarkable prophecy is infinitely diminished.

This prophecy of seventy weeks indicates not only the precise time of Messiah's coming, but also his ministry, the establishment of the New Covenant, his crucifixion and the anointing of the Holy of Holies.

The seventy weeks of 490 days actually refer to 490 years. Each day of the week stands for one year (Ezekiel 4:6). Hebrew scholars support the view that it refers to 'weeks of years'.

Verse 25: It has to be emphasised that 69 weeks (483 years) brings us not to the birth of Jesus, but to his appearance as Messiah, Christ, which means 'anointed one'.

The son of a king is born a prince with all the necessary credentials to become king in the future. When the time arrives, he will be publicly crowned and commence his reign.

In similar fashion, Jesus was born with the perfect credentials, sealed by God the Father, to become Messiah, 'the anointed one': " ... whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). When the time arrived, Jesus was anointed publicly with the Holy Spirit after his baptism in the River Jordan and the voice of God the Father proclaimed: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:16, 17). Also Acts 10:37, 38: "That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power".

As with the crowning of a prince, so the anointing of Jesus was public and only there and then did he become the Messiah, 'the anointed one', thus fulfilling the prophecy in Daniel 9:25: "until Messiah Ruler", and since this moment his Messianic mission began, as narrated in the Gospels.

When it says: "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" (Matt. 2:2), or "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11), it obviously indicates that the child is destined by God the Father to become the future King, Saviour, Christ the Lord etc. as stated in other verses: "He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father, David" (Luke 1:32); "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall

be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Is. 9:6).

Messiah Ruler: There are three basic aspects of Christ's rulership, supported by Scripture, and to some extent manifested until today among his followers.

1) Heavenly aspect. This aspect of Christ's heavenly rulership, the means by which it is accomplished is not known to us, but appreciated by the tangible and visible effects, such as his numerous deeds of healing both physical and spiritual impediments of men. Some of these took place as a result of his uttering a word without even seeing the person (Matt. 8:13). Many were healed by just touching his garments (Mark 5:27-30; Luke 6:19). Some were brought back from the dead (Luke 7:14, 15; 8:54, 55; John 11:43, 44). He manifested authority over the forces of nature by calming the storm (Matt. 8:26, 27) and other miracles.

Many scriptures testify to his pre-earthly existence: " ... whose goings have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). Christ himself said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58). "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38). "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5).

His heavenly rulership is confirmed by him when answering Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). In this context it is worth mentioning the appearance of the resurrected Jesus from heaven to Saul (later known as the Apostle Paul): "and suddenly there shone around about him a light from heaven; And he fell

to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the goads. And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what will thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:3-6).

Furthermore, this heavenly rulership of Jesus is confirmed by the following: "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not" (John 1:3, 10). "And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, all authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). See also Acts 10:42, Col. 1:16, 2:10 and Heb. 1:2.

2) The aspect of his rulership among his followers.
The Hebrew word 'nagid', apart from meaning ruler can also mean leader. So Christ's rulership in connection with his disciples can also be viewed as leadership. Since Christ's first Advent he rules in the hearts of his followers. His followers know his voice and they follow their leader. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27), also John 10:4, 16.

At Pentecost Christ sent the Holy Spirit to anoint and empower his followers to preach the gospel to the world: "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he who was ordained by God to be the Judge of living and dead" (Acts 10:42). Another clear manifestation that Jesus is the leader of his followers is that in certain cases, he is sending to them angels: "But an

angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, go, stand and speak in the Temple to the people all the words of his life" (Acts 5:19, 20). "And an angel of the Lord spoke unto Philip" (Acts 8:26). "And, behold, an angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shone in the prison" (Acts 12:7).

Sometimes the Lord himself speaks to his followers: "Then spoke the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision" (Acts 18:9). "And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (Acts 23:11). See also Acts 22:18-21. Similar experiences to these are still taking place among Christ's followers to this day.

The following verse about headship indicates Christ's leadership among his followers: "But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. 11:3).

3). Third aspect. Christ's rulership pertains also to his future kingship on earth, being a descendant of King David, in fulfilment of the prophecies mentioned in Scripture. That will take place after his second Advent in the near future, when his feet will stand again on the Mount of Olives: "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the East" (Zech. 14:4).

Christ is destined to be the ruler of the world, in accordance with Holy Writ: "and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting

Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgement and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this" (Is. 9:6, 7). "He shall be great, and shall be called the son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father, David" (Luke 1:32).

These prophecies confirm an earlier one in Gen. 49:10 spoken by Jacob to his son Judah, the ancestor of David: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall be the obedience of the nations" (KJV with my amendments). 'Shiloh' refers to the Messiah King according to the ancient Hebrew commentaries.

Previous to this prophecy, there was the promise given by God to Abraham: "and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 26:4). This promise refers to Christ, being the descendant of Abraham. We know from history what a great blessing to many nations resulted from Christ's first Advent. Multitudes were brought close to God through the preaching of the disciples of Christ. But his coming in the near future to rule over the earth will result in an even greater blessing to all mankind.

I came across an interpretation suggesting that the aforementioned 69 weeks (483 years) bring us to Jesus' birth. This interpretation is mistaken on two counts. Firstly, although there are many scriptures pertaining to his birth, nevertheless I believe that these 69 weeks bring us to the Messiah, the 'anointed one', as already explained. Secondly, verse 25 says that Messiah will come at the end

of 69 weeks and verse 26 says that afterwards he will be cut off (his crucifixion took place 3½ years after his arrival as Messiah, when his ministry began). It is obvious that his cutting off, and thereby atoning "for iniquity" had to take place within the decreed "seventy weeks", as stated in verse 24. As this interpretation suggests that Messiah was born at the end of 69 weeks, if we then add Jesus' life span, we shall arrive at well over the decreed 70 weeks stated in verse 24, so on this account also, this interpretation has to be discounted.

