



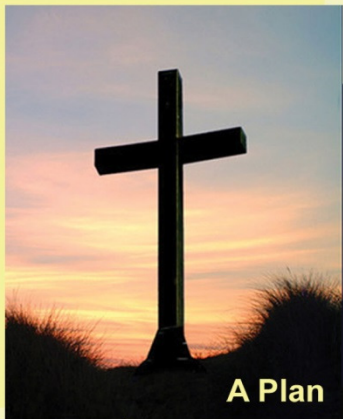
Daniel Prays



The Kingdom Restored



A Holy People



A Plan



A Decree

Daniel 9

**When Deliverance
and Restoration
Come**

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DANIEL 9

When Deliverance and Restoration Come

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These conclusions are always subject to progressive understanding.

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FOREWORD

Babylon has just fallen to the Persian General Cyrus and his associate Darius the Mede (539 B.C.). Babylon had been in power from 626 to 539 B.C., coming to an end the night of Belshazzar's drunken royal party, when they were mocking God by using vessels taken from Solomon's temple.

Cyrus gave immediate rule of the Babylonian area to Darius the Mede. The weight of evidence suggests that this onset of the Medo-Persian Empire alarmed and alerted Daniel that a significant transition in prophetic history was about to occur.

Jeremiah had prophesied that the Babylonian captivity was going to last 70 years (Jeremiah 25:11). He later prophesied that at its end God would permit His people to return to Canaan (Jeremiah 29:10). Daniel knew that the captivity had now gone on 66½ years. The people must be alerted that this end is in sight.

Daniel began reviewing more than one prophecy at this time (9:1). Isaiah had penned over 130 years before that this Cyrus would do two things: (1) let the captives go, and (2) rebuild Jerusalem and the temple (Isaiah 44:28, 45:13). He was to come from the east to accomplish this mission (Isaiah 46:11). The timing prophecy and the specific message of who the deliverer would be raised Daniel's paternalistic concerns for his people to the highest pitch.

If only he had deeper insight as to what lay ahead. Approximately seven to eight years before, Gabriel and Jesus had unfolded two timing prophecies. One related to an "appointed time" at a "time of the end" (8:17, 19) and the other was the 2300 Atonement year missive, when holiness would reign (8:14). Could they be related to this release?

Daniel likely had many regrets for fainting (8:27). A hiatus remained in his knowledge of Israel's future hope. He did what he so earnestly became known for – he began a session of prayer, recorded in Daniel 9:3-19. This petition is elevated to become one of the Bible's greatest revival prayers. The sweeping steps of confession to restoration are unfolded.

Daniel's words quickly became heaven-borne. Before he finished, Gabriel was at his side to answer his cry. That divinely originated message was not a simple "God heard you and the captivity will end as promised" response! To Daniel was given the Bible's most important prophecy. Though it was *initially* addressed to Daniel's people ("thy people"), it looked far into the future to another people who would fulfill God's covenant purpose. That's us! What unfolds in Daniel 9 goes right to the end of time. All apocalyptic prophecy has a link to this chapter. It is a revelation of events, clocks and Messianic hopes, with a redemptive end.

PREFACE

The *mareh* vision, specifically delineated from the *ha hazon* vision in Daniel 8 – 12, defines God's amazing plan to fulfill the everlasting covenant. Within its narrative, God unfolds man's part and He described the onset of heaven's part with the Messiah entering earth's history to be "cut off." That began a judicial process to adopt the human family back into the divine.

It reveals that man's restoration to holiness **will** occur but won't be completed until God's character is vindicated! This would not occur until after 2300 Atonement years have past.

Though the redemptive plan calls for a 490-year period of final mercy and probation, the prophecy clearly reveals that the last three and a half years would be put on hold until "time should be no longer [delayed]" (Revelation 10:6). Then the last period of tribulation and witnessing (Revelation 11:2-3) moves forward to its final end (42 months, 1260 days).

All apocalyptic prophecy finds its source framework and timing clues in Daniel 9. The events final three and a half years' are embellished in Daniel 10:1-9 and 12:6-12, when Jesus, above His people (Hiddekel and Ulai Rivers) is seen as Priest, Judge and King. So important is that three and a half years that it is repeated six times in prophecy, given a specific name – "appointed time" – and encompasses events virtually covering the entire book of Revelation.

The depths of its narrative require a careful penetration of its types and symbols. For most students, new and beautiful themes will open. The redemptive matrix of this *mareh* vision will elevate the "deliverance" theme for God's people. The summation of this inspired Danelic material is "holiness restored."

“In answer to his petition [Daniel 9], Daniel received not only the light and truth which he and his people most needed, but ***a view of the great events of the future, even to the [second] advent of the world's Redeemer.*** Those who claim to be sanctified, while they have no desire to search the Scriptures, or to wrestle with God in prayer for a clearer understanding of Bible truth, know not what true sanctification is.”

The Review and Herald, February 8, par. 23 – 1881

TIME MAKES PROPHECY RELEVANT

Thinking about Clocks

Prophetic events are embedded in a framework of time. Daniel 9 is no exception. Beginning with a regnal calendar, it quickly moves to sabbatical-year issues, then to the consequences of breaking that sacred time. Finally, a Jubilee is anticipated. Without *time* references, prophecy would be meaningless, hope would be delayed and repentance would lose its urgency. Understanding God’s myriad of clocks and how to “tell time” brings balance into our spiritual life. In addition, God identified some timing periods as sacred! This chapter will elevate that understanding. Intriguingly, many prophetic clocks are based on fractions or multiples of the number seven. Daniel and Gabriel will be riveted mainly on *numbers* (see Fig. 1 below).

“In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans” (Daniel 9:1).

The “*first year*” of Darius (Darius the Mede) refers to his first full regnal year (539 B.C.). This helps one to be oriented as to how long the Jewish people have been in captivity. The first attack on Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar occurred in 605 B.C. The designated 70-year captivity was, therefore, in its 66th year. That’s important. Those

“chosen of God” would be released to return to Canaan within a three-and-a-half year period. A timeframe of that same duration was also important to the fall of Jerusalem *and* alludes to the same time span of three and a half years, called the “appointed time” right at the “time of the end” (Daniel 11:35, 40; 12:4, 7, 9; Revelation 11:2-3, 13:5), when God’s people will be delivered! (see Fig. 2 – next page).

Babylon has fallen. The onset of the Medo-Persian Empire is in view.

“In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem” (Daniel 9:2).

“I Daniel understood by books the number of the years” (vs 2)

This phrase is a first person acknowledgment that Daniel grasped a timing prophecy from more than one source. This is intriguing, since his last timing missive was in 8:14, which he failed to understand. That message was so emotional that he fainted (8:27). This verse (9:2) is now a refreshing contrast. He understands some prophetic clock.

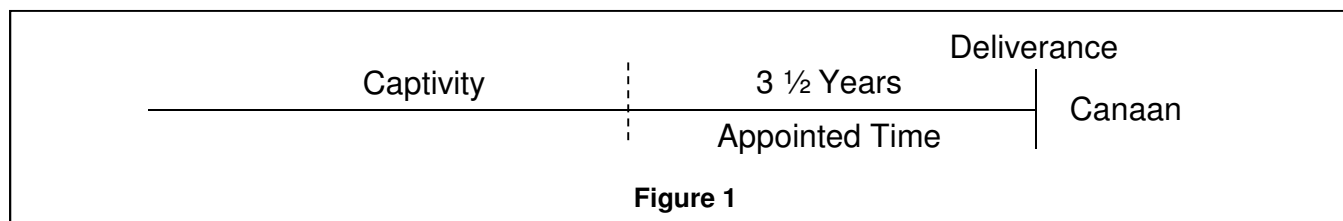
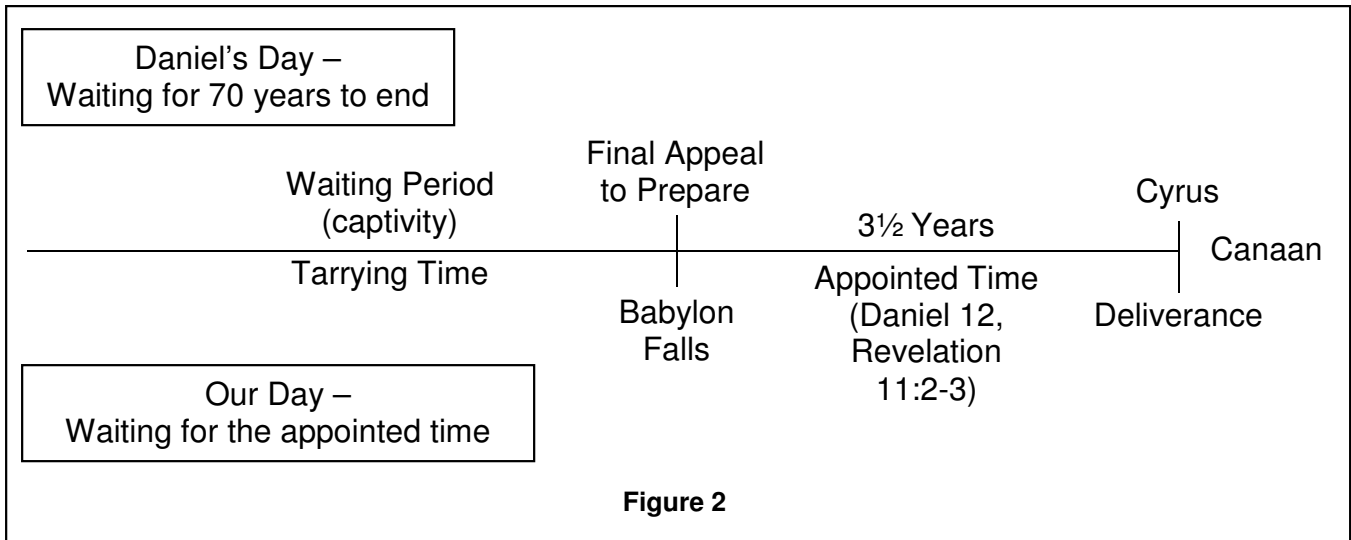


Figure 1



“whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet,” (vs 2)

“According to the word of the Lord” (NIV). This is the first time Daniel uses God’s proper name, *Yahweh*. This is God’s covenant name.¹ The captivity was severe and lasted nearly two generations. But *Yahweh* promised that the **number of years** would be **specific** and **limited**.

That is an important lesson. Though God warned of dire consequences to Israel’s rebellion, He promised that they would journey back to Canaan after those years ended. That, again, is a metaphor for the end of time.

At the end of time, God’s timed periods ends at the night of “deliverance.” That is when the everlasting covenant is given to God’s people.² The coming of Jesus is anticipated shortly thereafter. Daniel elevates the importance of the “*number of years*” in the next phrase.

“to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem” (vs 2)

The Old Testament was far from complete at this time. Scrolls up through Isaiah

were likely available. Intriguingly, Jeremiah was still writing his “book” when the first captivity occurred in 605 B.C. Daniel was able to obtain at least a copy of this incomplete document. Clearly, he recognized it as a sacred, inerrant word from God this early in its Canon history!

Two passages in Jeremiah were specific to Daniel’s concerns. Jeremiah 25:11-12 was written in Jerusalem shortly **before** the first attack and Daniel’s captivity (likely 609 B.C). There, he notes that the “land would become a devastation” for 70 years. Judah and other captive nations (not listed) would be subjects of Babylonian rule for those 70 years (vss 19-26). The next passage (Jeremiah 29:5) comes when Jeremiah, apparently still in Jerusalem, writes to the captives (approximately 597 B.C.). He urges those exiles in Babylon to seek a normal life, build houses, plant gardens, take wives, have children and acquire real estate. Why? They would be there 70 years (Jeremiah 29:10).

Jeremiah did include a covenant promise of restoration tied to that prophecy: “*For thus saith the LORD, That **after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected***”

¹ Steinmann, Andrew E.; *Daniel* (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis – 2008), p. 435.

² White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, p. 641.

end” (Jeremiah 29:10-11). Occupying the “land of Canaan” is that anticipated end!

Daniel’s prayer that follows (Daniel 9:3-19) seeks to rebuild the relationship be-

captives, just as our Savior will soon do. Cyrus is a metaphor for Christ! (see Fig. 3).

<u>Cyrus</u>	<u>Jesus</u>
My shepherd (Isa. 44:28)	Good shepherd (John 10:11, Heb. 13:20)
His anointed (Isa. 45:1)	God anointed Him (Acts 10:38)
Came from the east (Isa. 46:11)	Comes as lightning from the east (Matt. 24:27)
Set captives free (Isa. 45:13)	Deliverance of captives (Luke 4:16)
Called righteous (Isa. 45:13)	The Righteous (I John 2:1) ³

Figure 3

tween the Jewish people and God. He pleads with God to fulfill that promise of restoration. His narrative is based on prior covenant issues!

“With faith founded on the sure word of prophecy, Daniel pleaded with the Lord for the speedy fulfillment of these promises. He pleaded for the honor of God to be preserved. In his petition he identified himself fully with those who had fallen short of the divine purpose, confessing their sins as his own.”³

- Daniel knew of the salvic commitment man must make.
- He believed in predictive prophecy.
- He understood the significance of God’s prophetic time pieces.
- The end of the 70 years was now in sight. Urgency in making that spiritual renewal was a priority.

Though Daniel does not mention Isaiah, that book was part of the canon at that time. It is assumed that he had access to it and knew it well. Within its prophetic narrative were stunning predictions regarding a man named Cyrus.

Cyrus came from the east. Jesus will do the same. Cyrus brought deliverance to the

In light of this very specific information given over 100 years before, Daniel had amazing insight as to the hour he was in. On two counts he knew that an amazing prophetic drama was about to occur.

1. Cyrus led the campaign to bring Babylon’s fall.
2. Though Darius the Mede was the regional king of the Babylonian area, Cyrus would fulfill Israel’s prophecy to let the Jewish captives receive freedom.
3. The 70-year prophecy was nearly complete (it clearly would go into the time that the Persian kingdom was established – II Chronicles 36:20b).

One other issue, with deep spiritual significance, must be on Daniel’s mind. God had instructed Israel to keep a new Sabbath **when** they had entered the land of Canaan. Every seventh year was called a *Shemita* – a sabbatical year. This was a time when they were to be totally dependent on God. During the sixth year extra crops were divinely provided for food needed during that sacred non-farming year and even into the next year, while waiting to harvest the new crops. The **land would**

³ White, Ellen G.; *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 554-555.

⁴ Robertson, Patricia; personal communiqué, 2006.

rest for a whole solar year (outlined in Leviticus 25).

This was so important that God issued warnings of a seven-fold curse if this instruction wasn't honored.

*“But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments ... I will bring the **land into desolation**: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and **your land shall be desolate**, and your cities waste. Then shall the **land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate**, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths”* (Leviticus 26:14, 32-34).

That is exactly why Judah was taken into Babylonian captivity! They dishonored the *Shemita*. We are given unique insight

gods. That prayer of renewal is outlined beautifully by Steinman:⁵

- Confession of his people's sins against God (9:3-6)
- Recognizing God's judgment on Israel's sin (9:12-14)
- A plea that God would:
 - Avert His anger on Jerusalem (9:15-16) and
 - Shine His face on His city and sanctuary once again

All of the great spiritual themes addressed were based on incredible instruction found in Leviticus 25–26 and Deuteronomy 30. It is important to be aware that dual imagery is embedded within Daniel 9 (see Fig. 4):

	<u>Physical</u>	<u>Spiritual</u>	
Jerusalem	City	God's people, Israel	(9:12, 16; Isa. 63:18)
Mt. Zion (holy mountain)	Elevated in Jerusalem	Where God meets His holy people	(9:16; Psa. 51:18, 87:5; Jer. 8:19)
Sanctuary	Temple	God's church	(9:17)

Figure 4

into this by fascinating records in the Chronicles.

*“And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, **until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths**: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years”* (II Chronicles 36:20-21).

Daniel is ready to address, on behalf of his people (symbolizing, as we will also see, the 144,000 at the end), whatever is necessary to bring restoration. His prayer is a confession of how Israel broke away from a theocracy to a system honoring false

Confusion reigns with many commentaries regarding what follows. Literalism gets in the way of understanding spiritual restoration. The rebuilding of “Jerusalem” has two prophetic messages: (1) physical assets and (2) spiritual restoration of the theocracy.

To choreograph our understanding, God had designated Cyrus **not only** to subdue the apostate Babylonian Empire but to decree the restoration of the **physical city and the temple** in Jerusalem! This was prophesied through Isaiah long before Cyrus was conceived.

⁵ Steinmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 436-442 (adapted).

“This is what the LORD says – your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the LORD, who has made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself, ... who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, “Let it be rebuilt,” and of the temple, “Let its foundations be laid.””” (Isaiah 44:24, 28 – NIV). This prophecy is not of Artaxerxes I (a Biblical name tied to other prophecies.)

This orientation is extremely important to see and accept if one is to understand what follows. God will address the prayer of Daniel – but – the prophetic imperatives and events in Daniel 9 are **mainly spiritual**. Failure to see this will lead to divergent views, detracting from its redemptive climax.

Heavenly Response

“And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God. Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation” (Daniel 9:20-21).

While Daniel was still praying, heaven responded. This reveals the urgency of Gabriel’s message to Daniel and to all those living after the 2300-year prophecy (8:14). The 490-year and 2300-year prophecies are linked by the word for “vision” (*mareh*). They are part of one prophecy. Heaven seems very eager to talk with Daniel!

Daniel associated his personal tie to God with his personal loyalties to “*my people*” – his confession is to God for himself and his people. His endearing plea reveals the deepest pathos: “*God, remain as my [our] God.*” Then in a fascinating metaphor he says that this all concerns “*the holy*

mountain of my people.” (The best translations for this: NET, NIV.)

Four times (vss 7, 16, 18 and 19) Daniel has mentioned Jerusalem, where Mount Zion is located (cf. Psalms 2:6, 48:2, 99:9). There is more to this phrase than a prayer to restore the city and temple. Though the physical city and temple lay waste, rebellion of a *holy people* and disloyalty to a *holy God* remained the reason for desolation. Holiness was to be restored (8:14) in and through the people! That is **the** purpose of Daniel 9.

Dramatic imagery was painted of Satan and from **where** he fell in Ezekiel 28:12-19. He was called the “*anointed cherub*” that “*wast upon the ‘holy mountain of God’*” (vs 14). That was where God resided and the location of His throne (Psalm 48:2) – also called the “*mount of the congregation*” (Isaiah 14:13), where the saints will finally gather (Revelation 14:1). The name Zion or Mount Zion referred to the literal temple mount where God dwelled among them. Later, the name took on symbolic significance to the Jewish people as encompassing the whole city of Jerusalem (cf. 9:16).

“*The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God.*” (Psalm 87:2-3).

Daniel pleads for the restoration of the temple (sanctuary – vs 7). Literal rebuilding (restoration of what was made physically desolate) is in view. But – once again – the greater issue is the re-establishment of God as the theocratic head of that chosen people. Zion or that *holy mount* is used figuratively as *God’s people* (Isaiah 60:14). In the New Testament it means God’s spiritual kingdom (Hebrews 12:22).

Often, within the manuscript of a Biblical author, God has defined the meaning He wants us to see. Daniel is no exception. Within the exposé of the final rise of the antichrist, called the king of the north (Daniel 11:40), comes this insight: “*And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious **holy mountain***”

(Daniel 11:45a). That is where God is designated to dwell.

Literalism would demand that somewhere between the Mediterranean and Red Seas and the Temple Mount the antichrist will set up his world capital. However, figuratively, a vastly different picture emerges. At the end, the antichrist will come between God's throne, His church and the people of the world (Revelation 17:15). In that setting, he will be "*sitting in the temple,*" showing himself as if he were God (II Thessalonians 2:4). Jesus said that that would be part of an abomination that would lead to desolation (Matthew 24:15). The antichrist portrays his authority and role as though he were in God's temple and on Mount Zion. He will portray a "restoration" contrary to heaven's principles.

Though we have a sixth century B.C. story in Daniel, it is a giant metaphor for the apostasy in the Christian world at the end. More than the temple or city, God wants a **holy people**, called by His name, standing "*where he dwells.*" "*And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads*" (Revelation 14:1).

"Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation." (vs 21)

The imagery is stunning. God instructs Gabriel to present a complex prophecy. Apparently, sometime from the onset of Daniel's prayer to a point before it completely ended, that counsel was given, and this mighty angel was at his side.

- This angel, "*man,*" is identified as Gabriel,
- Whom he saw in a **previous** vision (Daniel 8 – confirmed in verse 16).

This reference to a past contact helps to prove the authorship of Daniel – an issue with many scholars. Continuity in the prophetic message is affirmed.

The Hebrew that follows is in some dispute. The growing evidence suggests that the words "*fly swiftly*" actually refer to sDaniel's extreme weariness. This is written in the superlative – he was totally exhausted.⁶ Gabriel came to him and touched him at a time of great weakness (from fasting and intense pleading with God).