There is another interpretation suggesting that at the completion of 69 weeks (483 years), when this prophecy reads "until Messiah Ruler", it refers to the end of Christ's ministry when he entered Jerusalem "riding upon an ass" (Matt. 21 and Zech. 9: 9), followed soon after by his crucifixion. The KJV reads: "unto Messiah the Prince". Unto is not the precise translation of the Hebrew word 'ad' which actually means until. The word unto leaves some freedom of choice in pointing to a certain stage in Christ's 3½ year ministry, whereas until indicates a definite end of one period and the beginning of the next.

Bearing in mind that these two events (Christ's entry into Jerusalem "riding upon an ass" and his crucifixion) were a climax of his ministry, the aforementioned interpretation can be appreciated. Nevertheless, the expression "until Messiah Ruler" points rather to the event when Jesus became Messiah, the anointed one, and not to the end of his ministry, as previously made clear.

These are some of the numerous passages in Scripture where the Hebrew word 'ad' — until or till is used: "until the day that Noah entered into the ark" (Matt. 24:38);

"until the flood came" (Matt. 24:39); "Till thou return unto the ground" (Gen. 3:19). We can appreciate from these, and many other verses where this word appears, that it always indicates a definite and abrupt change in the events, situations and conditions.

"Until Messiah Ruler" points to the world's greatest turnabout of events that took place at the termination of 69 weeks of this prophecy. A change of eternal consequence ensued when Messiah Ruler appeared publicly on the world scene, as proclaimed by John the Baptist: "And John bore (witness), saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him". "And I saw, and bore (witness) that this is the son of God" (John 1:32, 34). Thereafter, his mighty ministry, full of miracles and powerful sermons to great multitudes in many places commenced, as described in the four Gospels, and reverberated throughout the land of Israel. It is no wonder that when Christ entered Jerusalem "riding upon an ass", the multitude "cried, saying, Hosannah to the son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosannah in the highest!"; "And the multitude said, This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth" (Matt. 21:9, 11).

Although the calculations of the dates are an important part of this exposition, nevertheless they are not detrimental to the aim of it which is to show that the seventy weeks of this prophecy, according to the Hebrew text, took place in an uninterrupted sequence. As the date of Jesus Christ's birth emanates from these calculations and is rather complicated, it is dealt with in the Appendix on The Nativity of Jesus Christ.

The date of the beginning of John the Baptist's ministry,

when he was of age (at least 30 years according to the Law – Numbers 4:3), is clearly stated in the book of Luke as being in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar (Luke 3:1-3). Although during the last ten years of Caesar Augustus' reign, Tiberius was virtually co-regent, he only became Caesar on the death of Augustus in 14 AD. The fifteenth year of his reign would be 29 AD, the year in which Luke states that John began his ministry. Jesus began his ministry when he was of age (at least 30 years according to the Law – Luke 3:23), after being anointed by God. His ministry lasted 3½ years from the age of about 30.

As the crucifixion took place at Passover, around April, it means that Christ began his 3½ year ministry in October 29 AD, the year that John the Baptist began his ministry. It therefore follows that Christ was crucified in April 33 AD.

We know that the "emergence of the word" to rebuild Jerusalem was granted to Nehemiah (Neh. 2) in the 20th year of Artaxerxes' rule, which was 454 BC.*** Counting the prophesied 483 years from this date, we come to the anointing of Jesus in October 29 AD. Then the prophecy "until Messiah Ruler" was fulfilled.

*** "Archbishop Ussher's Chronology was first added to the AV by Bishop Lloyd in the edition of 1701. But, in Neh. 2:1, Bishop Lloyd put his own date, 445 BC to suit his own theory. Archbishop Ussher's date for the commencement of the reign of Artaxerxes was A.M. 3531, which, in his *Collatio Annorum*, corresponds to 474 BC. 'The twentieth year of Artaxerxes' would, therefore, be 454 BC." (Companion Bible App. 91 page 131 footnotes 1).

There is strong evidence in Greek, Persian and Babylonian sources that Artaxerxes Longimanus' accession took place in 475 BC., and consequently his 20th year of reign was 455 BC and not 454 BC as quoted on pages 18 and 45, [in the first edition 1997]. This basically agrees with Ussher's dating which differs from the commonly accepted date of 445 BC as the 20th year of the reign of Artaxerxes.

The dates of our Lord's ministry in this edition remain the same as in the first edition. If this correction of 454 BC to 455 BC was applied, it may be necessary to subtract 1 from the dates of the Messiah's ministry. Such a correction would not be inconsistent with the purpose of this work.

I believe that the dates quoted herein are correct. If there are any discrepancies, they will be marginal and will not affect the evidence that the last (70th) week of this prophecy took place during Messiah's first Advent.

Verse 26 reads: "And after the sixty and two weeks (altogether 69 weeks) shall Messiah be cut off". It is clear from this statement that the crucifixion took place in the 70th week. "And after" (ve'acharei in Hebrew) does not necessarily mean immediately after, as confirmed by other mentions of this word in Scripture. When it says: "And after", it is obvious that some years could have passed, and that is exactly what happened. As we know, Jesus' crucifixion (in the middle of the 70th week) took place 3½ years after his anointing and becoming Messiah. Clear confirmation of this comes in verse 27 where it reads: "and in the midst of this week (he) shall terminate sacrifice and offering". As we know, this was accomplished when Christ offered his precious life-blood on the cross as a paschal lamb and, in so doing, terminated

the annual sacrifices and offerings forever.

Verse 26 explains that after Messiah's crucifixion, the destruction of the city and Temple will follow: "and the city and the sanctuary will be destroyed by nation of the future ruler". This actually happened in 70 AD after Christ's crucifixion, when the Roman army under Titus completely destroyed the city and the Temple. This destruction of the city was also prophesied by Christ: "Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Matt. 24:2).

It is obvious that the second destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by Titus in 70 AD (the first destruction was by the Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar) took place after the "cutting off" (crucifixion) of the Messiah mentioned in verse 26, and it clearly points to no-one but Jesus.

When it says in verse 26 "and the city and the sanctuary will be destroyed by nation of the future ruler", many evangelists misinterpret this passage suggesting that "the future ruler" refers to the appearance of antichrist in a future fulfilment of the 70th week. The passage "destroyed by nation of the future ruler" is torn into two separate events. They believe that the nation spoken of will be responsible for destroying "the city and the sanctuary" after Messiah's cutting-off, but that the future ruler will come in our day. They also identify this coming ruler with the one who "shall confirm the covenant with many" (KJV) mentioned in the next verse (of course it should be translated "for many").

This future ruler (antichrist) is supposed to confirm a

covenant of peace between Israel and her enemies in the Middle East in the near future. One of the proponents of such an interpretation was the well-known Tregelles in the last century. The plain and simple meaning of this part of the verse is that soon after the crucifixion (the cutting-off) of the Messiah, mentioned earlier in this verse, a nation under their new leader, "the future ruler", will come and destroy Jerusalem and the Temple, which we know from history took place when Titus, leading the Roman army, carried out this destruction, in fulfilment of this prophecy. This is how Hebrew commentaries interpret this part of the verse, stating that this "future ruler", together with his army, will come from afar and destroy Jerusalem and the Temple. Of course they do identify the "future ruler" with the one who strengthens the covenant mentioned in verse 27, but such an interpretation is fully justified, bearing in mind that they do not realise that this prophecy of 70 weeks speaks about the Advent of the Messiah, who will "atone for iniquity", offering himself as a sacrifice and, by so doing, will "terminate sacrifice and offering". It is from this time that the Temple rituals of animal sacrifices and offerings became unacceptable by God.

Because Jewish commentators do not perceive the coming of the Messiah prophesied in these four verses (24-27), they suggest that when it reads "until Messiah Ruler", it might refer to Cyrus, ruler of Persia, or to Yehoshua ben Yehotzadak, the High Priest who returned from exile in Babylon, or to Zerrubabel Shealtiel, a descendant of the King of Judah; and when it reads: "shall Messiah be cut off", they suggest that it might refer to King Agrippa II who was killed at the time of the destruction of the Second Temple, or to the High Priest. Therefore, being completely

unaware that these two passages aforementioned concern the first Advent of "Messiah Ruler" and his crucifixion, they treat them as referring to two separate persons.

It is evident that many contemporary evangelists expect "the future ruler" to appear in the near future and confirm a peace treaty for seven years in the Middle East, in fulfilment of the 70th week, but Jewish scholars state, correctly in my estimation, that he already came in the person of Titus, with his Roman army, some two thousand years ago.

Being ignorant of the fact that this seventy weeks prophecy speaks about the promised coming of "Messiah Ruler", Jewish commentaries are disposed to interpret it on a purely human scale.

One who fully realises that these four verses disclose the first Advent of "Messiah Ruler" is enabled to fully appreciate this great prophecy and thereby interpret it correctly.

Verse 27 reads: "Vehigbir brit larabim shavua echad" — "And (he) shall mightily strengthen covenant for many one week", and not "for one week" as the KJV reads, but rather during the seventieth week. "Vehigbir" is in the masculine form and obviously refers to a man, even though the pronoun "he" is not quoted. If the pronoun "he" were included, it could tend to point to the future ruler mentioned in verse 26. Without it, it can refer to someone else, but knowing the facts, it obviously refers to Messiah mentioned in verses 25 and 26. "Vehigbir" — and (he) shall mightily strengthen — is, from the same Hebrew root as "gibbor", which was used as one of the attributes of Christ — El Gibbor (Mighty God — Is. 9:6). It is

noteworthy that the verb in this form "Vehigbir" appears only once in Scripture, in this very verse. The KJV reads: "And he shall confirm the covenant with many", when the Hebrew text actually reads "for many", which is what Christ actually declared at the Last Supper when he said: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28). There is a very great difference between making a worldly covenant with individuals and nations, and a voluntary covenant for many, which Christ did. We can also fully comprehend the significance of the small word "for" when reading: "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28).

"And (he) shall mightily strengthen covenant for many one week", (during the last week). How remarkably this ties in with Christ's crucifixion mentioned in verse 26. Now comes the mighty strengthening of the covenant for many in the second part of the last week (the last 3½ years), when Christ rose — bearing in mind that the disciples were in disarray after the crucifixion: "Then saith Jesus unto them, all ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad" (Matt. 26:31 and Zech. 13:7).

Do we truly appreciate the magnitude and the deep significance of Christ's resurrection from the dead? This mighty strengthening of the covenant continued after his resurrection. Christ appeared to his disciples in various circumstances. On some occasions "he expounded unto them, in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself"

(Luke 24:27); he appeared to them when the door in the room was closed; "Then the same day at the evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and said unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord" (John 20:19, 20). On one occasion the resurrected Christ "was seen of above five hundred brethren at once" (1 Cor. 15:6).

The resurrected Christ also showed himself in his glorified body to the Apostle Paul: "And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus, and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven; And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest; It is hard for thee to kick against the (goads)" (Acts 9:3-5).

The resurrection of Christ is the foundation of Christian belief as the Apostle Paul explains: "But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Cor. 15:13, 14). "But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15: 20-22).

The glorious fact of Christ's being resurrected from the dead, followed by his ministry to the disciples and his sending of the Holy Spirit to anoint them, giving them the power to preach the gospel, first to the Jews and thereafter

to the whole world, resulted in mightily strengthening the new Covenant as foretold in verse 27.