This angelic gesture appears to give Daniel special strength to be attentive to what follows. Gabriel is seen as a "*man.*" Men don't have wings.⁷ But to aid the seer, he came as before (8:15b, 17a). Daniel knew it was Gabriel from heaven, but he appeared as a man. Therefore, again, another metaphor – a "visual metaphor" – is given.

Gabriel comes to Daniel at the time of the evening oblation. This is the usual time of special prayer at 3:00 p.m. This is the "nighttime" period when he usually prayed (6:10-11). This *time* is when the *offering-oblation (minhah)* was usually given. Those cereal and drink offerings had not been made for over sixty years. Yet, it is referenced by Daniel as a "*set aside*" time⁸ commonly used (Ezra 9:5, Psalm 141:2).

"And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding." (vs 22)

When Gabriel arrived and touched Daniel, he **then** spoke: "I have come to give you insight and understanding" (NIV). This is interesting. When Daniel and his companions came into Nebuchadnezzar's court, he was given "insight" (1:17), and "under-

⁶ Steinmann, *op. cit.*, p. 444.

⁷ Miller, Stephen R.; *The New American Commentary*, vol. 18 (Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), pp. 250-251.

⁸ Whitcomb, John C.; (Moody Press, Chicago – 1985), *Daniel*, p. 127.

standing” (1:20) was in evidence. These are collectively seen as “wisdom.”

This echoes a similar mission of Gabriel in 8:16! There, Christ had just given a timing prophecy of 2300 evenings and mornings. Daniel said that he “*sought for the meaning*” (8:15). Christ ordered Gabriel to help him “*understand*” (8:17). Why does Gabriel come again on a similar mission? Daniel had misinterpreted what Christ had shared in 8:14. Then Gabriel’s explanation became so stressful that Daniel fainted (8:27).

It is important to grasp the dynamics of a series of visions Daniel received that brought him and Gabriel to this point.⁹

1. Daniel was first given a vision (*chezev*), described in Aramaic (Daniel 7). He wrote, “*my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me*” (7:28). He did not understand, and what he did see left him with anxiety.
2. The next vision (*ha hazon*) was written in Hebrew. It portrayed the ram, he-goat and little horn narrative (8:2-13, 17-26b).
3. Jesus then introduced an end-time atonement-language prophecy in 8:14. This would be labeled differently, as the *mareh* vision (8:26a).

Daniel became confused and couldn’t differentiate between the *ha hazon*, the *mareh*, the 70-year captivity (which he thought was about to end) and the 2300 years yet ahead. He feared that the captivity of the Jewish people would go on for centuries. That culminated in his fainting – it was too much for him (8:27). Gabriel’s last words in chapter 8 had combined **two timing visions**:

1. The evening and the morning is true (*mareh*) (8:26).

2. The vision (*ha hazon*) is for many days (far into the future) (8:26).

This is what led to such an intense prayer by Daniel after reviewing Jeremiah, and likely Isaiah. When Gabriel comes with assurances for skill, insight and understanding, he places his hand on Daniel’s shoulder, something additionally reassuring and of comfort. This time *discernment* required *wisdom* from heaven relative to prophetic clocks!

“At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision” (Daniel 9:23).

“At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth” (vs 23)

When Daniel **started** to pray, an **answer** was given. The word for commandment is *dabar*. In this context it means the “word” or “prophecy” (implied) which had come from God (the 9:24-27 revelation) to be conveyed specifically to the seer.

- Either the answer was not in response to the content of the prayer – OR
- It was seen in God’s foreknowledge as the divine reply to his petition, i.e., it was an answer before the prayer ended!

The latter is assuredly God in action. The amazing probationary and Messianic prophecy that follows is a divine corrective action missive. It is meant to achieve what Daniel was asking for – restoration of a people. Just as the Book of Revelation originated from God (Revelation 1:1), that which Gabriel is about to reveal originates from Him.

⁹ White, Ellen G.; *The Truth About Angels*, p. 142.

“and I am come to show thee;” (vs 23)

Since Gabriel has come to **explain** the heaven-sent *mareh* vision and to embellish its details, these messages cannot be discerned correctly without this additional divine revelation. A similar theological challenge comes to the students of His Word. Everyone must tap into the same divine inspiration to understand.¹⁰

“for thou art greatly beloved:” (vs 23)

Heaven looked with favor on Daniel. The Hebrew word for “favor” is *hamudot*, meaning “counted precious.”¹¹ It is plural, thus elevating the expression. These words reveal a stunning bond that heaven has made with one man on sinful earth. Gabriel gives Daniel the most elevated and spectacular salutation any earthling might receive – “God loves you deeply.” Why would he **precede** the divine missive this way?

Daniel certainly was emotional about the prior messages. God wasn’t in a hurry to respond (several years elapsed between chapters 8 and 9). But when He did – “Before we go further, Daniel, you are in great favor to God’s heart!” Daniel’s prayer won’t be answered easily. A revival must come to the heart of his people. Great will be the demands within a time limit on God’s patience. This greeting strengthened and prepared Daniel.

Then come these words:

“therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision” (vs 23)

God Gets Specific

The word here for vision is *mareh*. But it is more than that. Gabriel says “the” *mareh*. Many expositors say that *ha hazon* and

mareh refer to similar things. If that were so, *ha hazon* of 8:26, which was sealed for the distant future, is now going to be unsealed by Gabriel for Daniel. That would mean that the “distant future” came in a little over two to three years. That is out of character contextually and with prophecy yet to unfold.

Gabriel told Daniel that the *mareh* was “true” – precise – and that it distinctly related to the “evening–morning” *mareh* vision (8:26; cf. 8:14). Then he distinguished that from the *ha hazon* vision by noting that the latter was for the future (the ram, he-goat and little horn). To make clearer this distinction, Daniel affirmed that he later (10:1) understood the *mareh*. That vision was **not** sealed for the distant future – only the *ha hazon* was.

Gabriel is being sent back to finish a task from Daniel 8 that was incomplete. It was **after** Daniel 8:14 that Daniel reflected quickly on the *ha hazon* and sought for its meaning (8:15). Gabriel then appeared before him, and suddenly a voice (which was Jesus’) from between the banks of the Ulai River asked Gabriel to explain “**the**” *mareh*. Jesus knows that Daniel has not made the prophetic distinction between the two types of prophetic messages. Since Daniel later faints over the uncertainty of the 2300 years, Jesus is gently moving Daniel towards a correct view of Daniel 8:14 – the onset of “**the mareh**” by this command.

Then Gabriel **begins** by clarifying exactly what the *ha hazon* was (8:17-25) – then he gives the timing statement that its fulfillment wouldn’t occur until the far future (vs 26b). Gabriel never had a chance to complete **the mareh** explanation, which he was about to do.

Thus – here in 9:23, Gabriel comes in response to Daniel’s humble prayer **and** to

¹⁰ Goldingay, John E.; Daniel – *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 30 (Word Books, Publisher – Dallas, TX), p. 256.

¹¹ Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

finish what he was unable to complete earlier – explaining the rest of *the mareh* vision in Daniel 8:14 (the “*true*” vision!). We know that Gabriel’s mission in Daniel 9 is extremely vital and important because of the speed with which heaven responded to Daniel’s petition (while he was still praying)!

Therefore, at the beginning of Daniel’s prayer, though the end of the 70-year captivity is in view, God wants Daniel to address a broader issue: the **revival** of those who call themselves God’s people. That **is** the issue that will bring the captivity to its desired close!

THE DISTINCTIVE *MAREH* PROPHECY UNFOLDS

This begins one of the greatly contested areas in Old Testament prophecy. Daniel had clearly understood the meaning of Jeremiah's 70-year prophecy. That issue related to **why** the Jewish people went into Babylonian captivity. Gabriel is now echoing **elements** of that past missive as he moves deeper into the future of the *mareh* vision. Covenant restoration occurs only on God's surrender terms. That will be His "deliverance" treaty which offers hope to ancient Israel and to last-day spiritual Israel. Since we know that the main issue causing the captivity was a breach in Judah's loyalties to the Sabbatical year (II Chronicles 36:20-21), one can see how this new timing prophecy contextually would be structured, using those seven-year cycles. It flows forward from that "time" association noted in the first part of this chapter.

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city," (Daniel 9:24a).

"Seventy" is the motif that builds on an apocalyptic "*desolation*" theme. Jeremiah had predicted that the Babylonian king would "come from the north" (the route by which Nebuchadnezzar had to approach Palestine) and take them captive for **70 years**, leaving the "whole land" in "desolation" (Jeremiah 25:11). At the end of Gabriel's current visit with Daniel, he will say that because of abominations (9:27), God has already decreed that **once again** "*desolation*" will come. Thus, "70 weeks" suggests another probation, another failure and a desolating end tied to the same seven-year cycles!

In Daniel 10 it is clear that it took time for Daniel to absorb all the meaning of this. But finally in 10:1 (the summation verse of the chapter) he understood this *mareh* vision. On two counts, Daniel then knew that his people, Israel, as he envisioned them, would likely not be God's chosen nation forever (all associated with the composite *mareh* messages):

1. There would be another "desolation" of Daniel's people at the end of the 490 years. His people would experience apostasy once again – but then, it would be final. The curse did come before the Cross (Matthew 21:43, 23:37-38), before the 490 years ended. The desolation didn't occur until 70 A.D. – thus, a gap.
2. The 2300 years of 8:14 (judicial language – part of the *mareh* vision) suggests another probation that ends in the 9:27 "desolation," and won't occur until a point in time **after** this 2300 period. When that desolation comes, the verse notes that it will be at the "*consummation*" (*kala*) – a *final end*. That desolation prophecy is repeated in 11:31 and 12:11. All this final end-time application fulfills Matthew 24:15. Thus – another gap is in view!

Seventy weeks are determined (vs 24)

This "seventy weeks" is a composite of seven, sixty-two and one week segments, later noted in the prophecy. The word for "seventy" is *shibim*. Virtually all scholars agree that it is the cardinal number 70 and is exactly the same word used by Jeremiah relative to the 70-year captivity (Jeremiah

25:11, 29:10), associated with 490 years of rebellion against the Sabbatical years (70 Sabbatical years missed during that time).

The word for “weeks” is *shabua*, which refers to “periods of seven” or “units of seven.” The “sabbatical theology” of Leviticus 25–26 has already been drawn upon (II Chronicles 36:18-21), as well as Jeremiah’s references noted above (cf. Leviticus 26:34-35). Thus, “70 periods of seven” **contextually** alludes to “70 sabbatical years.” That would mean “seventy periods of seven.” What periods? The Sabbatical cycles of seven years each! Thus, 70 Sabbatical cycles or 490 solar years. Some call the Sabbatical cycle the “Sabbatical week” – thus “70 weeks of years” – four hundred and ninety solar years, which would equal ten Jubilee cycles, incorporated in this prophecy.¹ Dispensationalists calculate this period on a 30-day month and not solar years. That is at variance with the Sabbatical theme already introduced in this chapter.

Shibim (70) *shabua* (seventy periods) are “determined.” Again, what periods? God is giving to them another probationary time of equal length that brought on the 70-year captivity (one year for each seventh year desecrated). But – this time it will be the last chance. The ensuing linguistics describe the climax of redemptive history! [*kala* – the consummation – everything finished (vs 27)].

The concept of a “week” symbol represents a *renewal cycle* – *in a re-creation or deliverance setting*. The people are given 70 “renewals” to put away sin.

“First, years fit the context well. Second, the Hebrews were familiar with the concept of sevens of years as well as of days because the Sabbatical Year was based on this premise. Every seventh year there was to be a Sabbath of rest for the land (cf. Lev 25:1–7). God promised that if Israel did not keep these Sabbath years, they would be

driven from the land and scattered among the nations (cf. Lev 26:33–35; cf. Jer 34:12–22). According to 2 Chr 36:21, one result of the seventy-year Babylonian captivity was that the land was allowed to rest in order to make up for the Sabbath years, which the Jews had failed to keep. Therefore in Scripture only two types of weeks or sevens are mentioned – sevens of days and sevens of years. All agree that days is not a valid option in this context; only sevens of years remain. The burden of proof rests squarely upon anyone who would take the sevens in any other sense.”²

Of intriguing interest is the Mathian counsel Christ gave regarding Jerusalem’s end and the final apocalyptic terminus at His coming. “Go to Daniel the prophet” where he describes the sin/abomination that leads to **desolation** (Matthew 24:15). This opens a very critical reminder. Apocalyptic “ends” must be associated with “desolation!” Daniel clearly reveals this at the end of the 490-year period and later in a three-and-a-half year period (11:31, 12:11) (which will be shown is the last part of the 490 years!). “Desolation” is a key **reference word** in apocalyptic prophecy. It is an **orientation** word that describes an “end” to a major probation period.

That means that a commonly held view of the 490 years ending in 34 A.D. would not be applicable. The 70 A.D. destruction of Jerusalem would apply with its desolation, which would affirm the Mathian record. But either a late onset decree for the 490 years to begin must be discovered, so that this period would end at 70 A.D. – or – there is a “gap!” Since the **final** consummation is also associated with utter desolation, it too welcomes the concept of a “gap.” The onset and subsequent periods must be in sympathy with the timed decree, then with the *Shemitas*, Jubilees, probation, apostasy and, finally, destructive desolation.

¹ Collins, John J; *Daniel* (Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN – 1993), p. 352.

² Miller, Stephen R.; *The New American Commentary*, vol. 18 (Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), pp. 257-258.

“are determined” (vs 24)

Hatak (determined) is in the *niphal* or passive tense. Though it could mean “to be severed” or “cut off,” its sole use here in the whole Old Testament invites us to look at Rabbinic Hebrew references for better clues. There, it is used frequently as “decreed” or “determined.”³ Since Gabriel is reporting a message of surrender to divine terms, the setting reveals only 490 years to meet heaven’s expectations that were “**decreed.**” “Time” will passively receive what man does but be actively terminated when the “clock” stops. Mercy is spelled out in covenant terms. Shortly, it will be clear what God requires. The 70 sevens are tangible evidence for God’s amazing mercy – but equally persuasive that terminal justice is anticipated.

“upon thy people and upon thy holy city,” (vs 24)

The majority of scholars take this phrase to mean the Jewish people and the physical

city of Jerusalem. That is the hermeneutic approach of literalism. But others, such as Young, Keil and Leupold, introduce the idea of “spiritual Israel.”⁴ The latter is the directive God clearly implies. Gabriel noted in a qualifying statement in 12:1 that “thy people” (Daniel’s people) were “every one that shall be found written in the book.” The prophetic application is broad and not restrictive to the Jewish people.

“Jerusalem” is also a metaphor for God’s people. In Matthew 23:37 its personification by Christ depicted it in apostasy. In that setting, it symbolizes the Jewish nation, but addresses, symbolically, all those in all ages who scorn Christ’s love.⁵ In Revelation 21:2 and 9, the “new” Jerusalem is seen as the bride of Christ, a restored people.

The implications are forward-moving. This oracle clearly refers to the Jewish people in a minor application but spiritual Israel in an eschatological context.

³ Steinmann, Andrew E.; *Daniel* (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis – 2008), p. 445.

⁴ Miller, *op. cit.*, pp. 258-259.

⁵ White, Ellen G.; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 587. In Revelation 21:2, 9, Jerusalem is seen as the bride of Christ.

COVENANT CONDITIONS

Now the great purpose for this “probation period,” “time for a final chance,” is given. To achieve what Daniel prayed for *and* to come back into harmony with God, this distinct path of reformation must be followed. Surrender of self and identity with God’s original purpose for man is the unyielding objective. What Gabriel now presents is a directive from heaven for all of God’s people, applicable to the end – when *desolation* occurs and everlasting righteousness makes its debut.

There are two sets of three objectives:

First Set: What those who claim to be His people must implement (Daniel 9:24a).

Second Set: The promised outcome, if they honor that reform of the first three objectives (9:24b).

There is end-time spiritual drama in what follows. Words like “everlasting,” “consummation,” “anointing,” “reconciliation,” “seal up,” “confirm the covenant” are used. The message is elevating, exciting and filled with hope. There are warnings, however, which add urgency and balance: “finish *the* transgression,” “troubulous times,” “destroy the city and the sanctuary,” “flood,” “desolations” and “end.”

The decree is *passive* – its objectives are realized only through man’s actions. It is activated by man’s decisions.

Again, as with most apocalyptic prophecy, there is a minor and a major application. We will make that transition as we move deeper into the prophetic narrative. To recapitulate, the forward-moving predictive history outlined here in Daniel 9 leads to “the termination of the seventy weeks, coinciding with the end of the present course of

... [God’s redemptive] work.”¹ That will be the final “accomplishment of God’s purpose for all history”² for all of humanity.³

That, once again, means that there is a “timing gap” within the infrastructure of this prophecy. We are reminded of this several times. That must be carefully analyzed in light of the great purpose of this chapter!

“to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity,” (Daniel 9:24b).

“to finish the transgression,” (vs 24)

To “finish” (*kaia*) means to “bring to an end.” The implication suggests that it won’t arise again. It is the Hebrew piel verb tense and reveals intensity and action – a decision being acted upon to its completion.

The “*transgression*” alluded to is from the Hebrew word *bepesha*. This is a specific, willful and intentional sin against God. In the Hebrew ordinances, no specific gesture atoned for *bepesha*. Yet, we know that the blood of Jesus did so: “*But he was wounded for our transgressions [bepesha], he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*” (Isaiah

¹ Keil, C. F. and Delitzsch, F.; *A Commentary on the Old Testament*, (Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA; 1866–1991), vol. 9, p. 349.

² Baldwin, Joyce G.; *Daniel* (Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, IL), p. 169.

³ Miller, Stephen R.; *The New American Commentary*, vol. 18 (Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), p. 259.

53:5-6). *Bepesha* has deep religious connotations.⁴

Based on the Tanakh (the Hebrew Bible), Judaism described three levels of sin (all presented in this sequence in Daniel 9:24).

- *Bepesha* – intentional, deliberate defiance of **God**
- *Hattat* – mainly sin against **man**
- *Awon* – sin of lust, emotion to please **self** but not deliberately against God

Pesha is the highest level of severance of one's tie with God. It is a rebellion against God's authority and His covenant relationship. It is a deliberate act of man (Hosea 14:9) against Him. Gabriel notes that "this covenant relationship" must be re-established by ceasing all rebellion and acts against the government of heaven. Independence from God must end (Amos 4:4).

In its collective use, *bepesha* is rebellion against God's authority, law and covenant. Those are a "sign" of one's loyalty to God. The seventh-day Sabbath embodies all of those and is God's perpetual "mark" of that special relationship. Thus, *bepesha* is summarily seen as defiance against the weekly Sabbath!

*"Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a **sign** between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you.... Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a **perpetual covenant**"* (Exodus 31:13, 16-17).

Within the Sabbath law, most beautifully outlined in Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:14-15, is:

- God's authority (Creator) – Exodus 20:11

- God's law (part of the Decalogue) – Exodus 20:3-17
- God's restoration covenant (deliverance) – Deuteronomy 5:15

The ultimate mark of loyalty is keeping His seventh-day Sabbath. The ultimate mark of rebellion – *bepesha* – is desecrating that Sabbath. That is tied to the "*abomination*" that leads to "*desolation*" (8:13). God has two alternative responses to *bepesha*.

1. Punishment – which is ultimately "desolation"
2. Renewal of the covenant relationship

Number 1 is God's response to those who fail to repair the relationship. Number 2 is God's response to those who enter into a restored relationship. The eleventh chapter of Daniel (vss 30-45) fills in end-time details of the antichrist's hatred towards the covenant and towards God's people (implied – who are bonded to the covenant).

It is crucial to note a distinct theological concept emerging with this first infinitive. Though Daniel pleads for restoration, the reality comes through the moral choice of man. God in mercy says, "I'll give you time to make up your mind." Contextually, however, there is a defined time limit in which to respond. Within that framework, God gives a number representing "judicial completeness" – ten Jubilees – ten complete restoration cycles as probation. He is telling us that all decisions must be made within that period of time! The number "ten" in prophecy means completeness – nothing is beyond.

In turn, this is an early Biblical prophecy that at the apocalypse, the Sabbath will be a key issue!

"and to make an end of sins," (vs 24)

Many old translations, such as the OG and Masoretic text, say: "And to finish,"

⁴ Lucas, Ernest C.; *Daniel* (Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL; 2002) p. 241.

which is similar to “to make an end” (KJV).⁵ Theodosius I uses words that suggest “to seal,” “affix a seal” or “seal up.”

This is another willful decision that God is requiring of His people. The sins or *hattat* (plural) are mainly against man (I Samuel 20:1, Psalm 59:3).⁶ This alludes particularly to commandments 5 through 10 of the Decalogue. The wording means: Within the body of God’s people, this sin will become history. Only at the end of time does that occur. The first group of individuals who appears to reflect this purity of action is the 144,000 (white horse, Philadelphia church, pure woman – Revelation 7, 12, 14:1).

The very language is invitational to God’s people and looks forward to what will take place just before “desolation” comes in. It is part of God’s restoration imperatives. For righteousness to come, these sins have to be put away, finished, sealed – nevermore to arise. Daniel understood the issues relative to the 70 literal years of **desolation** for the Babylonian captivity (Daniel 9:2). We are to understand the 490 years that **end in desolation** (Daniel 9:27) at the **end of time**.

This is very different from the past. In God’s dealings with Israel, He had qualifying positions: “If you repent, I will bless you” (Leviticus 26:40-42). This time period of 490 years is a **set** time. It is mainly for **spiritual Israel, because**, as we will shortly see, it is integrally tied to the 2300 years of Daniel 8:14 and moves forward to the eschatological end. God is speaking to us!

“to make reconciliation for iniquity,” (vs 24)

This infinitive has been the subject of dissertations and much speculation. A large number see this (and the previous two phrases) as the completion of Messianic expiation. But there is a problem. “Messiah” is **not** the subject. It is “your people” and

⁵ Steinmann, *op. cit.*, p. 445.

⁶ TWOT (Theological Word Dictionary of the Old Testament).

the “holy city.” This redirects totally the purpose and meaning of these phrases!

The words “to make reconciliation” is from the Hebrew word *kippur*. It means “to atone” or “to make a covering.” The immediate allusion that many expositors assume comes from the Jewish ordinance of sprinkling blood on the mercy seat on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:15-16). There, it depicts not only forgiveness (already done in the courtyard) but “removal” or “total coverage” by the blood.

The easiest way to understand this phrase is to first look at the word “iniquity” (*awon*). It is used as a noun, and encompasses the collective misdeeds of man, **especially against himself**. It represents an overwhelming trait of man’s character, the very nature of man acting against itself, misdeeds against oneself and, in turn, God (Numbers 14:34, I Samuel 25:24, II Samuel 22:24, I Kings 17:18, Ezra 9:6, Isaiah 1:4, Jeremiah 11:10).⁷

In this setting the confusing word *kippur* or “to atone” takes on rich meaning. Man (your people) and the church (the holy city) are the subject. Rebellion against God and sins against man have been addressed in the first two infinitives in a judicial summary against the two great parts of the Decalogue. Now the infinitive is associated with other kinds of remaining iniquity, which must be addressed and atoned for. They, too, must be covered by the blood and taken away. *Awon* addresses all other sins not obvious in the Decalogue. Hebraic emphasis again stresses especially sins against one’s self, such as self-lust. There is an allusion to acting on man’s propensities to evil that may not directly affect another. Christ’s blood is to cleanse and restore the very nature of man. This is only done by willful submission to the power of heaven.

“It was not inevitable that punishment [automatically followed] ... [iniquity] [*awon*]; there was a way to escape it... Man must be aware of and confess ... [iniquity] [*awon*]

⁷ *Ibid.*, Daniel 9:24 – *awon*.

(Gen 44:16; Lev 16:21; Neh 9:2; Psa 32:5; Psa 38:18 [H 19]) and it must be a request directed to God (Exo 34:9; Num 14:19; Job 7:21; Psa 25:11). Man must also change his way of life or thinking (Ezek 18:30; Ezek 36:31). There is provision for a substitute in [place of] punishment (Lev 16:22; Isa 53:5-6, 11; Ezek 4:4-6).⁸ It was God's atonement, even for "secret" types of sin.

"Of supreme importance is God's acts of taking away, forgiving ... [*awon*]; this is both promised and declared as an actuality (Num 14:18; Psa 65:3 [H 4]; Psa 78:38; Psa 103:3; Prov 16:6; Isa 6:7; Jer 32:18; Dan 9:24; Mic 7:18-19; Zech 3:4, 9.... In three places the divine act of cleansing is stressed (Psa 51:4; Jer 33:8; Ezek 36:33)."⁹ (by His atoning blood). Expiation is strongly in evidence for this special sin.

Daniel prayed for restoration; Gabriel counseled him as to what would activate that possibility – these three infinitives. The instruction is broad, encompassing God's people and His church. Because of its

speedy answer from the courts of heaven, it was advice in urgent waiting. The "time" in history, the prayer and now the probationary period to repent have coalesced.

The invitation is to eliminate sin guilt through the atoning blood – to Daniel, in promise; to us, in reality. Thus:

1. "**finish**" – transgression (against God) – epitomized in the Sabbath command
2. "**bring to an end**" – sin (against man)
3. "**make reconciliation**" (*bring atoning blood*) – iniquity (against self)

Though perhaps oversimplified, the **three together** bring into play beautiful imagery of man actively engaged in pleasing God by eliminating everything that impedes holiness (anticipated in the last half of verse 24)!

⁸ TWOT (Theological Word Dictionary of the Old Testament).

⁹ *Ibid.*

WHEN WILL THE GREAT PURPOSE OF DANIEL 9 COMMENCE?

“and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy” (Daniel 9:24c).

“and to bring in everlasting righteousness,” (vs 24)

This phrase is another Danielic expression where conflicting viewpoints abound. The majority of scholars conclude that the appearance of the Messiah towards the end of the 490 years fulfills this promise. Many theories are then applied, such as where or how the 490 years ended or will end. But – what is the context?

- A timing prophecy is “formulated” for **God’s people** and **His church** to complete corrective measures against three types of sin.
- That list sequences rebellion against God and man, and any other wrongs, especially against self.
- This new positive infinitive series conveys what such action will accomplish – i.e., bring in righteousness.

The **subject remains God’s people** and **His church** (not the Messiah). The verb for “to bring in” is *bo* and is in the *hiphel* tense infinitive. This is “causative.” That suggests that when God’s people address the first three sin issues, the outcome – the result – will be everlasting righteousness!

This is an important transition in Daniel’s study. It dramatically opens a major salvic

issue. Though provision for man’s complete atonement is already implied in this verse, it shows that **his choice** is what **activates** the power of the Cross.

This message signals us that at the end of the seventy sevens, **everlasting righteousness will** exist with God’s people and His church. With the onset of this period decreed for 458–457 B.C., and knowing that that objective has not been accomplished, **a timing gap** is again in evidence. That 490-year period has not yet been completed. Any other conclusion removes this prophecy from its context.

There is another element within the word “righteousness” used here – *sedeq*. It refers to the arrival of ethical, forensic and theocratic justice. All questions about God’s character (His righteousness) are resolved. A holy people will attest to God’s laws as supreme and legally just. Satan will soon reveal his character in its fullest expression (sixth trumpet). God has already expressed His supreme loveliness through those people (first seal, 144,000, two witnesses, Philadelphia church)! This occurs when corporate righteousness emerges and proceeds on throughout eternity.¹

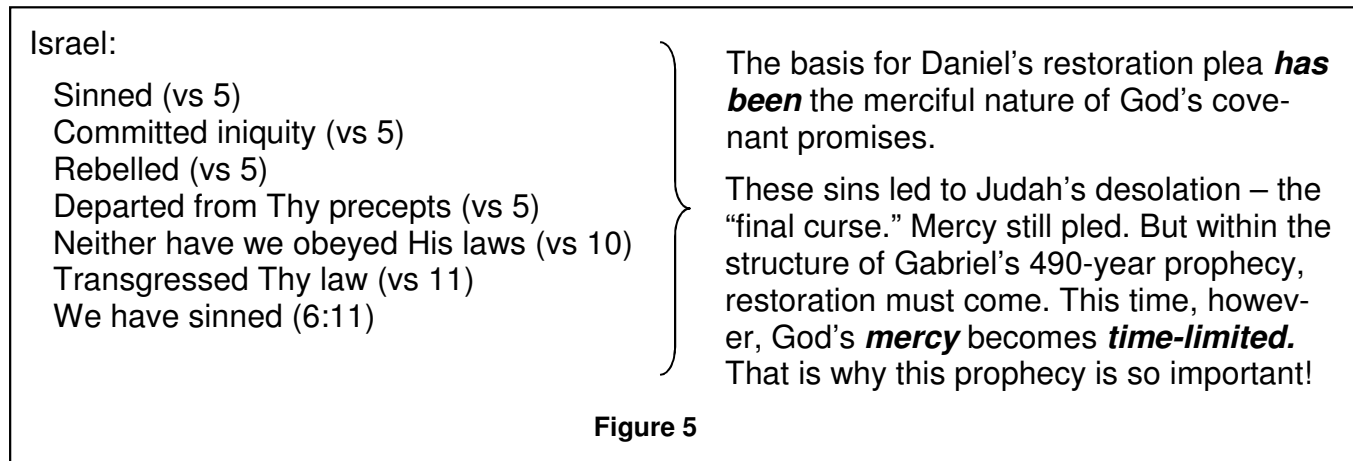
There is here a link to Daniel 8:14 that is stunning! The KJV does not do justice to the Hebrew text. On or after 2300 years (another discussion) holiness (*qodesh*) is vindicated (*nisdaq*). The word *nisdaq* has again a forensic implication. In fact, some translate it as “adjudicated.” It has the same root as *sedeq* in 9:24. *Nisdaq* is used only in 8:14 and is in the niphil tense – passive.

¹ Miller, Stephen R.; *The New American Commentary*, vol. 18 (Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), pp. 260-261.

What occurs to vindicate holiness and adjudicate God’s righteous character?

On or after the 2300 atonement cycles, holiness (note that there is no article “the” in front of holiness) will be vindicated/adjudicated. **That** is a prophecy representing the terminus to God’s plan of redemp-

Gabriel came in chapter 9 to talk about the *mareh* vision. But, **within** the context of that discourse comes this infinitive, present-tense message about the *ha hazon*. Notice carefully the contextual sequence (see Fig. 5):



tion. Righteousness wins out legally over Satan’s claims. But **why** is *nisdaq* passive? Amazing – God’s people, His church, have addressed sin, and “everlasting righteousness” comes in! Daniel 8:14 begins *the mareh* prophecy and Daniel 9:24 reveals how it will be fulfilled! We are invited to become a facilitator in vindicating the character of God! That is pending. Something within the 490-year prophecy waits (see Appendix I – *The Tarrying Time*)! What we wait for is called the “appointed time.” Daniel 8:14 and 26 must be put together with Daniel 9 to understand what these prophecies mean!

“to seal up the vision” (vs 24)

“To seal up” (*hatan*) usually refers to affixing a seal. This same word is used elsewhere in 8:26, 12:4 and 12:9, where the vision was to be **silenced** until the end. But here in 9:24 we are focusing on an eschatological point.

“The vision” in this phrase is *ha hazon* – referring back to Gabriel’s last encounter with the ram, he-goat, little horn and “time of the end” timing prophecies in chapter 8.

When God’s people have addressed the sin issue, **when** everlasting righteousness has come in – **then** – in present tense, the *ha hazon* vision will be finished. That is stunning! That **is** the end of Satan’s work on earth. The conflict between Christ and Satan will have ceased! Daniel also asked later when God’s deliverance and resurrection would come (be finished) (12:6). Jesus then said that the persecution would last three and a half years and then “all these things” – persecution, deliverance and resurrection – would have occurred! This relates to the same time. Gabriel ties together how we can bring together these two visions. Again, there is no way to do this unless there is a **gap** in the 490-year prophecy! We will look at this more deeply in the next verse.

The sealing here means that the prophecies (*ha hazon*) will have been confirmed by their occurrence and will have come to an end. No more conflict, persecution, horror from the antichrist – “he shall be broken without hand” (8:25), “he shall come to his end, and none shall help him” (11:45). Satan’s work on earth is done!

No timing prophecy will be needed beyond the 70 weeks of years.² “The allusion ... **includes** all prophecy that is construed as eschatological.”³

“and to anoint” (vs 9:24)

“To anoint” (*mashah*) is a special Hebrew verb. It was used anciently to express a variety of daily activities – such as, “rubbing” a war shield with oil (Isaiah 21:5), “painting” a house (Jeremiah 22:14), putting oil (like lotion) on the body or skin (Amos 6:6).

It was also used to describe many religious rituals such as ceremonial inductions of leaders by pouring oil from an animal horn onto the head of the individual – such as Saul and David (II Samuel 12:7), the high priest (Exodus 29:7, Numbers 35:25) or even a prophet (I Kings 19:16, Isaiah 61:1).

Biblically, anointing has deep spiritual significance:

1. It separates or sets aside individuals and objects for God’s service.
2. It draws attention to God as the authorizing power or agent behind the anointed.
3. It opens the door for a special endowment of His Spirit on the anointed.

With this special “set aside” understanding, we note the command that God gave to Moses to anoint the tabernacle and its implements after it was constructed (Exodus 30:22-33).

Cyrus was called “the Lord’s anointed” (Isaiah 45:1). This man was pagan and worshiped the god Marduk. Yet, he was divinely designated with this “holy title” over a century before he was born! He was singled

out or chosen as a **deliverer** and the **one** to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple (Isaiah 44:28). He was honored as God’s agent for a unique time of deliverance from Babylon.

A similar Messianic purpose came through Jesus by this declaration:

“The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound” (Isaiah 61:1).

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised” (Luke 4:18).

This was also prophesied here in Daniel 9. In verse 25 He is introduced as Messiah the Prince – the *mashiyach nagib* – the **anointed leader** or prince.

From a decree to restore and build to the Messiah was to be 69 “weeks of years” or 483 literal years. Here, the first imagery of Jesus was a focus on His anointing – the “anointed one.” He was set apart by the Holy Spirit to:

- Preach good tidings (gospel)
- Bind up the brokenhearted (restoration)
- Proclaim liberty to captives (deliverance)

This *mareh* vision narrative all began back at the Ulai River, where Daniel heard a “man’s voice” between its banks. That “man” was the “certain saint” (8:13). – the “Prince of princes” (8:25). The Ulai River represented the 144,000. This brings into focus an amazing picture:

(See Fig. 6 – next page)

² Steinmann, Andrew E.; *Daniel* (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis), p. 466.

³ Collins, John J.; *Daniel* (Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN – 1993), p. 354 (emphasis added).

Apocalyptic Messianic Roles – *Mareh* Vision

“certain saint”	“anointed prince”	“Michael”
(Prince of princes) (Dan. 8)	(Messiah the Prince) (Dan. 9)	(below)
Gives 2300-year prophecy, when holiness would be adjudicated	Anointed 483 years after a decree At 490 years ever- lasting righteousness would come in. Holiness will reign.	

Figure 6

In chapter 10 – still part of the *mareh* vision – Messiah the Prince of princes is reintroduced as Michael, who came to help Gabriel “war against” the “prince of the Kingdom of Persia” (Satan) (vs 13). This was in 536–535 B.C., the “third year of Cyrus” (vs 1) (the first year of independence from Darius the Mede). This was approaching the time the Jewish people would be “delivered” out of Babylon to return to Canaan. Satan was working on Cyrus’ heart to prevent that from occurring. Gabriel, then Messiah Michael, came to neutralize the satanic effects on the king’s heart.

This was near the *end* of the 70 years of captivity.

There in Daniel 10 Michael is described above the center of the Hiddekel River. He

is depicted by Daniel in a similar way as John described Jesus in Revelation 1:13-16. This large body of water represented the “great multitude.” Jesus is seen as a High Priest, Judge and King. Intriguingly, this prophecy is being given at Abib 24, the time of the Latter Rain in Palestine. Thus, our flow and timing of this special Christocentric thought moves forward.

The “Michael” imagery does not end there. In Daniel 12:1 Michael stands up for “all those written in the Book of Life, bringing deliverance. Thus, the “anointed one” is beautiful imagery in the very center of redemptive end-time prophecy.

This Messianic imagery expands as redemptive history draws to an end (Fig. 7):

Apocalyptic Messianic Roles

“certain saint”	“anointed prince”	“Michael”
(Prince of princes) (Dan. 8)	(Messiah the Prince) (Dan. 9)	(Priest, Judge, King) (Daniel 10)
Gives 2300-year prophecy, when holiness would be adjudicated	Be anointed 483 years after a decree At 490 years ever- lasting righteousness would come in. Holiness will reign.	Time of Latter Rain Message that Michael is still an interceding priest (Heb. 7:25)
Focus – 144,000	Focus – God’s people	A judicial attorney, making up the saints (Mal. 3:17), and king (Matt. 28:18)
		Focus – great multitude.

Figure 7

“certain saint”
(Prince of princes)
144,000 message

↓
“anointed prince”
(Messiah the Prince)
Message for all God’s people

↓
Michael the Prince
Michael the Deliverer
(Priest, Judge, King)
Great multitude message

In a wonderful finalé to Daniel 8–12, Christ, as High Priest, is once again above a river – assumed to be the Ulai (144,000 imagery). There, in a courtroom setting, He pledges His blood. The war between good and evil *will* end. “My blood will seal Satan’s fate.” God’s people will be delivered and blessed! The Danelic *mareh* picture is elevating, Messiah-driven and filled with redemptive hope. All begins with that “certain saint,” who became the “anointed prince.”

Here in verse 24 the Most Holy is **anointed**. This relates to Christ’s cleansing blood properties. Anointing often accompanied a bath (Ruth 3:3, II Samuel 12:20, Ezekiel 16:9) and was especially important in preparation for a feast (Ecclesiastes 9:8; Psalm 23:5, 7:46).

Since the imagery of this verse is “holiness restored,” it is a summation description of the “outcome” of the Day of Atonement. That included:

1. Purification of the tabernacle – God’s church – which meant:
2. Purification of the High Priest and His family
3. Purification of the people or congregation

That brings our study to the next words in this phrase:

“most Holy” (9:24)

“Most Holy” – *qodesqodasim* (H).

Daniel had prayed “Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon **thy sanctuary** that is desolate, for the Lord’s sake” (Daniel 9:17). It was in 592 B.C., before Nebuchadnezzar’s final destruction of Solomon’s temple and the city of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., that the glory of God – the Shekinah – had departed from that magnificent sanctuary (Ezekiel 11:22-23). Though partly praying for the physical temple restoration in the land of Canaan, in Daniel’s heart, the return of God’s presence to his people was central. No wonder this prophecy has such deep spiritual, covenantal, restorative imagery!

“As the place of His ascension, Jesus chose the spot so often hallowed by His presence while He dwelt among men. Not Mount Zion, the place of David’s city, not Mount Moriah, the temple site, was to be thus honored. There Christ had been mocked and rejected. There the waves of mercy, still returning in a stronger tide of love, had been beaten back by hearts as hard as rock. Thence Jesus, weary and heart-burdened, had gone forth to find rest in the Mount of Olives. The holy Shekinah, in departing from the first temple, had stood upon the eastern mountain, as if loath to forsake the chosen city; so Christ stood upon Olivet, with yearning heart overlooking Jerusalem.”⁴

“God, won’t you make your face to shine once again on us and restore your **sanctuary presence?**” That sanctuary was rebuilt by Cyrus, Darius I and Artaxerxes under a divine directive. Later, it was embellished by Herod and called “Herod’s Temple.” But God’s presence never came to “anoint it!” It could not be “set aside” as before. Jesus graced that temple with His presence. But with the Jewish rejection of Christ – it was

⁴ White, Ellen G.; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 829.

doomed once again to destruction and desolation – forever.

Because of the Daniel 8:14 prophecy, the restoration of the temple and its “anointing” with God’s presence wouldn’t occur for at least 2300 years. Though Daniel didn’t yet understand that the promise wouldn’t be for “his people,” today we can see that the anointing, the restoration, has an end-time fulfillment for the last generation.

The Most Holy Place was where God dwelt. Each year it was “cleansed” or symbolically “anointed” with the blood of Christ. New imagery was to be introduced by the “anointed one.” Where God dwells would be represented by each individual (I Corinthians 3:16-17). Prophecy would have us see that it meant His church (Revelation 11:1) and that the great purpose of the physical temple would come to a close, with it being open (Revelation 11:19) and Lamb Jesus becoming “the presence” (Revelation 21:22).

The future is in sight as Gabriel notes that the “most holy” would be “anointed” or “set aside.” Something had to be taken out or away from the “most holy.” The ancient tabernacle is our model. Though it was the “most holy” where God’s presence resided, it was where God “took” the confessed sins of the people. At Atonement those sins were transferred to Satan, the scapegoat. All New Testament “temple” imagery needs a similar “removal” – man, the church and the heavenly sanctuary (Jesus, the sin bearer).

There is a time when man is cleansed from all unrighteousness (I John 1:9). A final atonement in heaven is perceived when the “record” of confessed sins is removed. This is portrayed as a progressive event between Revelation 11:19 and 15:8. The church at the end was polluted. A new “body” does emerge.

Intriguingly, all these prophecies fast-forward in Paul’s writings, where he portrays the antichrist as the “man of sin” – the “son of perdition” (II Thessalonians 2:3). A fascinating parallel is made.

Notice how Paul becomes sanctuary riveted: “*Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God **sitteth in the temple** of God, showing himself that he is God*” (II Thessalonians 2:4). Notice that from Daniel 8:9-12 to this end-time motif of Paul’s, the “temple,” the “church,” the “body of believers” is in a desolate, deceived state spiritually. Right up to the very end of time the work of the “mystery of iniquity” continues. Daniel’s prayer is apropos still today: “*Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, **Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary.***” (Daniel 9:17 – NIV).