Of course, this culmination of the mighty strengthening of the covenant for many by the risen Christ, in the second half of the 7-year week, was the continuation of his mighty ministry in the first half of the week. His powerful words such as were never spoken before: "he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, From where hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?" (Matt: 13:54); "The officers answered, Never man spoke like this man" (John 7:46); and his mighty deeds: "And in that same hour he cured many of them of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. Then Jesus, answering, said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard – how the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached" (Luke 7:21, 22). See also Matt. 15:31; Mark 7:37; Luke 7:14-15; Luke 17:12-14; John 2; John 12:1. A further evidence of his mighty deeds was his walking on the sea: "And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea" (Matt. 14:25), and his calming of the storm: "Then he rose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" (Matt. 8:26-27). All these events, and many others, took place in the first half of the week as a living proof to the disciples that he was the long-awaited Messiah. So, at the Last Supper, they wholeheartedly accepted the New Covenant announced by him, which was validated soon afterwards by his shedding

of his precious blood on the cross "to atone for iniquity" (Verse 24). The scriptural evidence leaves us in no doubt that the mighty strengthening for many during the last (70th) week of years, according to verse 27, took place during Messiah's first Advent.

"... and in the midst of this week (he) shall terminate sacrifice and offering". Thus, by his crucifixion as a paschal lamb at the end of his 3½ year ministry, making atonement forever, the sacrifice and offering were terminated as they were no longer valid: "By which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:10); "For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14). The KJV incorrectly reads in verse 27: "and he shall make it desolate", thus making it appear to be the one who strengthens the covenant. In the Hebrew text there is no 'he', so the one who strengthened it has no direct connection to the destruction which follows.

At this point, it is worth mentioning that "(he) shall terminate sacrifice and offering" mentioned in this verse refers to the Old Testament sacrificial system in its entirety. It is obvious that the expression "sacrifice and offering" ('zevach umincha'), without specification (there were a good number of different sacrifices and offerings), encompasses the entire sacrificial system. Some eschatologists identify this expression in Daniel 9:27 with Dan. 8:11-13; 11:31 and 12:11 where it mentions the taking away of the daily sacrifice called 'tamid' in Hebrew. This 'tamid' was only a part of the sacrificial system, but not the entire sacrificial system as stipulated in this verse.

Knowing that (1) Christ's ministry lasted 3½ years and (2)

that he established the new covenant and (3) that he terminated the sacrifice and offering by his death on the cross "in the midst" of this week (the 70th), after his 3½ years' ministry, who can doubt that this was a fulfilment of the prophecy in verse 27, which clearly mentions these three events?

It is worth quoting here the comment by Henry and Scott in the A.V. Family Bible published in 1872: "Three years and a half, the time of Christ's ministry, ... This was the half week in which the Messiah was to confirm the covenant, Dan. 9:27".

The ends of verses 26 and 27 are, in a way, overlapping. These both speak about future desolations. They are also complementary. Verse 26 says: "until end of war, desolations are determined". Verse 27 says that the end of desolation will come when "total extermination will be determined on desolator". Herein is revealed the long-term prophecy which will come to final fulfilment when Messiah Ruler, mentioned in these two verses, will establish peace by removing the one who causes war.

Verse 24: The seventy weeks prophecy speaks only about the people of Israel: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people". We come to the crucifixion of Christ (April in 33 AD) in the middle of the 70th week and we are left with a further. ½ week (3½ years) to complete the 70th week (of years). During the 70th week of years the preaching of the gospel was exclusively to the Jews. After the completion of seventy weeks (around October 36 AD), the gospel was opened up to all nations, starting with Cornelius. ***

*** Chronologers can only estimate the date of Cornelius'

conversion. It is variously estimated at 35-40 AD, but in the light of Daniel's prophecy, I am inclined to believe that the conversion took place in the Autumn of 36 AD, as this is the time suggested for the end of Israel's favour and the opening of the Gospel to the Gentiles.

As the Holy of Holies refers to a place, what could better fit the reality than the Temple made up of living stones, the twelve apostles and the disciples of Christ, the chief cornerstone? The Scriptures confirm this: "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious" (1 Pet. 2:5-6); "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy which temple ye are" (1 Cor. 3:16-17); "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1 Cor. 6:19); "For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God; and they shall be my people" (2 Cor. 6:16). See also Acts 7:48-49, Acts 17:24, Heb. 3:6. Were not these first apostles and disciples the most holy amongst the whole nation of Israel, having direct fellowship with the Son of God? There are other scriptures where these early followers are called holy, or saints — Acts 9:13, 32, 41; 1 Cor. 7:14; Rom. 15:25 and others. In direct fulfilment of the last part of verse 24: "and to anoint Holy of Holies" (the most Holy), the Holy Spirit fell upon the whole body

of believers at Pentecost: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven like a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:1-4).

One of the arguments of some preachers who claim that the 70th week was not fulfilled at Messiah's first Advent, is that "everlasting righteousness" mentioned in this verse is still future. But this "everlasting righteousness" must be understood within the context of this whole verse, taking into consideration what took place during Messiah's Advent and thereafter, and in conjunction with other scriptures relating to the whole subject of righteousness. The contents of this verse clearly indicate that this "everlasting righteousness" refers to the followers of Christ. The sequence of events in verse 24 corresponds to the pattern in the life of Christ's followers: transgression is restrained by the Holy Spirit upon repentance, enabling the believer to refrain from sin, and by his faith in the atoning sacrifice "for iniquity", his sins are forgiven. In the absence of sin, everlasting righteousness prevails. Then the anointing of the Holy Spirit follows.