The **anointing of the Most Holy** – the place where God’s presence resides – is waiting. **But** – here in Daniel 9:24 it becomes a promise! When God’s people put away sin – righteousness comes into His church. Satan and his host are “taken out of the way” (II Thessalonians 2:7b) and **then** the precincts of “His abiding” can once again return. The High Priest’s function will cease when all sins are removed and placed on Satan. The Holy Place will once again be pure, without sin or its record – and the rightful place of the new kingdom will commence.

This is finally depicted in Revelation 12 as the “pure woman” standing on the moon, having total dominion over earthly things. Satan and his host no longer influence the church. God’s people are later noted as made up of individuals who are daughters of this pure, original church who keep the commandments of God (found in the Most Holy place) and have a faith like Jesus had.

Anointing the Most Holy in the context of a “set aside” people suggests that they are sealed. The hope of glory has come into them. The “body” has been made up. Though the Septuagint supports the “Most Holy Place” and alludes to the physical area of the tabernacle – or temple – there are too many symbols in Daniel 9 to be that restrictive. Daniel’s prayer is a covenant restoration plea. “Restore in us your pres-

ence!" That glory will return to His church (Haggai 2:7-9).

The "anointing or cleansing of the temple" is not depicted in prophecy until the very end of time (Ezekiel 43:1-6). There are many timing prophecies attached to Ezekiel's temple that are profound and link directly to several areas in Revelation!

The end of probation is initially shown in Ezekiel 44:1-2. All this end-time imagery of the temple "when the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord" (Ezekiel 44:4) once again begins at a "new moon" on a "Sabbath" day, when the gate that "looketh east" (symbol of Shushan – deliverance) will be opened. This vision alludes to the month of Tishri (40:1). That is the beginning of the Feast of Trumpets – judgment of the living – in anticipation of the Day of Atonement.

The weight of evidence – garnering all the symbols in this phrase – suggests that **the anointing of the Most Holy** is when the sanctuary, God's church, His bride, is finally cleansed. That will culminate with all the sins of God's people being placed on the scapegoat. Jesus will no longer be burdened as the "sin bearer." Everything will be ready for the wedding. The heavenly sanctuary will be free of atonement activity.

That is when the fulfillment of the everlasting covenant is complete.

*"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: ... For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and **their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more**" (Hebrews 8:10, 12).*

*"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And **their sins and iniquities will I remember no more**" (Hebrews 10:16-17).*

At the end of the 490 years, the holy of holies will be anointed (cf. Joel 3:18, Isaiah 60:7, Jeremiah 33:20-22, Ezekiel 37:26-28).

God's church will be pure, cleansed and without a trace of sin. Its members, the saints, will experience His eternal presence.

"In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. That temple, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was designed to be an object lesson for Israel and for the world. **From eternal ages it was God's purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator.** Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God. Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple. God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high destiny open to every soul. But the Jews had not understood the significance of the building they regarded with so much pride. They did not yield themselves as holy temples for the Divine Spirit. The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly the temple of the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. In cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin,—from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul. 'The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify

the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold
and silver.' Mal. 3:1-3."⁵

⁵ White, Ellen G.; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 161.

THE BEGINNING POINT FOR THE 490 YEARS

“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” (Daniel 9:25).

“Know therefore and understand,” (vs 25)

In the light of fulfilling the everlasting covenant with God’s people, Gabriel asked Daniel to “know the facts I’m going to tell you” and “make sure you understand what they mean.” Bottom line? Know the ***purpose*** God has in giving this ***time-limited prophecy***.

This is ***not*** a casual teacher–student imperative! Daniel had fainted with Gabriel’s last timing message (8:27). Eternal issues for God’s people are being entrusted to this prophet. Just a few minutes ago he had said: *“I am come to shew thee”* – therefore understand the matter and grasp the meaning of “the” *mareh* vision (9:23)! That vision is the story of how God’s people will be restored – the gospel’s expected end.

The events driving this timing vision now proceed. The 2300-year prophecy preceded this one, identified as part of this same *mareh* message. That message was couched in “sacred cycles” – “evening–morning,” which depicts the annual Day of Atonement. Here, the 70 weeks of years have a legal point of onset. Thus, a secular–spiritual time frame is being jointly developed.

Ezra will relate to this legal point also – a religious–secular time. *“I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and of*

his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee.... And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment” (Ezra 7:13, 23). (See Appendix II.) A copy of the decree letter was carried by Ezra in this journey to Canaan (Ezra 7:11).

“that from the going forth of the commandment” (vs 25)

“Going forth” *mosa* (*mowtsa*) refers to “issuing” of a command or decree. This is future to this meeting with Gabriel. The word “from” means that it begins at some point in time and covers a defined period. That will be revealed shortly by Gabriel as a 483-year expanse.

Since the 2300-year period – annual “atonement cycles” – is also a *mareh* vision, one can now conclude that it too begins at that decree (in Daniel 8:14 no beginning or ending point was given). There, Christ’s response to Gabriel’s *“until when”* (*admatay*) question clearly shows that one must know when that period begins because the time when the Daniel 8 prophecies will occur is at or after its end.

Thus, the decree must be given in the fall, at a time that would coincide with or come *immediately* after the Day of Atonement (Tishri 10). *Atonement* represents *restoration*, cleansing, a beginning again, when holiness is restored. The counsel given by Gabriel to Israel were steps of “corrective action” to *“bring in everlasting righteousness”* – a descriptive theme also of restoration. The prophecies focus on spir-

itual restoration. That is easily overlooked. That is the theme and overriding purpose of this prophecy.

A question that continues to provoke heavy debate: “Which decree?” And “By whom?” The end of the 70-year captivity is in sight. Would it occur when Babylon was captured by the Persian Empire in 539 B.C.?¹ The Jewish people still had three and a half years to go, as nearly as the records can be ascertained, to the end of that 70-year captivity, which ended when Cyrus became king in 536 B.C.² No decree was made in 539 B.C. related to the Jews. But at the end of the 70 years, one would be anticipated.

Focusing on Cyrus

The Bible had made many predictions regarding Cyrus over one hundred years before he was born. He was decreed by God as “*my shepherd*” (Isaiah 46:11) to set the captives free (Isaiah 45:13) and even called “righteous” (Isaiah 45:13).

Daniel was told that the “*decree*” was to “*restore and to build Jerusalem ... the streets shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times*” (Daniel 9:25). God also through Isaiah had noted: “*who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, "Let it be rebuilt," and of the temple, "Let its foundations be laid."'"* ... “*I will raise up Cyrus ... in my righteousness: I will make all his ways straight. He will rebuild my city and set my exiles free, but not for a price or reward, says the LORD Almighty.*” (Isaiah 44:28, 45:13 – NIV).

If that decree was what God intended, the 483 years to Messiah the Prince would

have brought that point to 53 B.C. – well known to fall shy of any Messianic fulfillment. Thus, it could not be what Gabriel was alluding to. There must be another meaning to what will occur!

Fulfillment of Cyrus’ decree was hampered. It was in his first year that he recognized that he would be fulfilling divine prophecy spoken nearly 150 years before. It was then that his decree went forth for the captives to return. The Samaritans quickly began to thwart God’s purposes. But God said that they would return and that Cyrus would rebuild the temple **and** the city!

Satan knew that that was a transitional point in Jewish history and in prophetic issues. That is why there was a dramatic delay in Gabriel’s later arrival to another of Daniel’s special petitions noted in Daniel 10. Satan was trying to discourage Cyrus from continued support of those exiles. Gabriel was working with Cyrus to bring the 70 years of captivity to an end and re-established God’s people. Finally, Jesus Himself, Michael, came to end that battle (Daniel 10:13).

Ezra notes that **this** decree came in the first regnal year of Cyrus’ reign: “*Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem*” (Ezra 1:1-4).

¹ Nabonidus Chronicle pp. 15-16. Cyrus Cylinder, British Museum
http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/me/c/cyrus_cylinder.aspx

² Herodotus, *The Histories Book I*, 440 B.C., translated by George Rawlingson, Flavios Josephus (Antiquity of the Jews). <http://sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/index.htm#aoj>

Though it is not the purpose of this article to decipher the complex issues regarding the accession and regnal years of the Babylonian and Medo-Persian kings (see Appendix II for more details), the year is best seen as 536 B.C.³ Was that **the** decree that Gabriel was referring to? Though Cyrus was prophetic to bring in the restoration of the temple **and** the city, the initial decree that Ezra noted only related to the temple.

“The year that Cyrus succeeded Darius the Mede to the throne of Medo-Persia marked the completion of seventy years since the first company of Hebrews had been carried captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel, who was familiar with the prophecies of Jeremiah and Isaiah regarding the duration of the captivity, and with the prophecies of Isaiah regarding the restoration by decree of Cyrus, was still living, and was occupying a position of leading responsibility in the Medo-Persian court. His faith in these prophecies led him to plead with God in behalf of his people. And now, when the time came for the temple in Jerusalem to be rebuilt, God moved upon Cyrus as his agent to discern the prophecies concerning himself, and to grant the Jewish people their liberty. And furthermore, Cyrus furnished them the necessary facilities for rebuilding the temple of the Lord.”⁴

“During the earlier years of the restoration of the Jews from Babylon, the Samaritans were untiring in their opposition. They ‘weakened the hands of the people in Judah, and troubled them in building, and hired counselors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius.’ By their false reports they aroused suspicions in minds easily led to suspect. At times, the rulers in authority seemed to be influenced to work against the purposes of God. But for many years the influences for evil were

held in check, and the people of God had liberty to continue their work.

“Throughout these years, Satan was striving to influence the highest powers of the kingdom of Medo-Persia to show disfavor to God's people. It was Satan who prompted the Samaritans to persevere in their opposition. But angels of God were working in behalf of the returned exiles, and all heaven was intensely interested in the controversy. In the tenth chapter of Daniel is given a glimpse of this mighty struggle waged for many years between the forces for good and the forces for evil.”⁵

Looking at Artaxerxes

The year of 458 B.C. was when Artaxerxes I made another remarkable restoration decree (Appendix II). This is an amazing legal directive. Though quoted often as “the” decree that fulfills the restoration of Jerusalem, its streets and walls, there is not one reference in that decree (quoted in Ezra 7:12-26) to repairing, rebuilding or restoring physical assets! Yet, it is “concluded” by many that this decree fulfills the directive. It is the decree – but for an entirely different reason.

Since the 70 weeks of years and the 2300 evening–morning prophecies are based upon luni-solar cycles, Artaxerxes I's decree does fit the prophetic events of the rest of Daniel 9 (more on this later as we unfold this study). That would put the emergence of Messiah the Prince – felt to be when He was anointed by the Holy Spirit and affirmed by His Father – at the Jordan baptism, near the historic time. But what do we do about the “decree to **build**”?

A second decree of Artaxerxes I was issued to Nehemiah (445–444 B.C.). This is a popular view among evangelicals (e.g., Walvoord, Whitcomb, Sir Robert Anderson). It was not a formal decree but was a letter of “permission” for Nehemiah (2:7) to visit

³ www.biblestudents.net/library/firstyearofcyrus.pdf

⁴ White, Ellen G.; *The Review and Herald*, March 28, 1907.

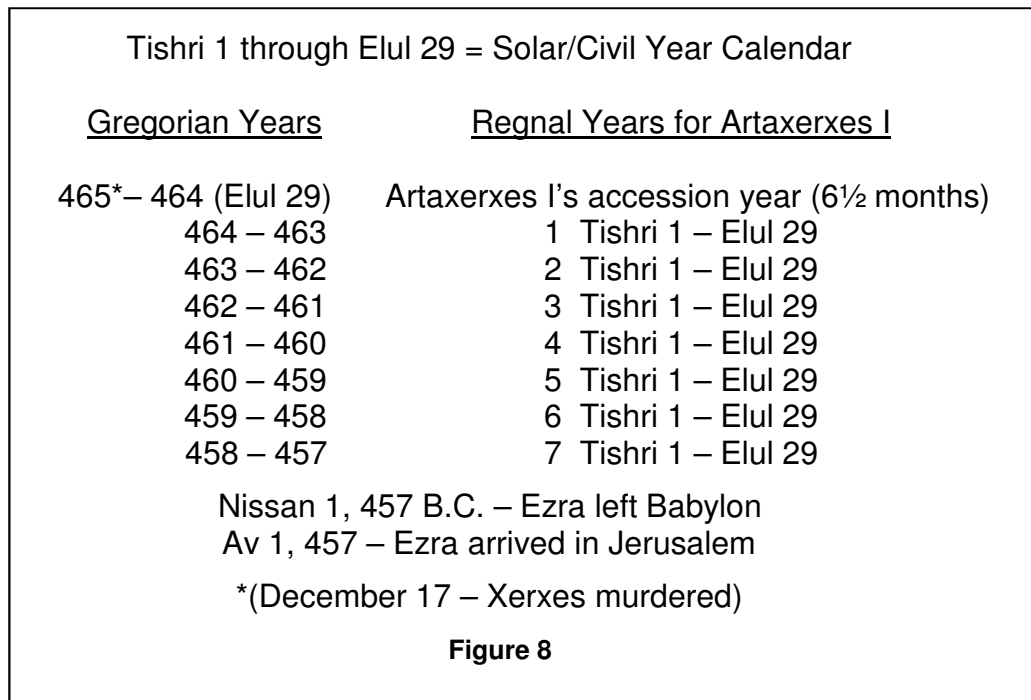
⁵ White, Ellen G.; *The Review and Herald*, December 5, 1907.

Palestine. The mission was actually to repair the broken walls of Jerusalem and the gates. But Nehemiah did say that “*Jerusalem lieth in waste and the gates are burned with fire*” (2:17; cf. 2:3) – and in his request to the king noted “*send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers’ sepulchers, that I may build it*” (2:5). But the actual work that was done was the repairing of the walls and gates – and all was completed in 52 days (Ezra 6:15)!

more important than simply drawing upon an historic retrospective conclusion from our day, is the question, “What could/would the Jewish people observe as a decree (*dabar*) that would permit them to begin “counting the years?” (see Appendix III for additional background).

Based upon this diagram from Appendix II, we begin further analysis (see Fig. 8).

The “beginning point” is noted in 9:25, which relates to the terms “restore” and



If 445–444 B.C. was the period, then the 483 years would go to 39 A.D. – well beyond the time of Christ.⁶ To “accommodate” that dilemma, Anderson argued that the years were 360 days and not luni-solar as this prophecy clearly stated (70 Sabbatical cycles). There are some prophecies calling on such short “years” – but not here. That is totally out of context.

The question that must be addressed is “What decree?” and “When?” since the prophecies which follow have distinct time periods that must be analyzed! But even

“build” Jerusalem. The “walls” and “streets” are added at the end, almost as an afterthought. Since there are conflicting expressions regarding when these were **physically restored**, a very important consideration must be raised: Since so much of Daniel 8–12 is based on metaphors and symbols, is it possible that the words “Jerusalem, walls and streets” are also spiritual representations? This question is of heightened interest in light of God already noting that Cyrus would deal with the physical city.

The answer is yes. But to convincingly demonstrate *why*, we must look elsewhere. This brings us first to Daniel 11. This prophecy was given in the third year of Cyrus’ reign (representing the time of Dari-

⁶ Miller, Stephen R.; *The New American Commentary*, vol. 18 (Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), p. 265.

us the Mede and Cyrus, felt to be ~536 B.C.) (Daniel 11:1). His decree to release God's people was in his first year, or 536 B.C. (Ezra 1:1-4).

Focusing on the Persian Kings

Daniel 11:2-20 discuss the key kings that arise **during** the 490 years, through to the "raiser of taxes" (Daniel 11:20 – Caesar Augustus)! The prophetic metaphors of Daniel 8 suggest that there is one or more Medo-Persian king(s) (Daniel 8:20). Moving to Daniel 11:2, we find that there are "four kings" that God draws our attention to.

*"And now will I show thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the **fourth** shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia"* (Daniel 11:2).

- Cyrus was king – when this was written.
- Daniel is told there will be:
 - Three Persian kings to first pay attention to.
 - Then a fourth rich Persian king will arise and stir up all against the realm of Grecia. [Note: Greece was not an empire at this time. But the Athenians (later, Greeks) were fighting Medo-Persia in many battles, beginning with the reign of Xerxes.]

Historically, there were 13 Persian kings until Alexander the Great (the "kings" – 8:21) conquers and the Grecian Empire then rules the world. This presents several problems. **One** – Which four kings is Gabriel referring to? The last of the four appears to be significant (see below). **Two** – When this prophecy was given (536 B.C.), Greece wasn't even a kingdom.

- Leopard-like beast (Daniel 7:6) – a future kingdom of Greece

- Rough he-goat, depicting Greece (Daniel 8:5, 21) – a metaphor for Satan

Not until Alexander the Great's father, Philip of Macedon, would Greece's early stage commence (359-336 B.C.). Yet, God is revealing that this area is a prophetic issue relative to Medo-Persia!

Suddenly – as we begin to see the great purpose of the 70-year **and** 490-year prophecies, Cyrus must be the **first king** since his decree brought the 70-year prophecy to its end and set the stage to begin the second.

Which kings are in that list of Daniel 11:2? Bypassing the many theories, there **are** four Persian kings **noted in the Bible** of prophetic significance (Ezra 4:5-7) (God says that these are the ones to know.):

- Cyrus (560-530 B.C.)
- Darius I (522-486 B.C.)
- Xerxes (486-465 B.C.)
- Artaxerxes I (465-424 B.C.)

Xerxes is the Ahasuerus of Queen Esther's fame. He did give a decree of destruction, but later of restoration under the guidance of Mordecai, who took Haman's place. The latter decree secured the Jewish people from their enemies but was not a decree of spiritual revival/covenant renewal – restoration of "Jerusalem."

Artaxerxes I was different. Though frequently alluded to as the king who decreed that the physical city of Jerusalem, its walls and streets be rebuilt, his published order is 100% devoid of such a command! It is a decree of **covenant restoration**, just what Daniel was praying for. It came in Artaxerxes I's seventh year as recorded in Ezra 7. By the context of Daniel 9, its spiritual restoration setting, and in an amazing background of the spiritual metaphors from Daniel 8, this must be the **fourth** king to fulfill the decree! Historically, he is the king that undermined the "Greeks," bringing to an end over 50 years of Greek (Athenian) –

Persian wars. How? By bribing, through Persian riches, Greek enemies to subvert Athenian power.⁷ He is the king of the decree!

Artaxerxes I is the king of Daniel 9:25's prophetic focus – the fourth king. Since his concern is spiritual, we must discover a spiritual meaning to the “asset” symbols of verse 25, based on Ezra's context.

Restoring Jerusalem and Its Parts

“to restore and to build Jerusalem ... the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times” (vs 25)

In Nebuchadnezzar's third and final attack on Jerusalem, devastation of the city and temple was profound. Jeremiah had prophesied, “*And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.*” (Jeremiah 25:11; cf. 29:10). Cyrus would give the decree to return to their homeland in 536 B.C. (70 years after the desolating attacks began). Here, three and a half years earlier, Gabriel (at the time of Darius the Mede – 539 B.C.) notes that the 490 years would begin when a decree to “restore Jerusalem” and then build the “walls” and “streets” went forth.

The record of Cyrus' decree is to rebuild the temple, “the house of the Lord” (Ezra 1:2-4). From Ezra 1–7 and Haggai 1:4 and 14, it can be ascertained that rebuilding of the city was moving forward at the same time.⁸ That actually fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 44:28 and 45:13, as we have seen. That was a divine imperative from God directly related to Cyrus. Is that what the 70 weeks of years is predicated on? When this Daniel 9 prophecy was given, that initial decree still lay ahead three and a half years.

Josephus concluded that this was the decree.⁹

If Cyrus' decree was the onset of the 490 years, God would have mentioned his name since he was about to assume power. He was already a familiar name in the Canon and living at the time of Daniel! This whole issue forces us to step back and re-assess the dynamics of Daniel 9.

The captivity was related to idol worship and more pointedly to a defiance of the Sabbatical year, the *Shemita* (II Chronicles 36:20-21). The *Shemita* was more than a Jewish ritual or divinely-mandated tradition (see Appendix IV). It was a sacred Sabbath year when all of Israel “played heaven.” It was a time when all of God's people related with each other and with God as though the everlasting covenant had been fulfilled. “This is what redemption will really be like” is the Sabbatical message. This is what God has ahead for everyone loyal to Him.

The Jewish nation defied that Sabbatical year and, in turn, through idolatry mocked God and His pastoral shepherding over that “flock.” In mercy, almost beyond comprehension, God is giving them 70 more chances to “play heaven.” This would be part of their steps towards holiness. ***Thus, the beginning of that restoration must have deeply spiritual directives.*** There is one decree and one only that matches that setting! It is recorded in Ezra 7. And in amazing language from a secular leader, it orders the Jewish people to get back to theocratic life and worship, and re-establish their loyalties to God. It is a covenant restoration decree from King Artaxerxes II! There is nothing in that decree about rebuilding the physical city Jerusalem.