To clarify further the subject of righteousness, the following scriptures are worthy of consideration: "The righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. 3:9); "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe" (Rom. 3:22); "for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes" (Rom. 10:4). See also Rom. 3:25-28, 4:1-25,

5:17, 6:19, 10:10 and 1 Cor. 1:30. This righteousness of Christ is imputed to the Church and dwells in believers. This imputation is an act of God whereby He accounts the righteousness to the believer in Christ, who has borne the believer's sins, in vindication of the law. Since Messiah's first Advent, untold multitudes of believers have repented and turned away from sin, accepted in faith the atoning sacrifice of Christ and thereafter followed the path of righteousness. "For he has made him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). This is an ongoing process which Messiah inaugurated.

In view of the foregoing, "to bring in everlasting righteousness" is like opening the gate for believers who repent and are restrained from transgression and, in faith, accept the everlasting atonement "for iniquity", the foundation of which was laid down by Christ on the cross, around April in 33 AD. It was through this cross that the sacrifice and offering were terminated "in the midst" of the last (70th) week of years, in exact fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy.

One must be aware that as the atonement "for iniquity" laid down by Christ is eternal, everlasting, so is the righteousness which stems out of it under the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. This everlasting righteousness dwells in genuine disciples of Christ and will pass into eternity when they join him to be with him forever.

In connection with this verse, I would like to quote the following comment by Henry and Scott from the same 1872 A.V. Family Bible previously mentioned, on pages

891-892:

"He came, First, to finish transgression; to restrain it; to break the power of it, to bruise the head of that serpent that had done so much mischief; to take away the usurped dominion of that tyrant, and to set up a kingdom of holiness and love in the hearts of men, upon the ruins of Satan's kingdom there; that, where sin and death had reigned, righteousness and life through grace might reign. When he died he said, 'it is finished'; sin has now had his death's wound given it; like Samson's, 'let me die with the Philistines'; he inflicts the wound, and dies. Secondly, 'to make an end of sin', to abolish it, that it may not rise up in judgement against us, to obtain the pardon of it, that it may not be our ruin; 'to seal up sins', that they may not appear or break out against us, to accuse and condemn us.

"He came 'to bring in everlasting righteousness'. God might justly have made an end of sin by making an end of the sinner; but Christ found out another way, and so made an end of sin as to save the sinner from it, by providing a righteousness for him. We are all guilty before God, and shall be condemned as guilty, if we have not a righteousness wherein to appear before him. Had we stood, our innocency would have been our righteousness, but, being fallen, we must have something else to plead; and Christ has provided us a plea; the merit of his sacrifice is our righteousness; with this we answer all the demands of the law; Christ has died, yea, rather, is risen again. Thus Christ is the Lord our Righteousness for he is made of God to us righteousness, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. By faith we apply this to ourselves, and plead it with God, and our faith is imputed to us for righteousness, Rom. 4:3, 5. This is an everlasting righteousness for Christ, who is our righteousness, and the Prince of our peace is the everlasting Father. It was from everlasting in the counsels of it, and it will be to everlasting in the consequences of it. The application of it was from the beginning, for Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; and will be to the end, for he is able to save to the uttermost. It is of everlasting virtue, (Heb. 10:12) it is the rock that follows us to Canaan".

Henry and Scott

Furthermore, the KJV reads in verse 24: "and to seal up vision and prophet". This rendering may give the impression that it means to make an end of vision and prophecy, by fulfilling all that has been the subject of vision and prophecy. This is because the Hebrew word 'lachtom', meaning to seal, to sign, to stamp, etc. as a guarantee of fulfilment has been translated "to seal up". A more correct translation of 'lachtom' is "to seal". The fulfilment of all prophecies concerning Messiah's first Advent, including his "cutting off" on the cross, is the living guarantee (seal) that all the remaining prophecies will be fulfilled in their due time. On the other hand, it also points to the end of written vision and prophecy. With Christ and his Apostles, that era of vision and prophecy ceased. The holy Writ, as we know it, is finished. As the Messiah's "cutting off" (crucifixion) for atonement "for iniquity" and his sending of the Holy Spirit to anoint the Most Holy at Pentecost (Acts 2), took place during the 70th week, so did the other four events mentioned in verse 24.

As we see, verse 24 contains the blessings brought to us by Messiah at his first Advent foretold in verse 25. Verse 24 is a summary of Christ's accomplishments at his first Advent. These things had to be fulfilled by the end of the 70th week, as stated in this verse. As many eschatologists insist that the last (70th) week refers to Antichrist and is still future, and not to Christ's ministry, how is it that this event is not mentioned in this very verse, which describes what will take place with the ending of the 70 weeks prophecy? It is clear that their interpretation is mistaken and plainly contradicts Scripture.

Those who suggest that the six events mentioned in this

verse are not yet in any sense fulfilled seem to deny the effectiveness of Christ's first coming. The prophecy in verse 24 will, in future, be more fully realised when many other nations accept Christ as their Saviour: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob: and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Is. 2:2, 3). In this connection, we are reminded of the predicted conversion of all Israel when they shall look upon him "whom they have pierced" (Zech. 12:10), "And so all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11:26). Whatever the future holds, the foundation of this great blessing was laid down by Messiah at his first Advent, in the 70th week of years, thereby bringing into immediate and continuing realisation its fulfilment of the events contained in this verse.