Verse 25 begins with an exhortation for Daniel to “know and understand.” This was not part of the sealed vision. That sets it distinctly apart from the previous chapter, outlining the *ha hazon* vision.¹⁰

⁷ Dandamaev, M. A.; *A Political History of the Achaemenid Empire* (1989) (translated by W. J. Vogelsang).

⁸ Steinman, Andrew E.; *Daniel* (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis – 2008), p. 470.

⁹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, 11:1-18.

¹⁰ Goldingay, John E.; *Daniel – Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 30 (Word Books, Publisher – Dallas, TX), p. 260.

Daniel prays – Gabriel responds: “This is what you have to do” (vs 24a); then “If you do that, this is what will occur” (vs 24b). Now God sets that purpose in a time setting – but as He does, a great spiritual objective deepens. Thus – within the compassionate restoration theme, God is warning His people that His mercy has a timing limit. “Understand and perceive.” What is predicted in verse 24 will be completed in verses 25-27 in that framework of time. It becomes a prophecy of the final phase of redemption.

Since the 70 weeks of years is for “your people” and “your holy city,” a fascinating characterization of spiritual deliverance is portrayed (see Fig. 9).

God’s People Holy City (Jerusalem)	Address sin (vs 24)	Spiritually Restore and rebuild City – God’s corporate body Streets – center of worship Wall – God’s protective law
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Figure 9

The word “Jerusalem” in prophecy represents God’s people. It can be when in apostasy (Isaiah 1:21, Matthew 23:27) or fully restored as Christ’s bride (Revelation 19:7, 9; 21:9-10).

There are other illustrations of a “holy people.” John was told that the “bride” reached such a point in her spiritual experience that it “was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints” (Revelation 19:8; cf. Isaiah 61:10). That is exactly what Gabriel is telling God’s people through Daniel. In fact, the word for “restore” (*shub*) is used mainly to “turn from evil and turn towards good” (Joshua 24:23; Jeremiah 4:4, 14; Hosea 10:12). It is associated with man’s willful decision to “turn back” and re-establish the divine–human relationship! That is exactly what we see in Daniel’s prayer. He acknowledged that God is always ready to keep covenant promises (9:4), to permit man the opportunity once again to be restored, to turn back.

“Let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy

mountain: 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.... O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies” (Daniel 9:16, 18).

The theme is the redemption of a personified Jerusalem! Focusing on the physical city detracts completely from the prophecy and renders its beautiful climactic purpose void.

Everlasting righteousness will be grant-

ed, will come in. There will be saints who have that clean, white linen of holiness. Jerusalem, the holy city will be restored within a specific boundary of time!

Paired with the word “restore” (*shub*) is the word “build” (*bana*). Though used with actual construction of buildings, walls and roads, there was a metaphorical use introduced by Jeremiah: *“Again I will build you and you shall be built”* (Jeremiah 31:4; cf. Jeremiah 24:6, 33:7). God is always the implied subject. If man does his part, God will do His. A similar promise is recorded later by Amos that the house of David would be rebuilt (Amos 9:11). Another spiritual allusion: *“A Song of degrees for Solomon. Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain”* (Psalm 127:1).

“the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times” (vs 25)

The “street” (*rehob*) denotes an “open place” or often an open square in the

middle of a town or village. At the time of Israel's apostasy these were places where idols were set up (Ezekiel 16:24, 31). With Jerusalem representing God's people, that would then represent His desire to see their center of worship be re-established with Him. It suggests that when this corporate body has been clothed with His righteousness, the heart temple, the center of affections, will have been purified. Holiness and righteousness will supervene.

Another hint is introduced by the use of the word "walls" (*harus*). The words "street" and "walls" are together in the Hebrew. The word for walls is prefixed by a *w^e*, joining the two words as being inseparable. However, the way *harus* follows, it suggests a causative outcome.

"*w^e harus*," as used here, **literally** means a moat, or something that has been carved out. It is a Hebrew *metaphor* for either an act, decision or event that, when accomplished, cannot be changed! (cf. Joel 3:14).¹¹ It is "sculptured," "carved out" as irrevocable. That is incredible!

God's people have corporately brought heaven's power into the church and their lives, **irrevocably**. This is alluding to a time that is unveiled in Revelation 7 of the 144,000 when they are sealed. It is an elevated prophecy that God **will** have a holy people. It is what the Hebrew clearly reveals as occurring in Daniel 8:14, that on or after 2300 Atonement years holiness will be adjudicated (*qodesh nisdaq*). The case will be closed. God's character will be vindicated and holiness will irrevocably be the nature of the saints!

The phrase "shall be build again" in actuality says, "will have been built." This commentary suggests that that will occur in the time of trouble.

The concept of a physical Jerusalem must be replaced with the elevated theme of restoration, deliverance and holiness of God's people. Gabriel is moving into the prophetic precincts of what it will be like when all conflict will end. "Move away from the earthly to the heavenly – that is God's object for His people."

That "building" project – the spiritual restoration of God's people – will occur in:

"troublous times" (vs 25)

In all of apocalyptic prophecy there are times of "trouble" or "tribulation." Daniel 12:1 alludes to this. Clearer still is the description of the corporate body – that great multitude – that surrounds the throne.

*"And he said to me, These are they which came out of **great tribulation**, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb"* (Revelation 7:14).

It is during this period of tribulation that the woman flees into the wilderness (Revelation 12:14). It is **this** time in which Jesus (in His Priestly imagery) is pledging His blood (Daniel 12:7), noted unequivocally as a three-and-a-half year period (timed in annual feast language), which will end **the** time of persecution (tribulation/distress).

Once again, the 490-year period will not be complete or its purpose fulfilled until the time of the end, during a tribulation period – there's a gap. God keeps dropping hints of **when** His dreams of a holy people will consummate! Daniel 12:1 tells us **when** that period of trouble will be!

¹¹ TWOT (Theological Word Dictionary of the Old Testament) on "*w^e harus*."

APOSTASY AND REJECTION OF THE PRINCE

“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.” (Daniel 9:25).

There are translation challenges relative to the timing in this verse. In the ancient Hebrew, a “Hebrew accent,” called an *athnach*, was between the words “seven” and “sixty-two.”

This led to translation variations in Greek (OG and Theodotian) and later in the Hebrew Masoretic text. One expositor actually inserts periods of time between the 7–62–1 weeks, spreading the “70 weeks of years” out over 673 years.¹

Context demands that we see a 490-year period broken into 49–434–7 contiguous periods or years. The *Shemita* cycles and Jubilees are then in evidence, tied to Daniel’s review in Daniel 9:1.

The question as to why it begins with a 7-week period or 49 years is important. The 70-year captivity related to desecration of Sabbatical years and, in turn, Jubilee years as previously discussed. This 7-week division is a reminder of the absolute need to re-establish that key provision in the covenant relationship. From that we can forward apply 62 plus 1 (adding 63 more Sabbatical cycles), finally making ten full Jubilees. The “seven”-week imagery is a divine 7 *Shemita*, then Jubilee, restorative reminder. The Jubilee is a symbol for the “covenant restored.”

At 7 plus 62 or 69 weeks of years, or 483 years from the decree, comes Messiah the Prince. There are, in turn, key “timing points” in the life of Christ. His birth, baptism and death are highlights for which dates can be calculated (with some minor variation). The evidence, as previously discussed, for a 458 B.C. decree, would place the 483 years at 26 A.D. This would coincide with the time of Christ’s baptism. This is generally assigned as the point for the inauguration of His earthly “ministry.”²

The word from which the KJV translates “Messiah” is *mashie*, which actually means the “anointed one.” This would support the time of the descent of the Spirit/dove on Him (Luke 3:22). That would affirm the imagery of when His baptism occurred (see Fig. 10 – next page).

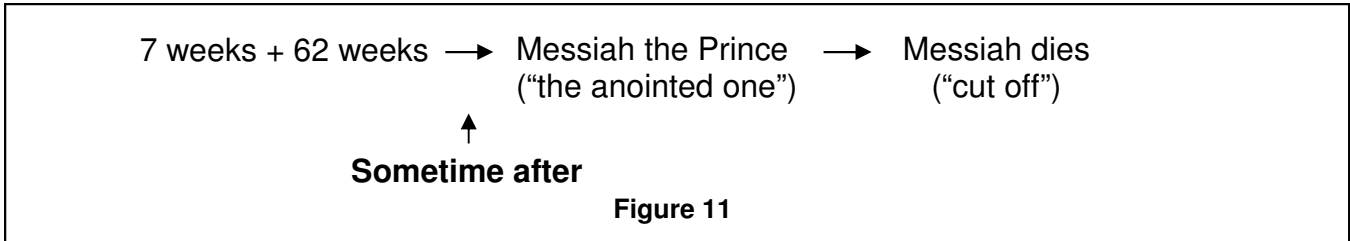
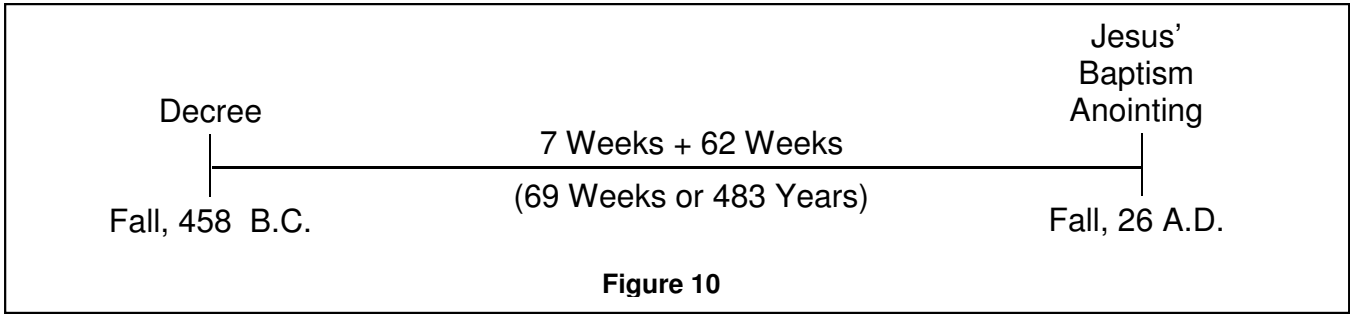
“And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined” (Daniel 9:26).

“And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.” (vs 26)

“And after” (*aharay*) or following the 62 weeks the Messiah or “anointed one” will be cut off. Most expositors who see this as a Messianic prophecy tie this to the “anointed leader” of verse 25 (see Fig. 11 – next page).

¹ Steinmann, Andrew E.; *Daniel* (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis), pp. 471-473.

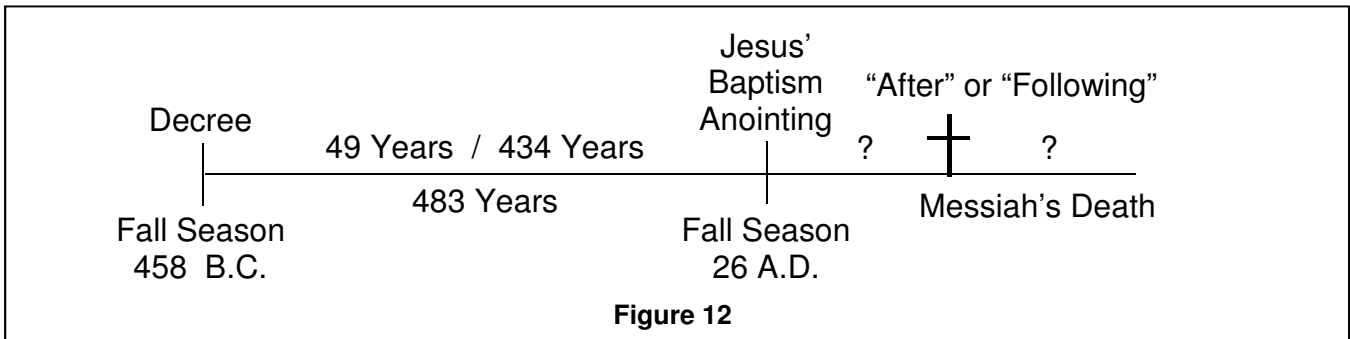
² Miller, Stephen R.; *The New American Commentary*, vol. 18 (Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), p. 266.



There is a difference of interpretation regarding whether this verse's "after" alludes to the very end of the 62 weeks or a period following. Since in the previous verse it notes that the anointing of Jesus is at the time the 69 weeks ends, the word "after" or "following" applies to later.³

First, the "anointed one" would come (v 25), then He would be "cut off." His coming

or destroying something (e.g., Deut 12:29; Josh 7:9; Ps 37:38), often specifically referring to being 'cut off' in death (e.g., Gen 9:11; Exod 31:14; Jer 9:21; 11:19). Here it is used as one of the Old Testament prophecies for the crucifixion of Christ (cf. Isa 53:8, which uses a synonym, *gazar*)."⁴ (See Fig. 12)



would be immediately at the end of the 69 sevens, but **how much** later He would be "cut off" is not yet specified. To this point, it is reasonable to expect that His death would ensue relatively soon. The next verse shows when.

"The verb translated 'cut off' is the common verb for 'cut' (*karaf*). It can be used literally (Exod 4:25; 1 Sam 5:4; 1 Kgs 5:6; Job 14:7) or figuratively. The word is used figuratively for eliminating, removing,

Sixty-nine of the seventy weeks have passed when Jesus is anointed. The implication is now made that Christ's death is during the **70th week**. Again, this will be shown in the next verse.

"not for himself" appears to be mischaracterized in the KJV. It is a Hebrew idiom meaning "and will have nothing." The noun "*ayin*" is used and means "nothing." This means: Christ's earthly ministry from outward appearances seems to have been

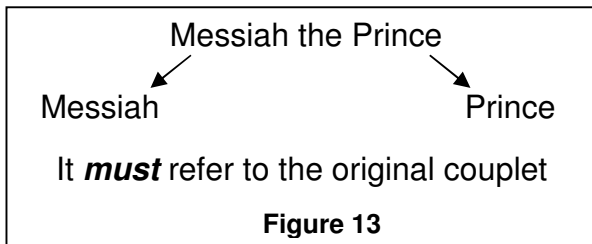
³ Steinmann, *op. cit.*, p. 472

⁴ Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

in vain. “All the disciples forsook him” (Matthew 26:56), “we trusted that it had been he” (Luke 24:21), “despised and rejected of men” (Isaiah 53:3).⁵ The Messiah seems to have had no kingdom or power-base to wield authority when He died.

“and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary;” (vs 26)

This clause has created many colorful interpretations. First, there is a couplet in verse 25 – “Messiah the Prince.” In verse 26a, the “Messiah is cut off.” Finally, here in 26b, the “prince *that shall come*.” (See Fig. 13)



In the phrase, “the people of the prince,” Archer has concluded that the wording is best translated, “the people of a prince who shall come will destroy both the city and the sanctuary.”⁶ That takes away the ambiguity of the Hebrew expression. We are dealing with the time that the Messiah is “cut off.”

Who were the “people of the Prince?” They were the Jewish people – Daniel’s people. But how are they seen as the “destroyers?” Before we answer that, it is imperative to recall the metaphors that are being used, beginning with verse 24. “Jerusalem” represents God’s people, the “temple,” His church. In the context of being “cut off,” who cried for His crucifixion and proclaimed

“his blood be on us and our children”? The Jewish people (Matthew 27:25).

Destruction comes because of apostasy of His people within the context of Christ’s death, after the 69 weeks!

It is even more pointed: “But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.... Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? *They* all say unto him, Let him be crucified” (Matthew 27:20, 22). Christ’s own people, the “people of the prince” destroyed their own theocracy and church, and forever lost the distinction of being God’s people!

- “Therefore say I unto you, *The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof*” (Matthew 21:43).
- “Verily I say unto you, *All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate*” (Matthew 23:36-38).

“and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined” (vs 26)

The “end” refers to the final judgment against the “city” – God’s people and “sanctuary” – God’s church. The ultimate end is God’s wrath against apostate rebellion, which includes the literal end to the city and temple.

“Flood” is a figure of speech, emphasizing the magnitude of the destruction (Isaiah 8:7-8, 28:2). In Daniel 11:10, 22, 26 and 40 it is both literal and figurative. That word “end” or *qes* is used twice. Contextually, this noun describes the finality of these two

⁵ Whitcomb, John C.; *Daniel* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), p. 132.

⁶ Archer, Gleason L., Jr.; as quoted in Gaebelain, Frank E.; *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 7 (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI), 1984, p 116.

distinct missives (contemporary and end of time).

1. The end of the Jewish people, as God's people, occurred at the Cross. It was such a curse that the designation as God's "special people" ("the people of the prince") terminated. Christ said that it would be given to "another nation."

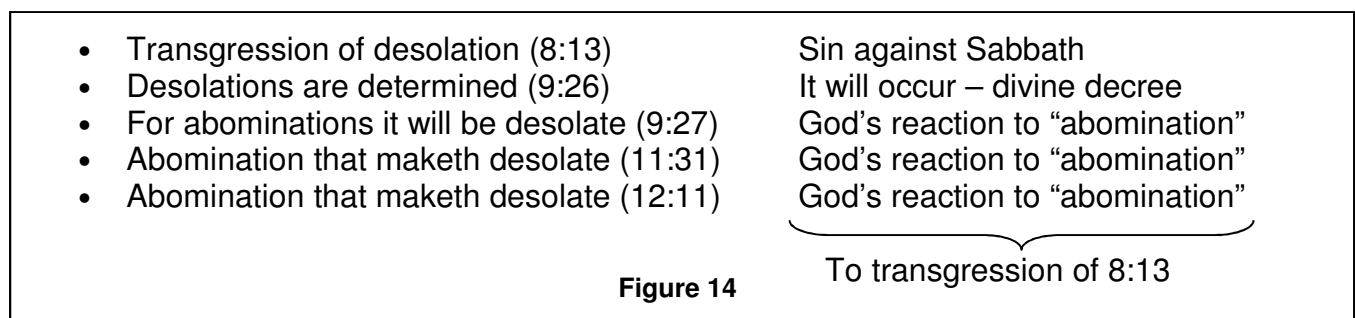
"When Caiaphas rent his garment, his act was significant of the place that the Jewish nation as a nation would thereafter occupy toward God. The once favored people of God were separating themselves from Him, and were fast becoming a people disowned by Jehovah. When Christ upon the cross cried out, 'It is finished' (John 19:30), and the veil of the temple was rent in twain, the Holy Watcher declared that the Jewish people had rejected Him who was the antitype of all their types, the substance of all their shadows. Israel was divorced from God. Well might Caiaphas then rend his official robes, which signified that he claimed to be a representative of the great High Priest; for no longer had they any meaning for him or for the people. Well might the high priest rend his robes in horror for himself and for the nation."⁷

2. The desolation of Jerusalem as a city came in 70 A.D. when the temple was burned, never to rise again.

That brought to an end the visible imagery of Israel's center of God's presence. This fulfilled the minor application of Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14 and Luke 21:24: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled." Then the New Jerusalem will come on the scene and eternity will have begun. A rise again of the **Jewish** temple or that nation as a people is not in prophecy. This would introduce another "gap" for the prophecy to be completed for spiritual Israel!

The phrase "unto the end of war desolations [plural] **are determined**" means that they are **decreed**. The setting portrays that God has foretold this outcome by prophetic decree. An end will come to Daniel's people – it is a divine prophecy. Though God's people are given the opportunity to repent and give up sin, the Jewish nation, as His elect, will cease. Desolation is the ultimate end. Nothing is left. That word (desolation) is used often in Daniel 8–12. Its use ties to abominable acts. It is God's final executive, judicial act (see Fig. 14).

The first part of the next chapter deals with continued imagery of this *mareh* vision. The "probation" answers Daniel's prayer for mercy and restoration. The picture of a Messianic death and loss of divine favor of His people gradually sank into his mind. In Daniel 10:1 he distinctly notes that the meaning of this *mareh* vision was finally



⁷ White, Ellen G.; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 709.

understood – **but** not until he prays again for three weeks and has a second encounter with Jesus (10:2-9). Verse 1 is a summation of what occurred after verses 2-9. “I understand the vision [*mareh*].”

As in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21, all this imagery is of a minor application to the Jewish people. These prophecies fast forward to earth’s final history. That will be seen in the next verse!

Since the word “desolations” is plural, it refers to more than one curse, when **nothing is left**. In the Olivet discourse Jesus opened up a dual apocalyptic prophecy.

One would apply to the apostate church in Christ’s day, the other to the church called Babylon at the end (Revelation 16:19, 17:4-6; cf. 14:8, 18:2-3).

This end-time imagery is embellished in Daniel 11:30 –12:13. Chapter 11 details the final work of the antichrist. Chapter 12 draws to a close with this desolation thought: “*And from the time that the daily [sacrifice] shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days*” (Daniel 12:11).

THE COVENANT PROMISE THE DEVASTATING CURSE

“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” (Daniel 9:27).