The exact time of Messiah's first Advent; his mighty ministry; his cutting-off (crucifixion) thereby validating the New Covenant; his sending of the Holy Spirit "to restrain transgression" and empower the believers; his shedding of his blood in atonement "for iniquity", so making "an end of sins" and consequently bringing in "everlasting righteousness"; his termination of "sacrifice and offering" by making "his soul an offering for sin" (Is. 53:10) as a paschal lamb; his establishing the New Covenant; his fulfilling in himself many prophecies concerning him, even to his death, thereby putting a seal

(guarantee) of the fulfilment of all prophecies in the Scriptures; the anointing of the most Holy and the preaching of the gospel exclusively to the Jews until the conversion of Cornelius, the first Gentile, were all accomplished in the last (70th) week of years between approximately October of 29 AD and October of 36 AD, as the foregoing evidence suggests. Thus, the seventy weeks of years were completed in one uninterrupted sequence.

Unfortunately, the misinterpreted 27th verse, is relied on by many preachers as one of the main pillars of eschatology. By insisting that all the prophecies in this verse are still to be fulfilled, they mistakenly interrupt the sequence of seventy weeks. They also treat verse 24 as still for the future. If the 70th week is still to come, according to them, so Messiah's cutting-off is still for the future because it took place in the 70th week, following Messiah's coming at the completion of 69 weeks.

It does not seem feasible that this important prophecy would fail to mention the immediate effect of Messiah's first coming. The New Covenant, the atonement for iniquity, the termination of sacrifice and offering and the bringing in of everlasting righteousness are all included. How is it that most modern-day preachers fail to notice? The main reason is probably that the KJV is not precisely correct in these four verses, as one can clearly see from the foregoing exposition. It is obvious that small and seemingly insignificant discrepancies in translation can sometimes cause great misunderstanding in some scriptures. For example: if one reads "to atone for iniquity" (verse 24), one immediately pictures the

crucified Christ and therefore concludes that this was fulfilled at his first Advent, together with the other five events prophesied in the same verse. However, the picture is less clear in the AV's. translation "to make reconciliation for iniquity". The same problem occurs with translating "seal" (lachtom in Hebrew) as "seal up" in the KJV verse 24.

Other small discrepancies appear in verse 27 which have misled many, especially in the first part of the verse which, in my opinion, is wrongly used in present-day eschatology. It would be beneficial to compare the first part of verse 27, as amended at the beginning of this exposition, with the KJV:

Amended translation: "And (he) shall mightily strengthen covenant for many one week ..."

KJV: "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week ..."

The amended translation directly from the Hebrew text quoted above immediately conveys to us that an event of great magnitude took place. This strikes one very clearly in the original Hebrew because the adjective 'mighty' is so very frequently used in Scripture in connection with God. This vividly portrays the great ministry of Messiah. The KJV fails to bring out the full import of this outstanding act: it portrays it as being on a mere human level.

The Hebrew text in the first part of verse 27 reads: "And (he) shall mightily strengthen covenant for many one week ..." and not "with many" and "for one week" as the KJV reads. It is important to note that the "one week" in

the Hebrew text should be understood to mean during the week.

During my research into this prophecy, I have consulted many Bible versions, and commentaries in both Hebrew and English, as well as the Bible in other languages with which I am familiar. I was fascinated to discover that in some of these languages, there is no problem in understanding the meaning of these four verses of Daniel's prophecy, because they are very close to the Hebrew text. It was only after becoming more familiar with the King James Version - which I find conveys the spirit of the Scriptures better than any other English version — that I came across the present misinterpretation of Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy, which seems very prevalent in the English-speaking world, and which insists that the 'last week' is still unfulfilled. One wonders how, in times past, many evangelists managed to understand the prophecy in a similar light to this exposition, when having to rely solely on the KJV, in spite of the discrepancies which I have pointed out. I can only conclude that they were led by the Holy Spirit into the correct understanding of it.

So, as the foregoing evidence confirms, the 70th week (the last) of Daniel's prophecy commenced from the completion of 69 weeks, when Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit in fulfilment of "until Messiah Ruler", followed by his earthly ministry and crucifixion which resulted in the "termination of sacrifice and offering" in "the midst of this week", and ended when the Gospel was extended to the Gentiles, beginning with the conversion of Cornelius.

In conclusion, this wonderful prophecy, revealed by God

to Daniel through the angel Gabriel, is so outstanding in its inclusion of all the main events concerning Messiah's first Advent, that it is unsurpassed by any other prophecy concerning Jesus Christ. It focuses our attention on the greatest drama ever to take place on the world scene.

"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Is. 55:11).

THE RETURN OF CHRIST

The resurrected Christ ascends from the Mount of Olives:

"... Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey" (Acts 1:11, 12).

The final return of the people of Israel to their Land now taking place:

"And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink their wine; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, says the Lord, thy God" (Amos 9:14, 15).

The spiritual recovery of Israel:

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem ..." (Zech. 12:10, 11).

The return of Christ to the Mount of Olives:

"And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east ..." (Zech. 14:4).

Appendix 1

The Nativity of Jesus Christ

Bible scholars calculate the date of the birth of Christ as being between 8 - 4 BC, with one or two exceptions suggesting 1 or 2 BC. All these calculations revolve around the date of the death of King Herod the Great which, according to Scripture, took place after Christ's birth. Historians and scholars have long accepted that Herod died in 4 BC and before the Passover on 12th April the same year. These calculations are mainly based on the writings of the Jewish historian Josephus Flavius who was born in 37 AD. He used a Greek historian, Nicholas of Damascus, who was born in 64 BC, as the main source for the Herodian period.

In Josephus' book, "The Antiquities of the Jews" there is an important section on Herod's rule in Judea. Although Josephus' dates might raise some questions, his most important record states that, shortly before Herod's death, there occurred a lunar eclipse. Precise dates, and even hours, can be calculated for lunar eclipses and we actually have canons of them between 2022 BC and 3000 AD. So, if we pick up the right eclipse from the period in question, it will be decisive proof of the date of Herod's death.

The partial eclipse of 12th March in 4 BC was traditionally accepted as the correct one. Recently, three other eclipses have been suggested: a total one on 15th September 5 BC, a total one on 9th January 1 BC and a partial one on 29th December 1 BC.

The lunar eclipse mentioned by Josephus is recorded in Book 17 of Antiquities, Chapter 6 paragraph 4. The

narrative in this small paragraph seems to indicate a quick sequence of the events mentioned therein: (1) the Jews appease Herod; (2) the high priest's dream which prevented his officiating on "that very day"; (3) "that very day which the Jews observed as a fast"; (4) Herod deprives Matthias of the high priesthood, (5) the execution of "the other Matthias, who had raised the sedition, with his companions" and (6) the eclipse of the moon on the very day of the execution.

During my research, the scholars I came across seemed not to take sufficient account of what I consider the crucial fact mentioned by Josephus in this small paragraph. He states that, prior to Herod's executing some Jews, there was an event which he describes as "that very day which the Jews observed as a fast". The way Josephus phrases it seems to point to the Day of Atonement — Yom Kippur. In Hebrew, Yom Kippur is also called Hatzom — the very Day of Fast.

There is another circumstantial hint in the same aforementioned paragraph that it was Yom Kippur — the Day of Atonement. It is the single most important day in the Hebrew calendar and referred to as the Sabbath of Sabbaths. It is the only day in the year when the high priest was allowed to enter into the Holy of Holies, to stand in the Shekinah (Divine Presence in Hebrew). Everything had to signify the importance of purity. The high priest had to be pure in spirit and body. Midnight prayers for forgiveness, called Slichot, were offered for a whole month before the Day of Atonement. Seven days before 'that very day' the high priest had to abide in the chambers of the Temple in order to practise the various

priestly rites. While officiating on this day, he would wear white linen garments and bathe his body a number of times, in a place specially set apart for him. During this great day he would have to perform an elaborate ritual of sacrificing the animals in atonement for his and the nation's sin. All the nation had to 'afflict their souls' (to fast) on this very day. The occasion was of such solemnity that we can fully appreciate Josephus' statement in this paragraph: "This Matthias, the high priest, on the night before that day when the fast was to be celebrated seemed, in a dream, to have conversation with his wife; and because he could not officiate himself on that account, Joseph, the son of Ellemus, his kinsman, assisted him in that sacred office".

The footnote on page 462 of W. Whiston's translation of Josephus' Antiquities confirms that 'that very day' was Yom Kippur.

As the events in the aforementioned paragraph seemed to take place in quick succession, it is reasonable to conclude that Yom Kippur took place shortly before the eclipse mentioned by Josephus. Of the four eclipses quoted, only the one on 15th September in 5 BC seems to fit, because Yom Kippur in 5 BC occurred on 11th September, just four days before the eclipse took place, which followed the execution of "the other Matthias, who had raised the sedition, with his companions". It is quite clear that this fast day, followed soon after by the eclipse on 15th September, could have been no other fast than Yom Kippur.

Further support for the eclipse of 15th September in 5 BC having been the correct one is that between this eclipse

and the Passover on 12th April in 4 BC, there are seven months. There would have been sufficient time to accommodate the more than twenty events recorded by Josephus as happening in this period, some of which lasted a few weeks.

I had to use my imagination while thoroughly examining the length of time needed for the various events ascribed by Josephus to the period between the eclipse of the moon and the coming Passover. I was very surprised by the amount of time needed for all the events to take place. I calculated it as approximately 31 weeks, which corresponds to the seven months mentioned above between 15th September 5 BC and Passover on 12th April 4 BC.

The other three eclipses mentioned do not satisfy the requirements. The traditional eclipse on 12th March in 4 BC is too far away from Yom Kippur on 11th September 5 BC - it is actually six months away. Between this eclipse and the Passover on 12th April there is only one month and therefore insufficient time to accommodate all the events recorded by Josephus.

The eclipse on 9th January in 1 BC is also too far from Yom Kippur on 8th September in the previous year (4 months). There would also not be enough time for all the events which Josephus described as happening between this eclipse and the Passover on 8th April in that same year (3 months).

The third eclipse in question, on 29th December 1 BC is also discounted on the same grounds as that on 9th January that year because it is too far from Yom Kippur, which took place on 28th September that year (3 months), and

there would not have been enough time for all the events to take place before the next Passover on 28th March in 1 AD (3 months).

There is another reason for disqualifying the three above-mentioned eclipses from being the correct ones. In Ant. 17.6 1-3 Josephus writes about the imprisonment of some Jews for sedition, and their conviction by Herod, who was already suffering from a grave incurable illness, so much so that he "could not himself stand" when speaking to "the principal men among the Jews". These three paragraphs precede the aforementioned paragraph Ant. 17.6.4 where Yom Kippur and the execution of these seditious Jews on the day of eclipse are mentioned. Josephus' narrative after this small paragraph (17.6.4) goes on to describe the grave deterioration in Herod's health, which resulted in his death soon after. The question arises as to why, in Ant. 17.6.4, nothing is mentioned about Herod's grave condition when, in the preceding and following paragraphs, Josephus writes a lot about it. I am convinced that the reason is that the events in this paragraph followed in quick succession and only took a short time (about two weeks in my estimation). This is probably why Josephus did not mention Herod's grave illness in it. As the three dates of Yom Kippur preceded the three corresponding aforementioned eclipses by six, four and three months respectively, so the total duration of the events described in paragraph 17.6.4 would accordingly be six, four and three months longer. In this case, it is inconceivable that Josephus would fail to mention the fast deterioration in Herod's health. So these three eclipses have to be discounted.

A further reason for discounting these three eclipses is that it was not in Herod's barbaric nature to wait for over six, four or three months before executing the seditious Jews after their conviction by him before Yom Kippur.