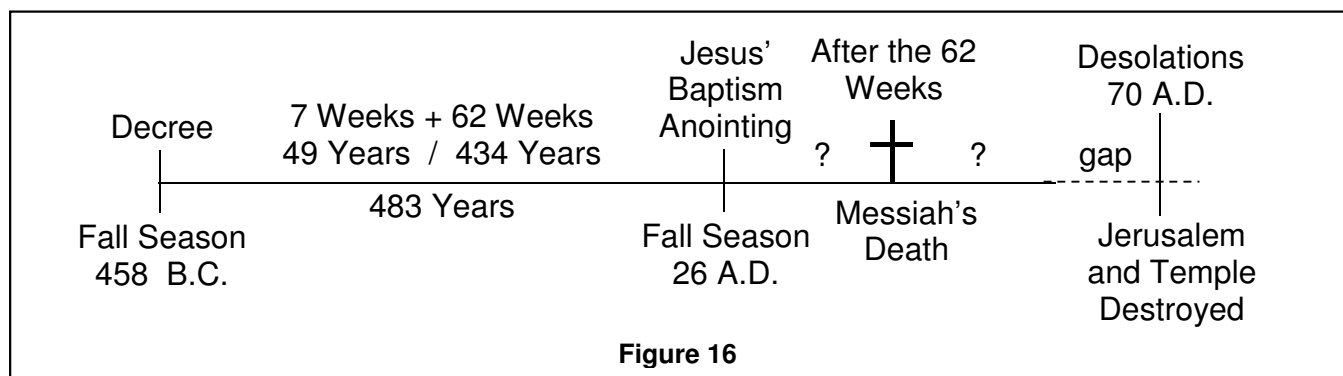
Sabbatical cycle of the 70. All are couched in a **covenant restoration** theme! And – that is exactly how this verse begins. But, different from all others, this is the last period of mercy God offers to man.

“And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week:” (vs 27)

It would have been best to divide this verse into two verses after the word “cease.” Let’s analyze this further.

To understand this continuing flow of thought, one must refer to the context of the previous verse. This graph, once again, outlines the structural timing of events Gabriel has given thus far (see Fig. 16).

The antecedent of “he” is “prince.” This prophecy notes that Jesus, during the final week of redemptive history, will “confirm” the covenant. “Confirm” is *gabar*. It is in the hiphil tense that is *causative*. Paraphrased: **“He** will do something to cause the covenant to be confirmed/affirmed” during this last week (cf. Psalm 25:10, 89:34). The



Here is where speculation has led to incorrect “gaps” in this chronology, which has, unfortunately, opened up “gaps” in understanding.

We already know that at 483 years Jesus was anointed (that would be 26–27 A.D.). Also, His death came after that – fulfilled within the gospel stories. Within **that context** we have distinctly moved into the last “week” or seven years of this 490-year prophecy. This represents the final

covenant is a “transaction” (an agreement) between God and man. Initially, the Messianic part was in view during Daniel’s prayer (9:4). Then a decreed timing stipulation with promise was given by heaven in Gabriel’s message (vs 24). To make this like “silver words,” purified seven times (Psalm 12:6-7), Jesus soon talks personally with Daniel and pledges His **blood** by raising His left hand (Daniel 12:7)! That is His

assurance, within timing prophecies, that they will occur!

This was all based on the **blood of the Cross** – when the Messiah would be “cut off,” a **“blood covenant.”**

This recalls: “*And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the **blood of the covenant**, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words*” (Exodus 24:8).

“*Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the **blood of the everlasting covenant**”* (Hebrew 13:20).

The promise of the **completion** of that covenant was given in 9:24c: “and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.” The prophecy was *timing-fixed* but *people-conditional*. That is where the next few words are so elevating.

Messiah the Prince affirms the covenant (*berit*) completion with **“many.”**

“‘Many’ does not imply a limited atonement. Rather, it points to the messianic covenant as one that will include many peoples from many nations, not just Israel. Similarly ... [*rabab*], ‘many,’ occurs five times (Is 52:14, 15; 53:11, 12 [twice]) in the fourth Suffering Servant Song (Is 52:13–53:12) and designates the beneficiaries of the Servant’s sacrificial atonement and resurrection. Jesus alludes to those verses in Isaiah and Dan 9:27 when he speaks of giving his life as ‘a ransom *for many*’ (Mt 20:28) and of his blood ‘poured out *for many* for the forgiveness of sins’ (Mt 26:28; see also Rom 5:15).”¹

This fulfills Jeremiah’s prophecy: “*And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more*” (Jeremiah 31:34). This will “*finish*

sin and atone for iniquity.” But it is conditioned upon Gabriel’s imperative action by God’s people.

- “*Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; **Let us draw near** with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)”* (Hebrews 10:19-23).

- When that relational condition is met, the everlasting covenant is activated.

“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrews 10:16-17).

“with many for one week” (vs 27)

The everlasting covenant is completed (all of its provisions met) during that 70th week. All **is to be** finalized in that last week or seven years. But – there is a unique caveat:

- Jesus completed the divine portion of that covenant agreement in the first three and a half years of that week.
- Man did not.
- There remained, in mercy, three and a half years for the ratification provisions, promised in Hebrews 8 and 10, to be accepted by man!

¹ Steinmann, Andrew E.; *Daniel* (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis – 2008), p. 449.

That means that when the Messiah was “cut off” or when He died it would have been in the middle of that week **and** the clock would have been stopped because God did not yet have a holy people who would help vindicate His character and finish the covenant agreement. Only at a later time, when a “tarrying time” (Appendix I) ends, could those three and a half years be completed. The clock, by divine action, was stopped till an “appointed time” (Daniel 8:19, 11:35).

That is why Revelation 10 and 11 are such vital eschatological documents. Angel Jesus, in future tense, prophesies that “There will be **no more** delay!” (Revelation 10:6 NIV, NET). The next timing prophecies or “clocks” are revealed in Revelation 11:2-3, and are that three and a half years! That is when the 490-year prophecy is completed and the holy covenant, redemptive bond, is final. As we have now seen, there is a gap in time, called a “tarrying time,” till the purpose of this prophecy is completed: “*For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry*” (Hebrews 10:36-37).

“and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease,” (vs 27)

The imagery of a major terminus is in view. When did all the sacrifices end? When did all the oblations of cereal and wine offerings cease? **When** type met anti-type at the Cross. At Calvary came the plaintive cry that reverberated throughout the universe: “It is finished” (John 19:30). At that moment a visual fulfillment of the end of a Holy and Most Holy Place came:

- “*And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom*” (Mark 15:38).

- Through Jesus, man had direct access to God’s throne, and we could **legally** call God “our Father.”
- The “family of God” is assured – but clearly must await the completion of that final week, when man’s part would consummate.

A “holy people,” who would vindicate the character of God (*qodesh nisdaq* – holiness adjudicated – Daniel 8:14) was still pending. Understanding that tie means everything to a balanced grasp of the beauty of end-time prophecy!

“When the loud cry, ‘It is finished,’ came from the lips of Christ, the priests were officiating in the temple. It was the hour of the evening sacrifice. The lamb representing Christ had been brought to be slain. Clothed in his significant and beautiful dress, the priest stood with lifted knife, as did Abraham when he was about to slay his son. With intense interest the people were looking on. But the earth trembles and quakes; for the Lord Himself draws near. With a rending noise the inner veil of the temple is torn from top to bottom by an unseen hand, throwing open to the gaze of the multitude a place once filled with the presence of God. In this place the Shekinah had dwelt. Here God had manifested His glory above the mercy seat. No one but the high priest ever lifted the veil separating this apartment from the rest of the temple. He entered in once a year to make an atonement for the sins of the people. But lo, this veil is rent in twain. The most holy place of the earthly sanctuary is no longer sacred.”² A new way was opened for God’s presence to tabernacle with man – “in man” (I Corinthians 3:16; cf. 6:19-10).

Christ rendered the Jewish theocracy and all its ordinances obsolete. Paul struggled with Judaizers who couldn’t let go of these types, especially with the Galatians and Colossians.

² White, Ellen G.; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 756.

- *“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross ... Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (Colossians 2:14, 17).*
- *“But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain” (Galatians 4:9-11).*

A “new way” to the very portals of heaven had been opened. Gabriel now fast forwards to the apostasy once again. Again, it would have been best if this last part of verse 27 would have been made a new verse. This “desolations time” is reminiscent of destructive concepts in Daniel 8, 11 and 12. Already, because of rebellion by the Jewish people, their “desolation” was predicted (vs 26). A destructive curse was to be on those people. **But now**, something else is foreseen:

“and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation,” (vs 27)

The Hebrew phrases here are difficult. The words in the first phrase, “overspreading of abomination,” are literally “and on the wing of the detested thing.” To best understand this, it is helpful to go elsewhere, where similar phrases are used in Daniel.

- *“They shall place the abomination that maketh desolate” (Daniel 11:31).*
- *“The abomination that maketh desolate” (Daniel 12:11).*

Putting all the expressions together, the NAS and NET translations capture this es-

sence best: “on the wing of abominations, will come one who destroys.”

This still could allude to the desolation that lay ahead for the Jewish people in 70 A.D. But a greater issue is opened. Gabriel already noted that a “transgression would lead to desolation” (8:13). He also made clear that **that** would come at the “time of the end” – at the “appointed time.” Jesus also noted these issues related to a dual prophecy for 70 A.D. **and** the time when He comes the second time (Matthew 24:15-23, Mark 13:14-20, Luke 21:20-24).

For those assuming it was only historical, tied to Christ’s day, please note that He pointed to Daniel to describe the abomination of desolation.

Miller notes: “In reality the end of this final seven is one of the most significant events in history, the second coming of Christ.”³ The “last desolation” is linked to earth’s redemptive end. This was recognized even before the first advent! (See Appendix V)

These “wings” bring to mind the swiftness of an eagle or falcon. The “wing” symbol is used in the Old Testament for swiftly-attacking armies (Isaiah 8:8; Jeremiah 48:40, 49:22; Ezekiel 17:3, 7). This means that when the abomination, known to be forced dishonor of the Sabbath, comes, it occurs swiftly.

“The agencies of evil are combining their forces and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones.”⁴

Since Gabriel, here in chapter 9, has already described the Jewish rebellion, we are now fast forwarded to this desolation message, exegetically bonded with similar missives, in Daniel 8–12 that solely refer to the end of time! This desolation relates to the “consummation” or final end (*w^ead-*

³ Miller, Stephen R.; *The New American Commentary*, vol. 18 (Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), p. 270 (cf. Steinmann, *op. cit.*, p. 476).

⁴ White, Ellen G.; *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 11.

kalah) of the 70 weeks of years. When is that? Daniel 12 tells us that the three and a half years would end with the deliverance of God's people and a special resurrection.

Contextual evidence when combining these chapters means that there will be a holy people, a remnant, who will be saved – and all detestable things (sin) will end. *“For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness. For the Lord GOD of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land”* (Isaiah 10:22-23).

The abominations that are in view reflect the horror from the antichrist, detailed in 11:30-45. Because he “commits abominations,”⁵ desolation (God's final executive curse) will come. “Abomination” is God's reaction to something He wants mankind to see as filthy or loathsome (Hosea 9:10, Nahum 3:6). It will come out of Rome.⁶

“and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate” (vs 27)

This phrase is best rendered “until the full/final end (*kala*) comes, pouring out desolation.” This is at the consummation or Second Coming (the contextual period Jesus declared in His Matthew 24 discourse for Daniel!).

During this terrible period of earth's history God has “decreed” (determined) or ordered that the abominations will have an end. Insubordination will last only until God's wrath is poured out on the rebels. That is described as a flood of judgment. It brings total destruction – desolation (7:9-11, 26; II Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 19:19-21).

The latter part of verse 27 is seen as the very end of time, when the work of the anti-christ ceases.⁷

- “He shall be broken without hand” (Daniel 8:25).
- “He shall come to his end, and none shall help him” (Daniel 11:45).

All this is at the “time of the end,” immediately prior to the consummation (8:17, 12:4, 9). It is a “pre-determined end.”⁸ Revelation 16:19 describes the final outcome of Babylon.

That is when the final glorious victory of Christ will come in.

A literal end to the temple **services** came in the rending of the curtain at Christ's death and the **actual temple** in 70 A.D. The curse goes even deeper. That city, in spite of a large Jewish presence, is today occupied by Muslims, Christians and Palestinians. On the temple mount is one of the most important mosques in Islam – the Dome of the Rock. That fulfills “Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (Luke 21:24 – NIV)! First literal, then spiritual, when another holy people (a remnant) emerges.

Deeper, however, are these prophecies. The Jewish theocracy not only was built on types and figures to define the plan of redemption and a messianic restoration, it prefigured the inauguration of a holy kingdom, with saints as citizens.

The prophecies open to the student elements of the final conflicts between good and evil. The “players,” the spiritual issues, the battles and God's final victory are all choreographed. But of greatest value to God's final remnant are the timing prophecies that add a fourth dimension to our understanding. Within that framework, an

⁵ Archer, Gleason L., Jr.; quoted in Gaebel, Frank E.; *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 7 (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI), p. 118.

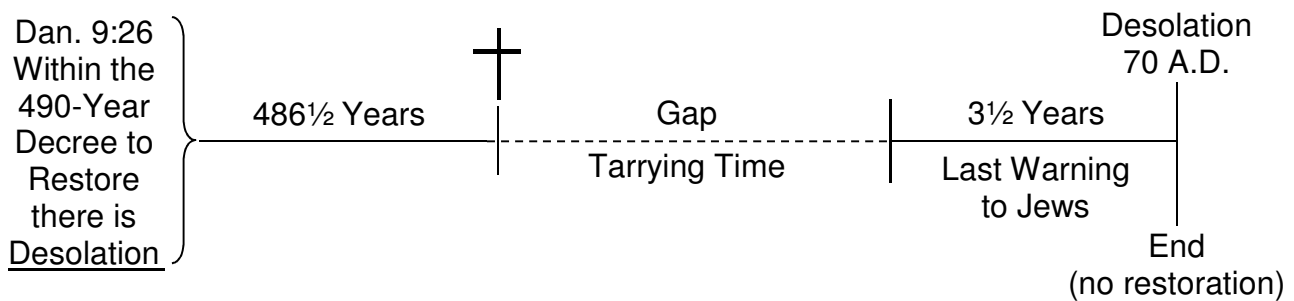
⁶ Hunt, David; *A Woman Rides the Beast*; quoted in Steinman, *op. cit.*, p. 476.

⁷ Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

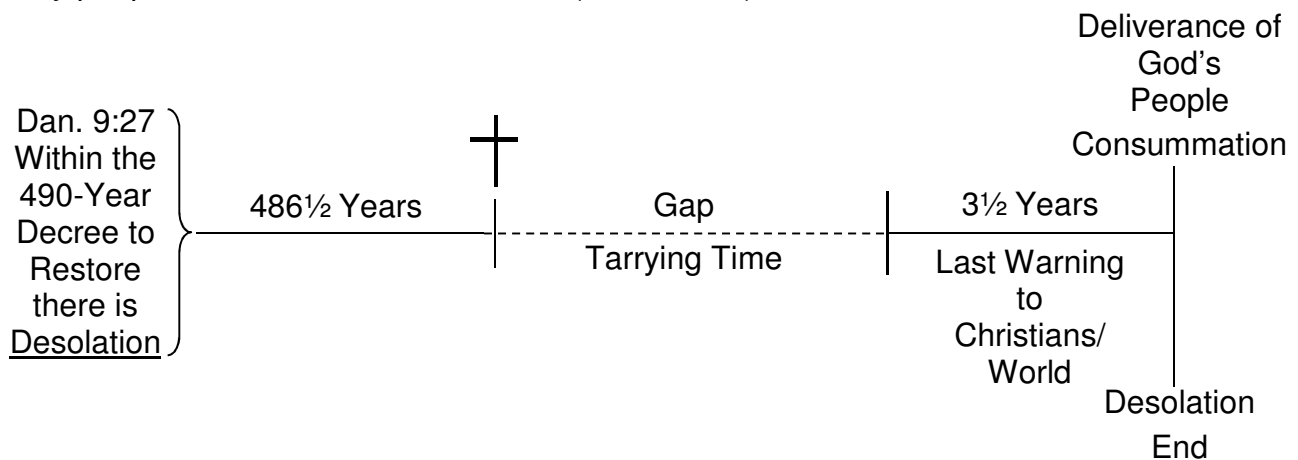
⁸ Collins, John J.; *Daniel* (Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN – 1993), p. 358.

Desolation Timing of Daniel 9:26-27 and 12:11

(The key to the dual nature of this prophecy)



“Thy people” found “written in the book” (Daniel 12:1)



element of urgency is given, leaving any delay of preparation totally devoid of any excuse.

Concluding Thoughts:

Many assume that the 490-year prophecy ended in 33 or 34 A.D. A direct calendaric counting would seem to confirm that date(s). But an analysis of the purpose of the prophecy is directly associated with specific **events**, when God has a holy people. The Jews as a nation ceased to be a chosen people before Calvary. This amazing narrative describes the end of redemption.

“The sheep gate was before Christ, and the path which led to the temple, and for centuries the victims had been conducted thither for sacrifice. The lambs that had

been slain had been a representation of the great anti-typical sacrifice that in a few hours would be made for those who rejected his grace and compassion, the refusers of his offers of mercy. The only-begotten Son of the Infinite God would be led through the sheep gate as a lamb to the slaughter, while through the priests and rulers and through the common people would be manifested satanic attributes. For a few moments the Son of God stands upon Mount Olivet, expressing the intense yearning of his soul that Jerusalem might repent in the last few moments before the westerling sun shall sink behind the hill. **That day the Jews as a nation would end their probation.** Mercy, that had long been appointed as their guardian angel, had been insulted, despised, and rejected, and was already stepping down from the golden

throne, ready to depart. But, O, that the rejecters of God's mercy, full of zeal to sustain themselves in their own way, might yet turn from their man-made inventions, repent, and seek reconciliation with God! The shadows of twilight are beginning to gather, and, O, that Jerusalem might know the things that belong unto her peace! But now the irrevocable sentence is spoken, because 'she knew not the time of her visitation.'"⁹

The gospel first went to the Jews, then outward (Acts 1:8). In that light, we are told:

"Mercy was extended to them, and their probation was lengthened [since it ended at the Cross as a nation, this extension was for individual Jews to respond first

to the gospel call], ***until three years and a half after the death of Christ***, when the apostles declared: 'It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.'"¹⁰

It is imperative to grasp the "tarrying time" concept (see Appendix I). It is a key clue to unlock the meaning of God's terminal clock in prophecy. When another "holy people" emerges, they will be called "saints," and are first represented by the symbol of 144,000 individuals. Their mission will cover the final three and a half years of this Daniel 9 prophecy (see Appendix VII).

⁹ White, Ellen G.; *The Signs of the Times*, February 27, 1896 (emphasis added).

¹⁰ White, Ellen G.; *The Review and Herald*, March 10, 1896 (emphasis added).

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX I

THE TARRYING TIME

If the 6000-year plus 1000-year *Great Week of Time* is a precise system of reckoning, how does one reconcile the numerous “tarrying” allusions in the Scriptures? Wouldn’t they lengthen or alter the “sacred seven” millenniums? What could such a “delay” relate to? Does this force God to move to plan “B” in His redemptive timing? Is it simply a perceptual issue? Or – is it a “delay” in some other “timed” manner?

The “poster-child delay” parable is recorded in the end-time chapter, Matthew 24.

“But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming ...” (vs 48).

The setting of this verse surrounds the little Greek word *ean*, which means “if.” Jesus has just been describing a good servant who suddenly switches to being an evil servant. That servant is head of other servants:

He abuses them.

He still calls his master “My Lord.”

He may say, “My Lord delayeth his coming.”

In the context, it is a warning to anyone who chooses to assume that Jesus’ coming is in the far distant future. His actions, described in subsequent verses, betray that very conviction. He lives carelessly and is insensitive to others. Does this statement present a timing truth? Any thought or lifestyle that suggests a delay is fatal. When the master returns, judgment comes to this servant. The subliminal warning is to not function as though the coming of Jesus is postponed or delayed.

Does that mean it could be postponed? We are to live as though it is imminent. *A delay in Jesus’ return is not the message portrayed!* It is important to note that Jesus gave this parable after telling us **timing prophecies** and **events** that would say “His coming is near.” In the light of that knowledge, there is no reason to say that the eschaton is delayed. The “how” and “when” are open information. A denial of a soon return as an excuse to live carelessly is the issue.

Peter, reflecting on truth that had already been “*spoken **before by the holy prophets, and ... of us the apostles,***” said: “*Knowing this first [the foundational principle], that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming?*” (II Peter 3:3-4). These scoffers **perceived** that Jesus’ coming was “put off.” Scoffers also include those who marginalize talking about or studying end-time issues.

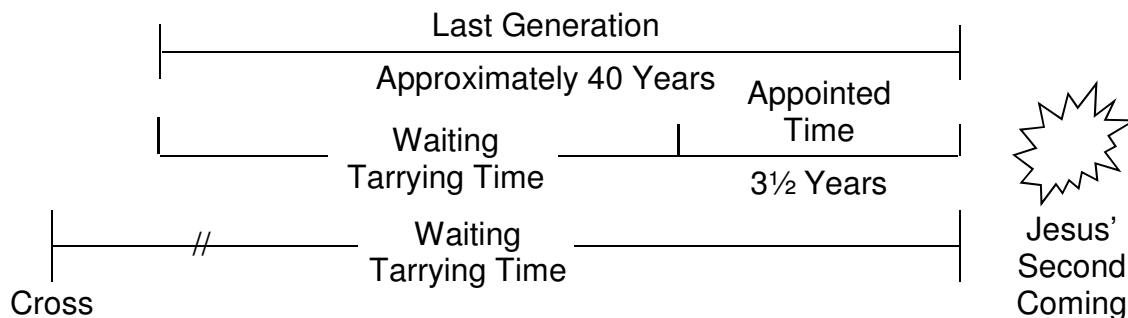
The imagery portrays those who declare “the Lord delays His coming” as sinners! Then God makes the point that He operates within His own timing sphere: “*A day is as a thousand years and a thousand years is as a day*” (vs 8). Yet in prophecy he constantly tells us how to enter His timing realm.

To the godly, Paul provides the context of how God’s timing occurs: “*For yet a little while [a small space of time] and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry*” (Hebrews 10:37).

Soon, in a little while – in God’s time – He’ll return. That could be years or it could be one day. But Jesus does not operate in the sphere of the vague. There is specific timing information that He gave, found in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. He outlined two distinct ends of time that we are to focus on – one for the Jewish people within the apostles’ day and one for the end of the world at the Second Advent. They are spelled out with great detail. For the *end of time era* the “rest of the story” is found in Daniel (Matthew 24:15). Jesus stipulates that those end-time prophecies would each be fulfilled within one generation – or – approximately 40 years.

When Jesus told the inquiring disciples that “*It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath in his own power*” (Acts 1:7), He never said it was going to be delayed, nor did He say it would come with mystical suddenness. Nor did He say it would never be known. Jesus already gave detailed signs related to when it could be declared that “the season” has arrived, “*even at the door.*” The “*beginning of sorrows*” is the signal for the beginning of the end!

What then did Jesus allude to in Acts 1:7? This is vital to grasp! Looking forward in time, one cannot predict when the consummation of events will begin – that was in the Father’s hand. But – *when* the predicted developments *begin* to occur, it’s going to happen within one generation. When looking at Daniel, we see even further information refinements within a three-and-a-half year *appointed-time* setting!



Within the timing structure of God’s end-time prophecy there are built-in *waiting periods*. God does not want us to call them delays! He has given us permission to call them **tarrying times**.

There are many tarrying times, such as:

1. Between the two end times noted in Matthew 24
2. *Within* the timing of one generation to the three-and-a-half-year appointed time
3. All prophetic times that still must be completed

It is vital to note that *in* God’s predictive time periods there are **no** delays. He does recognize the waiting time between prophecies or within specific time periods. A notable example of this was recorded by Habakkuk: “*And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: **though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry***” (Habakkuk 2:2-3).

The vision is tarrying – the prophecy has an *apparent* delay to its fulfillment. But wait for it, it really will come to pass, and then it won't appear to tarry any longer. Thus a specific prophecy can tarry *within* the greater framework of God's fixed time. There simply is a time that we must "wait" through.

The parable of the ten virgins is instructive. The bridegroom tarried (*chronizei* or *chronizo*) (Matthew 25:5). What was the delay or lingering in reference to? The people who were waiting. The bridegroom is Jesus. It does not say that God's plans were delayed. It does say from the perspective of the virgins that they waited so long that they "slumbered and slept" (vs 5). While the foolish virgins tried to play catch-up, the "appointed time" had already come and they were barred from the marriage.

Imminent Return in Revelation

In the book of Revelation is this repeated theme:

- Revelation 1:1 – *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must **shortly** [en tachos] **come to pass**; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John."*
- Revelation 1:3 – *"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the **time is at hand**."*
- Revelation 1:19 – *"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things **which shall be hereafter**."*
- Revelation 11:14 – *"The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe **cometh quickly** [tacho]."*
- Revelation 12:12 – *"Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but **a short time**."*
- Revelation 16:15 – *"Behold, **I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth**, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."*
- Revelation 22:6 – *"And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which **must shortly be done**."*
- Revelation 22:10 – *"And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: **for the time is at hand**."*
- Revelation 22:12 – *"And, behold, **I come quickly**; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."*
- Revelation 22:20 – *"He which testifieth these things saith, **Surely I come quickly**. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."*

On the surface it appears as though the message to John decrees a soon return of Jesus in his day. He did appear to him in 1:13-17, but that is not the meaning of the above verses. Also, a similar message goes to the seven churches.

- Revelation 2:25 – “But that which ye have already **hold fast till I come.**”
- Revelation 3:11 – “**Behold, I come quickly:** hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”

“The time [kairos – last opportunity] is at hand.” “Behold I come quickly [tacho – soon] – without delay.” At the end of the Bible, in that apocalyptic book, the message is “no delay!” There has been a forward movement of prophetic thought from Daniel through the gospels to this final unveiling of the end. Is this prophecy a declaration that Jesus was coming in John’s day? Clearly not. There was an expectancy by the disciples. But *their timing prophecies* related to the “end” of time for the Jewish nation. The eschaton is defined as distinct and separate by the books of Daniel and Revelation.

Revelation 1:4-6 is a commentary insert. There is a break in the introductory thought to extend greetings from the Trinity to the seven churches. When verses 1-3 and 7 are combined, which they should be, the “shortly come to pass” (vs 1) and “time is at hand” (vs 3) refer to Jesus’ coming in the clouds when every eye will see Him (vs 7).

The apostles had the privilege of knowing that there would be a wait – just as Daniel did! Daniel 8:14 makes it clear that the final restoration of God’s people would not occur until after the 2300 evenings and mornings – distinctly 2300 years. (That is in atonement–sacred–legal language.) Daniel did not understand at first. Several years later he did (Daniel 10:1). That was part of the *mareh* vision, which was *not* sealed.

For the apostles there was an imminent *end* within one generation. But for the great *eschaton*, when all will be made new, that was far in the future. The “end” of Jerusalem had already occurred in 70 A.D. The Revelation was penned in approximately 96 A.D. The time when Jesus would come was John’s focus. The angel made that clear in Revelation 1:7: “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him.” **As consummation-event prophecy unfolded as revealed in the prophetic books**, He would come quickly. That is the exact concept outlined in Daniel and Matthew 24.

Daniel’s Appointed Time

Few have paid attention to the amazing information that Gabriel opened to Daniel. He said: “At the time of the end (*eth qets*) shall be the vision” (Daniel 8:17). The *chazown* vision within Daniel 8–12 revealed how the Mystery of Iniquity would work right at the end of time.

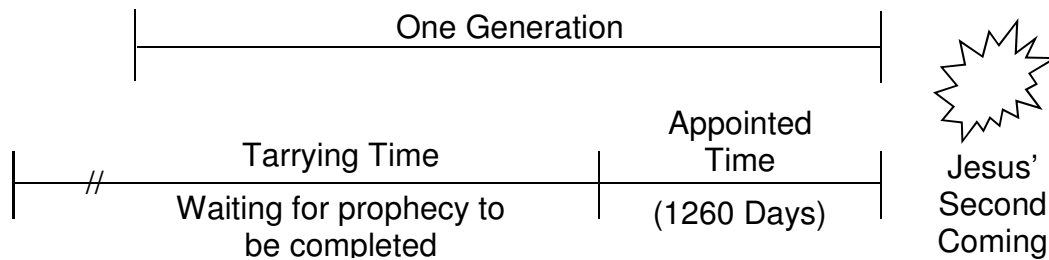
“I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation (*zaam – God’s wrath*): for at the time appointed, the end shall be” (Daniel 8:19). At the “time appointed” is the end of time – at the time of God’s wrath.

Habakkuk said the tarrying time or waiting period would end at the “appointed time” (*mowed*). Therefore, we can see the following outline emerge:

- The finale of the Mystery of Iniquity of Daniel 8–12 is at the end of time.
- The appointed time is at the end of time.
- The appointed time is when the tarrying time ends.
- The end of time is when God’s wrath terminates.

The information continues to pour in. Daniel asked Jesus in chapter 12, “How long to the end of these wonders?” (vs 6), referring to Michael standing up, the time of trouble, deliverance of God’s people and the special resurrection (Daniel 12:1-2). When will all this occur? Jesus said simply: “It shall be for a time, times, and an half [mowed, moweds and half mowed – 1260 days]; and when he [king of the north (Daniel 11:40-45)] shall have accomplished to scatter [persecute] the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished” (Daniel 12:7).

The *chazown* vision with all the oppression of God’s people and church will come to an end at the end of 1260 days – at the deliverance of God’s people. From Habakkuk to here it is now clear that there is a waiting period – but **no** delay:



This coincides exactly with Jesus’ message to John in Revelation 10:6. There will no longer be a wait. Both times Jesus gives end-time timing messages – first to Daniel and then to John – He swears by heaven with the hand uplifted. Those timing messages are so vital, so sacred, so important that Jesus didn’t leave them to that mighty angel, Gabriel. He came personally to present them.

The honor and reputation of heaven itself stand against the truth of those *time* prophecies. When the *appointed time* comes, it is a prophetic, literal-time countdown to the deliverance of God’s people. There is no prophecy that sets a time/date for the Second Coming of Jesus. Everything ends at the “deliverance!”

“The book that was sealed was not the book of Revelation, but that portion of the prophecy of Daniel which related to the last days. The Scripture says, ‘But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased’ (Dan. 12:4). When the book was opened, the proclamation was made, ‘Time shall be no longer [delayed].’ (See Revelation 10:6.) The book of Daniel is now unsealed, and the revelation made by Christ to John is to come [future] to all the inhabitants of the earth. By the increase of knowledge a people is to be prepared to stand in the latter days.”¹

“As we near the close of this world’s history, the prophecies recorded by Daniel demand our special attention, as they relate to the very time in which we are living. With them should be linked the teachings of the last book of the New Testament Scriptures. Satan has led many to believe that the prophetic portions of the writings of Daniel and of John the revelator cannot be understood. But the promise is plain that special blessing will accompany the study of these prophecies. ‘The wise shall understand’ (verse 10), was spoken of the visions of Daniel that were to be unsealed in the latter days; and of the revelation that Christ gave to His servant John for the guidance of God’s people all through the centuries, the promise is, ‘Blessed is he

¹ White, Ellen G.; *Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 105 (1896).

that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.' Revelation 1:3."²

"Daniel shall stand in his lot at the end of the days. John sees the little book unsealed. Then Daniel's prophecies have their proper place in the *first, second, and third angels' messages* to be given to the world. The unsealing of the little book was the *message in relation to time!*"³

Summary

The Great Week of Time is not marred or impinged upon by the tarrying-time message. The *apparent* "delay" is between the two great end-time prophecies of Matthew 24. It represents a waiting time *within* the Great Week of Time of seven millenniums. The prophetic "tarrying time" started at the Cross. A new era began that would culminate with a holy people (last three and a half years of earth's history). A one-generation warning has already begun. The next time period will be the three and a half years. Then time no longer waits and His coming is imminent.

An analogy can be seen from Noah's day. God delayed from the fall of man to Noah to deal with violence and rebellion. Once the preaching began, there was a distinct tarrying or waiting time that God had foretold. There would be a 120-year "wait" before the wrath of God started. Noah built, preached and prepared during that "tarrying time." Then a final call seven days before the flood. When the animals and Noah were in the ark, the door was shut. That began the appointed time of seven days. They were safe in the ark, sealed from harm. When God's wrath was poured out, they were under His protecting care within the ark.

² White, Ellen G.; *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 547-548.

³ White, Ellen G.; *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 19, p. 320 (1887) (emphasis added).

APPENDIX II

THE DECREE TO RESTORE AND BUILD

(DANIEL 9:25)

Much controversy surrounds the meaning of the “going forth” (*mowtsa*) command or decree to restore God’s people back to Israel’s theocracy (Daniel 9:25). Various translations have adapted these phrases:

- “from the issuing of a decree” (NAS, NIV)
- “from the issuing of the command” (NET)
- “from the time the command is given” (NLT)
- “from the time the word went out” (NRS)

Intriguingly, though this expression states that the **prophetic command** will begin the 483-year period, many expositors loosely apply its onset to a “year” without identifying a season or sacred time. That is a problem. Also:

- It does not say that it began when Ezra started his journey.
- Nor does it imply a starting point when he arrived in Jerusalem.
- It states, “from the issuing of the decree.”

Though minimally discussed in the literature, prophecy tells us specifically when that decree had to have been given. This study is submitted to address that issue.

The last part of verse 25 relates to what is to be restored. Gabriel’s message to Daniel is in direct answer to his stunning prayer earlier in the ninth chapter. Literalists read into that verse a rebuilding of city assets. But the theme of Daniel 8–12 is highly symbolic and full of important spiritual metaphors. The actual city **and** temple restoration was ordered by Cyrus.

*“This is what the LORD says – I am the LORD ... who carries out the words of his servants and fulfills the predictions of his messengers ... who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; **he will say of Jerusalem, “Let it be rebuilt,” and of the temple, “Let its foundations be laid.”**’ I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts” (Isaiah 44:24, 28; 45:13 – NIV).*

The historical restoration of that desolate Judean country is another topic beyond the purpose of this discussion. It is important to note that Artaxerxes I’s decree in Ezra 7:11-26 is spiritual and orders the Jewish theocracy to be re-established. That command fits the theme of a spiritual restoration in preparation for Messiah the Prince (9:25).

At the *terminus a quo* (beginning) of the “seventy weeks” prophecy is a command, word or decree (*dabar* – H) to “restore.” The prophecy – which is time driven – begins when this word goes out. If the distinct time periods and their endings noted are precise, so must be their times and dates of onset. Evidence suggests that the Magi from the east were students of

Jewish writings when they made the discovery of Christ's birth. Daniel 9 contributed to that understanding. It is a prophetic record of details.

The restoration decree was given by Artaxerxes I in his seventh year of reign (Ezra 7:7). This man was king of Persia from 465 to 425 B.C., when he died. In spite of a long and peaceful reign, this is noted:

"There are no archeological remains of the reign of Artaxerxes I, with the exception of a single inscription on a building in Susa and an alabaster vase in Paris which bears his name in Persian, Susian, Babylonian cuneiform, and in hieroglyphs. All information concerning him is derived from the accounts of Greek writers, especially the fragments of Ctesias, and from the statements of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah."¹

The Greeks gave him the name Longimanus because his right hand was longer than his left.² Thus, he is noted in literature as Artaxerxes I or Artaxerxes Longimanus.

Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah used regnal (reigning) years, and by making the "accession year year zero, applying it to the Jewish civil 12-month calendar, running from Tishri 1 to Elul 29. Thus, Artaxerxes I's seventh year was the seventh **full** year of his reign, beginning in the fall with the month of Tishri. This system of applying kingdom leadership goes back to Solomon's time.³ This reckoning was used in spite of the use of a Babylonian calendar year (with Abib or Nissan beginning their year) paralleling the Jewish sacred year throughout the Medo-Persian Empire.

Artaxerxes I's father was Xerxes. He was murdered by an aide (Artabanus) in 465 B.C. This occurred on December 17, which meant that the **accession** year was from that date to the next Tishri 1 of 464 B.C. In 464 B.C. the regnal years would then start to be counted.⁴ Coordinating three calendars will be done graphically further on in this article.

Ezra notes that he left Babylon with a "copy of the letter" or decree (Ezra 7:11) on the first day of the first month and arrived on the first day of the fifth month at Jerusalem (7:9). When the term "month" is used, the Jewish writers revert back to the sacred calendar, beginning with Nissan (Abib). If this had not been so, the thousands traveling with him would have traveled in the winter or wet season [i.e., Tishri–Shevat (secular year)]. It would have been nearly impossible to travel during the cold and rainy months.

The men were taking with them their wives and children, and all their substance, besides returning large treasures of the temple and its service to Jerusalem. The time and organization had to be optimal and extensive.⁵ The decree had to have been months before this journey started in the spring of 457 B.C. (during Artaxerxes I's seventh year).

¹ "Artaxerxes I," www.Jewishencyclopedia.com

² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³ Shea, William H.; *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, February 1, 1991, pp. 115-138.

⁴ Cowley, A. E.; *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1923). Papyrus No. 6 appears on pp. 15-18 of this work (a quote by Shea).

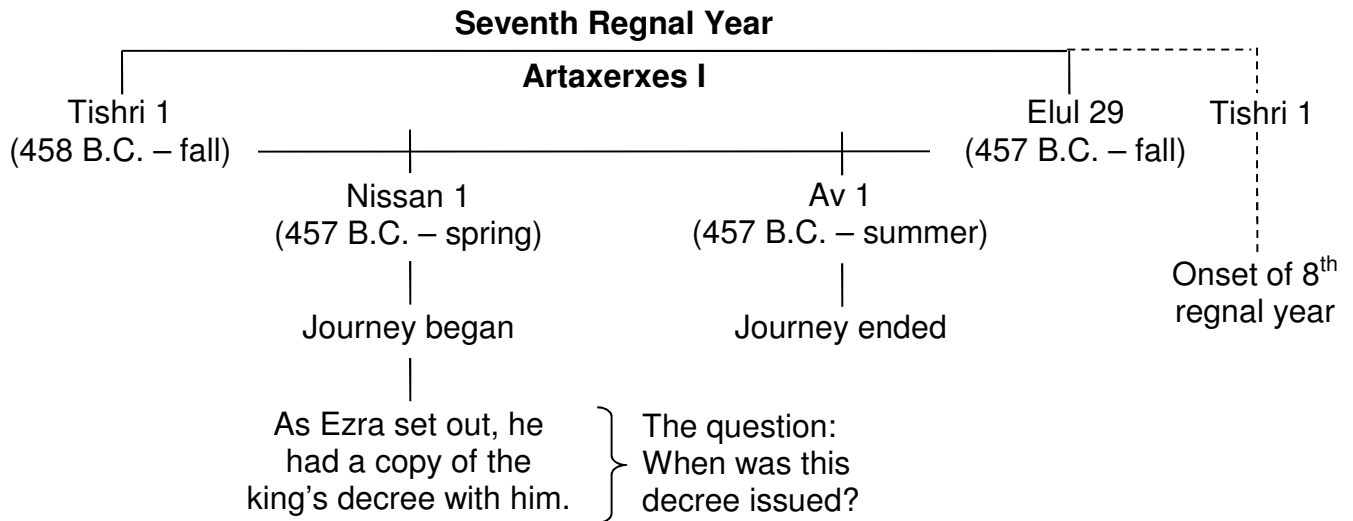
⁵ White, Ellen, G.; *Prophets and Kings*, p. 615.

The Prophecy, the Decree, the Fulfillment

Tishri 1 through Elul 29 = Solar/Civil Year Calendar	
<u>Gregorian Years</u>	<u>Regnal Years for Artaxerxes I</u>
465*– 464 (Elul 29)	Artaxerxes I's accession year (6½ months)
464 – 463	1 Tishri 1 – Elul 29
463 – 462	2 Tishri 1 – Elul 29
462 – 461	3 Tishri 1 – Elul 29
461 – 460	4 Tishri 1 – Elul 29
460 – 459	5 Tishri 1 – Elul 29
459 – 458	6 Tishri 1 – Elul 29
458 – 457	7 Tishri 1 – Elul 29
	Nissan 1, 457 B.C. – Ezra left Babylon
	Av 1, 457 – Ezra arrived in Jerusalem
	*(December 17 – Xerxes murdered)

The *years* of kingdom rule are based upon solar time. This would cover from the month of Tishri to the end of Elul. As Artaxerxes I assumed power, first in the **accession** “year,” then the **regnal** years, this graphic display unfolds how to parallel various calendrical cycles:

Notice how the events and markers of the last regnal year associated with this prophecy flow in this sequence.



To understand the timing of the issuance of the document, we must review another **part of this vision** that was given to Daniel 5–6 years previously.

The vision of the ram, he-goat and little horn had ended (Daniel 8:12). This was called *ha hazon* or “the vision” (starting with Daniel 8:2). Then Gabriel came on the scene and asked Jesus, the “whoever it may be,” the “one saint speaking,” the “certain saint” (all elevated, respectful language), timing questions related to the “little horn” (Daniel 8:13). That part of Daniel’s vision/audition was still designated *ha hazon*. Jesus, however, responds to another vision (8:14) that was then called the *mareh* (8:26).