So, the eclipse on 15th September in 5 BC fits the circumstances given in Josephus' "The Antiquities of the Jews" and is therefore the correct one. As to the historical support for this eclipse, I recommend the Essay by T. D. Barnes entitled 'The date of Herod's death' in the Journal of Theological Studies No. 19, pages 204-9.

Josephus states that Herod died between the lunar eclipse and the following Passover. As I have endeavoured to prove, the lunar eclipse is that of 15th September in 5 BC. It therefore follows that Herod's death took place at the end of 5 BC, or the beginning of 4 BC. This allows time for the events between the eclipse and his death, which preceded the Passover on 12th April in 4 BC.

The birth of Jesus Christ would seem to have taken place towards the end of 6 BC when Herod was still alive. This would allow time for all the events surrounding his birth, including the flight to Egypt and the slaughter of the infants in Bethlehem. There is no unanimity among the early Christians (200-600 AD) regarding the date of Christ's birth. It varies between 5 BC and 2 BC.

If Christ was thirty years of age when he began his ministry in 29 AD, he would have been born in 2 BC. However, as the foregoing evidence demonstrates that Herod died at the end of 5 BC or the beginning of 4 BC, we have a problem: according to the Scriptures, Herod was still alive when Christ was born, so he could not have been born in 2 BC if Herod had died earlier. There are two

ways of solving this problem. One way is by accepting that Christ began his ministry earlier. To support this suggestion, some scholars propose that the reign of Tiberius Caesar actually began two or three years earlier, but before the death of Augustus in 14 AD. This was the time when Tiberius started governing the provinces jointly with Augustus. This would mean that "the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar" (Luke 3:1) when John the Baptist began his ministry, followed soon after by the ministry of Christ in the same year, would commence in 26 or 27 AD. Therefore, the date of Christ's birth would be correspondingly earlier, so he could still have been thirty years of age at the time of the commencement of his ministry. But this appears to be an accommodation with the dates, because Tiberius was virtually co-regent with Augustus ten years before Augustus' death in 14 AD. The Roman historians Dio, Tacitus, Suetonius and others reckon the start of Tiberius' rule from 14 AD, the year of Augustus' death.

The other way of solving the problem is by accepting that Jesus was somewhat older when he began his ministry. I tend to accept this solution as it seems to be more straightforward and does not necessitate adjusting various dates. In the Fourth Chapter of the book of Numbers we read: "from thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old, all that entered into the host, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation". A man of thirty was considered a full man, and so able to commence his ministry for God. It was open to him until he reached the age of fifty. In view of this ruling, I tend to interpret Luke 3:23 literally: "Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age" (RSV), similarly the NIV and

NKJV. In other words, Jesus could have been thirty three or thirty four years old when he began his ministry, which means that he could have been born in 6 BC. The renowned chronologist Archbishop Ussher gives the date of Christ's birth as 5 — 4 BC, and the beginning of his ministry as 29 — 30 AD. It therefore follows that he considered Christ to be about 33 — 34 years old when he started his ministry.

The other reason that this solution seems more acceptable is that the end of the prophesied sixty-nine weeks (483 years) brings us to 29 AD, the year that Jesus began his ministry. This calculation is based on 454 BC as being the twentieth year of Artaxerxes' reign, the date established by Archbishop Ussher. This is also fully supported by S. P. Tregelles in his book on Daniel on pages 100 and 101.

I am confident that the lunar eclipse preceding King Herod's death, mentioned by Josephus, is the one which occurred on 15th September in 5 BC, as the foregoing evidence shows. If this fact had been taken into account, it could have saved scholars from protracted historical search.

It was not my intention at the outset to deal with the subject of the Nativity, but it ensued in the process of working on Daniel's seventy weeks prophecy. The impetus to write about this came when I was trying to ascertain the correct date of the eclipse which Josephus mentions as occurring just prior to Herod's death, and which would fit his record that, shortly before the eclipse, there was "that very day which the Jews observed as a fast". This "very day" has been confirmed in the foregoing evidence as the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) on 11th September in 5

BC, just four days prior to the eclipse on 15th September of that year.

As previously mentioned, there may be marginal discrepancies in working out the dates mentioned herein, which are quite convoluted, but they will in no wise affect the purpose of this exposition, which is to show that the 70 weeks of Daniel's prophecy took place in one uninterrupted sequence.

"And God said, let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and seasons, and for days, and for years" (Genesis 1:14).

Appendix 2

Numeric Sequences

It has been recently found that the Hebrew name Yeshua is often encoded in the original Hebrew Scriptures where the context refers to the Messiah. Several experts suggest that the equidistant sequences of the Hebrew letters forming significant words is mathematically most unlikely to occur by chance and that if this is the case, then it is of God's doing. I concur.

I discovered the name Yeshua, formed from the four Hebrew letters yod, shin, vav and ayin encoded twice in the four verses of Daniel 9:24-27:

1. In Daniel 9:24, starting from the yod in "iyr" (city), counting every 79th letter three times right to left (the Hebrew way), with the last letter ayin in "ve'ad" (and until) in verse 26 spells Yeshua.
2. In Daniel 9:25, starting from the yod in "shishim" (sixty), counting every 61st letter three times from right to left, with the last letter ayin in "ve'ad" (and until) in verse 27 spells Yeshua.

A third encoding was found by Yacov Rambsel, mentioned in his book "Yeshua":

3. In Daniel 9:26, starting from the yod in "ve'ha'iyr" (and the city), counting every 26th letter three times from left to right, with the last letter ayin in "ve'shavuim" (and weeks) in verse 25 spells Yeshua.

I believe that these encoded mentions of Yeshua in the Hebrew Scriptures are very significant as they occur in Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy (Dan. 9:24-27), and especially as Yeshua is embedded in verse 27 which mainly refers to Christ, and not to Antichrist as many mistakenly interpret it.

Herman Goldwag