Ha hazon and the *mareh* visions were not finished at that time because Daniel fainted (8:27). Though the Hebrew analysis is extensive, a resumé of these two visions is very helpful:

<u><i>ha hazon</i></u>	<u><i>mareh</i></u>
<u>(conflict between good and evil)</u>	<u>(deliverance message for God’s people)</u>
Vision for the far future, called “time of the end”	Daniel finally understands (Daniel 10:1)
Sealed portion of Daniel	Not sealed
Wouldn’t be understood until the “time of the end”	Many timing prophecies within the <i>mareh</i> :
(When God’s wrath comes	2300 years – identified as “evening morning”
When sin reaches its peak	490 years
When Jesus has a “host” or corporate body	3½ years
When the little horn/vial person/king of the north exerts its global power)	1290 days
	1335 days

The 2300-year prophecy of Jesus’ (Note: KJV is not translated correctly; NIV is better) in Daniel 8:14 is continued by Gabriel in 9:24-26a. In 8:26 Gabriel notes that the *mareh* was the **evening and the morning** and it was “true.”

That is profound information. This is how the Daniel 8:14 wording actually flows in Hebrew: “Until 2300 evening morning holy vindicated.” Gabriel said that he came to give Daniel skill and understanding. Therefore: “understand the matter and consider the [*mareh*] vision” (9:23). The **deliverance** counsel begins with 9:24. The 8:14 introduction theme fits after the word “cease” in verse 9:27.

The late Jewish scholar Umberto Cassuto, in his book *From Adam to Noah: A Commentary of Genesis I–VI* (never finished), 1961, noted that when the words “evening morning” are in that order, it is a sacred allusion. Indeed, the great Day of Atonement was the day when God’s judicial decisions were made. That occurred on Tishri 10. It was a sacred time that began the evening before by putting away all sin from the precincts of the sanctuary – a cleansing. Holiness had come in once again.

*“Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.... Ye shall do no manner of work: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the **ninth day of the month at even**, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath”* (Leviticus 23:27, 31-32). Thus, the evening occurred first, then the morning of the next day. A sacred period is in evidence.

Thus, the evening–morning designation is symbolic in these prophecies for Atonement. That truly was when holiness was vindicated or legally adjudicated. Thus, in Daniel 8:14 we know it is 2300 years because it is 2300 evening-morning Atonements – an annual, recurring event.

Since the 490-year prophecy is a *mareh* message that has a beginning decree (9:25) and since the 2300 evening–morning prophecy is also part of the *mareh* message that begins with an Atonement, Daniel 9's vision must commence with this fall feast! Thus, though we do not have a historical Medo-Persian secular document to affirm this, this prophecy notes that it must be the beginning of both prophecies in the fall before Ezra leaves in the spring of the next year.

That means that the 483-year period (9:25 – seven weeks, sixty and two weeks) decree to re-establish holiness begins on Atonement – Tishri 10 of 458 B.C. Tishri 1, 458 to Elul 29, 457 B.C. would be Artaxerxes I's regnal year *seven*. It is assumed that Christ's baptism was His *début* into His three and a half years of ministry preceding the Cross. This would, therefore, be:

From the decree to restore to Messiah the Prince is 483 years. $483 + 1 - 458 = 26$ A.D. – anointing/baptism of Jesus in the fall during Trumpets – a vital link (another topic).

This date is at variance with the many baptismal years of some scholars. But it solves many other issues. The time of Trumpets is a time of testing – judgment. That is Christ's first key wilderness encounter with Satan, beginning His sorrowful walk to Calvary. One would like to think – but can't prove – that He left the wilderness victorious on Tishri 10! – the Day of Atonement.

Another issue relates to when Jesus died. The only Friday, full-moon, Passover at this time was three and a half years after the fall of 26 A.D. (i.e., 30 A.D.). One would have to go astronomically to 33 A.D. before that would occur again (which many in the evangelical world do). But that would require an alternative interpretation of Daniel 9 at variance with proper exegesis. There is no Friday Passover at full moon in 31 A.D.

Does all this affect the 2300-year prophecy? Yes – but when one understands its great meaning in light of the other end-time periods of the *mareh*, a beautiful message for the end-time saints unfolds. The sanctuary, its cleansing, the judgment, the perfecting of a holy people and the bringing in of everlasting righteousness with the vindication of God's character are all given in judicial briefs in Daniel 8–12!

Calendar Year Associations

Julian Year B.C.	Julian Month	Babylonian Month	Hebrew Year A.M.	Hebrew Month	Event	Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, Judah – use Tishri	Daniel 9:25
459	Jan/Feb	Shabatu	3302	Shevat			
	Feb/Mar	Addaru		Adar			
		Addaru II					
	Mar/Apr	Nisanu		Nisan			
	Apr/May	Aiaru		Iyar			
	May/June	Simanu		Sivan			
	Jun/Jul	Duzu		Tammuz			
	Jul/Aug	Abu		Av			
	Aug/Sep	Ululu		Eulu			
	Sep/Oct	Tashritu		Tishri			6 th regnal
	Oct/Nov	Arahsamnu	Heshvan				
	Nov/Dec	Kislimnu	Kislev				
	Dec/Jan	Tebet	Tebet				
458	Jan/Feb	Shabatu	3303	Shevat			
	Feb/Mar	Addaru		Adar			
	Mar/Apr	Nisanu		Nisan			
	Apr/May	Aiaru		Iyar			
	May/June	Simanu		Sivan			
	Jun/Jul	Duzu		Tammuz			
	Jul/Aug	Abu		Av			
	Aug/Sep	Ululu		Eulu			
	Sep/Oct	Tashritu		Tishri 10	Artaxerxes' decree (458 B.C.) (Day of Atonement)	7 th regnal	483 years begin
	Oct/Nov	Arahsamnu		Heshvan			
Nov/Dec	Kislimnu	Kislev					
Dec/Jan	Tebet	Tebet					
457	Jan/Feb	Shabatu	3304	Shevat			
	Feb/Mar	Addaru		Adar			
				Adar II ed			
	Mar/Apr	Nisanu		Nisan 1	Ezra leaves Babylon with multitude		
	Apr/May	Aiaru		Iyar			
	May/June	Simanu		Sivan			
	Jun/Jul	Duzu		Tammuz			
	Jul/Aug	Abu		Av 1	Ezra arrives in Jerusalem 1 st day of 5 th month 7 th year		
	Aug/Sep	Ululu		Eulu			
	Sep/Oct	Tashritu		Tishri			8 th regnal
456	Oct/Nov	Arahsamnu	3305	Heshvan			
	Nov/Dec	Kislimnu		Kislev			
	Dec/Jan	Tebet		Tebet			
	Jan/Feb	Shabatu		Shevat			
	Feb/Mar	Addaru		Adar			

		Addaru II				
	Mar/Apr	Nisanu		Nisan		
	Apr/May	Aiaru		Iyar		
	May/June	Simanu		Sivan		
	June/July	Duzu		Tammuz		
	July/Aug	Abu		Av		
	Aug/Sep	Ululu		Eulu		
	Sep/Oct	Tashritu	3306	Tishri		9 th regnal
	Oct/Nov	Arahsamnu		Heshvan		
	Nov/Dec	Kislimnu		Kislev		
	Dec/Jan	Tebetu		Tevet		
455	Jan/Feb	Shabatu		Shevat		

The issue that is paramount in this study relates to why Tishri 10 must be the “time” for the decree of Artaxerxes I. 458 B.C. appears to begin the seventh regnal year of this king. This gave Ezra a period of 7–8 months to gather the select tribes and ready them for the lengthy trek. Even that seems brief in light of all the planning and gathering of temple furnishings for a Jerusalem journey.

The Shemita within Man’s Decree

God’s restoration decree (490 years of final mercy) would begin with man’s decree, filled with sympathetic support to Israel’s God. In a direct probationary order He structured this period to represent five numeric calipers:

1. Its declaration in 458 B.C announced that a time limit on God’s mercy had been set in motion.
2. It was divided into sacred periods – 70 Sabbaticals and 10 Jubilees – all highly symbolic for deliverance and restoration.
3. Within its timing infrastructure, the first advent would occur.
4. At its end, redemptive history is closed. The tenth reveals this to be the era when the second advent occurs.⁶
5. The 490 years begin in the fall and are based on solar years. Thus, it ends in the fall. That means the second advent occurs in the fall.⁷

God instructed Moses that a Passover lamb was to be chosen four days before that sacred day. That means that on Abib 10 the lamb was chosen – on Abib 14 (Passover) it was slain. The triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem occurred on Abib 9 (Sunday). The lamb would be chosen the next day (Monday). But now – the real “Lamb” had come and was rejected.

“Jerusalem had been the child of His care, and as a tender father mourns over a wayward son, so Jesus wept over the beloved city. How can I give thee up? How can I see thee devoted to destruction? Must I let thee go to fill up the cup of thine iniquity? One soul is of such value that, in comparison with it, worlds sink into insignificance; but here was a whole nation to be lost. When the fast westering sun should pass from sight in the heavens, **Jerusalem’s day of grace would be ended.** While the procession was halting on the brow of Olivet, it was not yet too late for Jerusalem to repent. The angel of mercy was then folding her wings to step down

⁶ White, Ellen G.; *Christian Teachings of Ellen G. White*, pp. 95-96.

⁷ White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, p. 399.

from the golden throne to give place to justice and swift-coming judgment. But Christ's great heart of love still pleaded for Jerusalem, that had scorned His mercies, despised His warnings, and was about to imbrue her hands in His blood. If Jerusalem would but repent, it was not yet too late. While the last rays of the setting sun were lingering on temple, tower, and pinnacle, would not some good angel lead her to the Saviour's love, and avert her doom? Beautiful and unholy city, that had stoned the prophets, that had rejected the Son of God, that was locking herself by her impenitence in fetters of bondage,—her day of mercy was almost spent!”⁸

The purpose of the 490-year prophecy was to bring an end to sin, anoint the most Holy and see everlasting righteousness arrive. Jesus said that it wouldn't happen with the Jewish people! (Matthew 21:43, 23:36-38, Daniel 8:14).

That means that the probationary time **either** was a prophecy totally cancelled at the Cross or it was put on hold and a “tarrying time” began until another group of loyalists could be found. Prophecy invokes the latter (another topic). There is a pending three-and-a-half-year period waiting for a purified people to emerge and vindicate God's character. (That's why apocalyptic prophecy has so many three-and-a-half-year periods.) This is how they are presented:

1. 42 months – used when persecution is disclosed.
2. 1260 days – used when God's people can do a “countdown.”
3. Time, times, and an half – used when the prophetic Jewish feasts are to be a tool.

Thus, the three and a half years must finalize a Sabbatical cycle and match the Passover Feast on a Friday. Is God numerically precise regarding the end or was He only so for the first advent? The prophecies of Daniel take us to the **deliverance of God's people** and the **special resurrection** (Daniel 12:1-2). They are atomic-clock precise.

“The sky opened and shut and was in commotion. The mountains shook like a reed in the wind, and cast out ragged rocks all around. The sea boiled like a pot and cast out stones upon the land. And as God spoke the day and the hour of Jesus' coming and delivered the everlasting covenant to His people, He spoke one sentence, and then paused, while the words were rolling through the earth. The Israel of God stood with their eyes fixed upward, listening to the words as they came from the mouth of Jehovah, and rolled through the earth like peals of loudest thunder. It was awfully solemn. And at the end of every sentence the saints shouted, “Glory! Alleluia!” Their countenances were lighted up with the glory of God; and they shone with the glory, as did the face of Moses when he came down from Sinai. The wicked could not look on them for the glory. And when the never-ending blessing was pronounced on those who had honored God in keeping His Sabbath holy, there was a mighty shout of victory over the beast and over his image.

“Then commenced the jubilee, when the land should rest [the 10th Jubilee that finishes the 490 years after a “tarrying time”]. I saw the pious slave rise in triumph and victory and shake off the chains that bound him, while his wicked master was in confusion and knew not what to do; for the wicked could not understand the words of the voice of God.”⁹

⁸ White, Ellen G.; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 577-578.

⁹ White, Ellen G.; *Early Writings*, pp. 34-35.

This expositor clearly knew of the delay **and** the finishing of the last three and a half years¹⁰ with a final Jubilee.

Evidence (historical and Biblical) shows that Artaxerxes I's decree occurred in the fall of 458 B.C. This would give winter months' preparation for a spring trip westward, north and then south to Palestine. This puts Christ's baptism at the fall of 26 A.D. and the crucifixion at 30 A.D. at Spring Passover. That would then coincide with the known full moon on Friday, Abib 14, when Calvary had to have occurred.

¹⁰ White, Ellen G.; *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 19, p. 282.

Appendix III

THE KINGS – THE DECREES – THE PROPHECIES

Introduction

Gabriel gave Daniel a timed restoration prophecy, recorded in Daniel 9, to enlighten God's people. It was to **begin** with a “**decree**” (*dabar*) (future to **when** the prophecy was presented) to restore Jerusalem, its walls and its streets (9:25). Since the theme of Daniel 8 through 12 is spiritual restoration, it **will** be shown that “spiritual metaphors” are intimated in most of the imagery, beginning with the city of Shushan (8:1-2) through this decree, to Michael “standing up” (12:1). The weight of evidence suggests that the “restore and build” decree refers to the re-establishment of covenant ties between God and His people. That finding reflects the conclusions of this document.

There are many regnal “timing points” and associated events that help us establish when that decree began. As we will see, they are instructive links for “Daniel's people” to respond to the probation mandates of the 490 years. In turn, that will reveal why the “rebuilding” and “restoration” represent God's kingdom and not a physical city. That will help in our search for a sympathetic decree. First, let's look at the first king of Medo-Persia who was in power when the prophecy of Daniel 9 was given.

Darius the Mede

Daniel regards Darius as responsible for the Babylonian conquest and its first Medo-Persian ruler (Daniel 5:31, 6:25). Many cuneiform texts from that era refer to a Babylonian “provincial government” and kingdom leaders with names such as Gubaru, Ugbaru and Gobryas, especially in the Nabonidus Chronicles.¹

There has been much debate regarding how the many names tie to Cyrus, a leader who “delivers” the Jewish people at the end of the 70 years. How do they differ from Darius the Mede? Are they referring to Cyrus, the King of Medo-Persia?

We have adopted the work of Whitcomb as the most accurate because it coincides with numerous historical references going back to the 1800's.² It also agrees with expositor White and the Scriptural account.

We will build on his analysis, but first will note the position of White in 1907:

“Daniel's prayer in behalf of his people, as recorded in the ninth chapter, **was** ‘in the first year of **Darius' the Mede**. Darius was favored of heaven; for in the first year of his reign the angel Gabriel ‘stood up to confirm and to strengthen him. [Daniel 11:1]’ It was this king who, early in

¹ Shea, William H.; *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 7/1 (Spring 1996), pp.1-20.

² Whitcomb, John C.; *Daniel* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985) and *Darius the Mede (The Historical Chronology of Daniel*, Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1959).

the establishment of the Medo-Persian empire, 'set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; and over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first.... This Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.'"³

"The year that Cyrus **succeeded** Darius the Mede to the throne of Medo-Persia marked the completion of seventy years since the first company of Hebrews had been carried captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel, who was familiar with the prophecies of Jeremiah and Isaiah regarding the duration of the captivity, and with the prophecies of Isaiah regarding the restoration by decree of Cyrus, was still living, and was occupying a position of leading responsibility in the Medo-Persian court. His faith in these prophecies led him to plead with God in behalf of his people. And now, when the time came for the temple in Jerusalem to be rebuilt, God moved upon Cyrus as his agent to discern the prophecies concerning himself, and to grant the Jewish people their liberty. And furthermore, Cyrus furnished them the necessary facilities for rebuilding the temple of the Lord."⁴

Whitcomb concludes that Gubaru is the only individual who could be Darius the Mede. He also notes that Gubaru and Ugbaru were two different individuals who were interchangeably referred to in cuneiform tablets as Gubryas. He shows that Ugbaru died within weeks of Babylon's fall (p. 24). Gubaru lived on as Darius the Mede.⁵

According to the Babylonian Chronicles, Gubaru was born to Ahasuerus the Mede and appointed by Cyrus as governor over Babylon. Governors over large areas were often called kings. One example was Belshazzar. He was actually a "fill-in leader" for his father Nabonidus, who was elsewhere worshipping a pagan god. Darius, noted in the Nabonidus Chronicles,⁶ as an appointee of Cyrus,⁷ began to "reign" immediately at Babylon's fall.

Gubaru entered Babylon with Cyrus on October 13, 539 B.C. Gubaru – Darius the Mede – appointed 120 satraps or provincial governors. Daniel was one of three over these satraps. There are many ancient historical records that note that Cyrus was the Babylonian "conqueror" (Herodotus, Xenophor, Berosus, Isaiah 45:1, II Chronicles 35:20-23).⁸ But Darius the Mede was its first "provincial" governor (likely over the Mesopotamia area).

Decree One: From Darius, in Support of God's People

Darius was the one who threw Daniel into the lions' den. When he found him alive the next day, "*Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. **I make a decree**, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions*" (Daniel 6:25-27).

³ White, Ellen G.; *The Review and Herald*, March 21, 1907 (emphasis added).

⁴ *Ibid.*, March 28, 1907 (emphasis added).

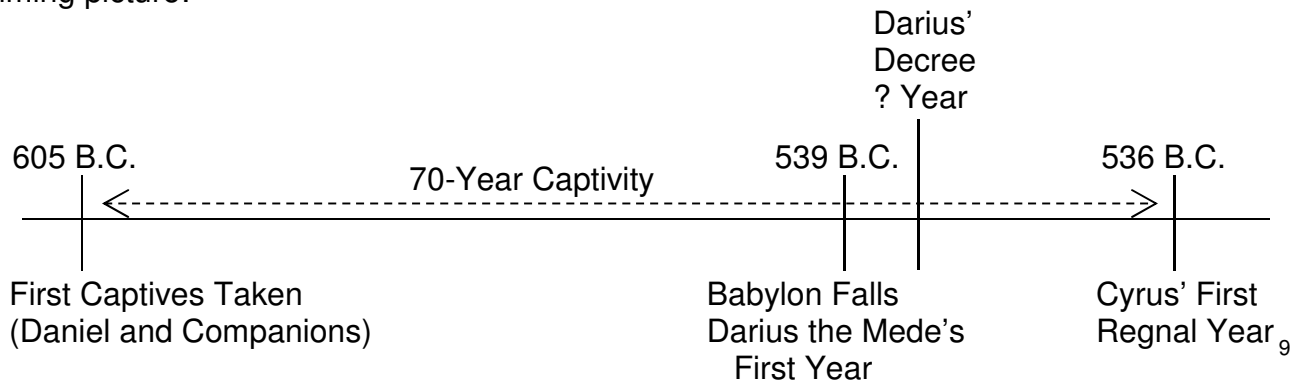
⁵ Whitcomb, *op. cit.*, *Darius the Mede*, pp. 10-16.

⁶ Ford, J. Massingberde; *The Anchor Bible* (Doubleday, New York), 1975, p. 15.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁸ Whitcomb, *op. cit.*, *Darius the Mede*.

From the study of those ancient tablets and several historical records one can develop this timing picture:



The period of 70 years (605–536 B.C.) began with the conquest of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C. It ended in 536 B.C. by Cyrus' decree in his first regnal year (II Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezekiel 1:1-4, 6:3-5), fulfilling prophecy (Isaiah 13:1-2, 45:13). This is the well-known time referred to in Daniel 9:2 and predicted in Jeremiah 25:11-12.

The decree of Darius the Mede was a law throughout the Medo-Persian Empire and was given under inspiration.

- Mankind was to recognize Daniel's God as living and steadfast.
- His kingdom will be forever.
- His rulership will never end.
- He works signs and wonders in heaven and earth.
- Tremble and fear before this God.

It was a secular mandate to be spiritual. It was an overview of the everlasting covenant! This is not at variance with the implied directive that Gabriel prophesied (9:25). But the people were still in stipulated captivity, making its implementation compromised. God invites a willful response to repent, which leads to an eternal state of righteousness. Such a corporate revival still lay in the future. The "forever" divine kingdom was "in anticipation" within Darius' **prophetic decree**.

It is important to note a typological concept within prophecy. The compass directions have symbolic meaning. East equates with deliverance. Cyrus comes from the east to deliver Babylon and to help God's people to "come out." When Jesus comes, He approaches planet earth from the east. The "decree" of restoration and deliverance from earthlings is anticipated to come from the east (Daniel 11:44a). Most scholars assume that the decree (*dabar*) that God's people must anticipate is from one of the *eastern* Persian kings! Since there are only four Persian kings mentioned within the Bible restoration prophecy, it must be one of these (Ezra 4:5-7). Any scrutiny into which decree God is referring to should at least tentatively draw on those four "eastern" kings. Darius was named to introduce this "time" for these Danielic messages. His decree underscores the spiritual imagery God is teaching in anticipation of these prophetic treasures.

⁹ Waterhouse, S. Douglas; *Why Was Darius the Mede Expunged from History?* (Berrien Springs, MI: Institute of Archaeology, Siegfried H. Horn Archaeological Museum, Andrews University, 1997), pp.173-189.

Decree Two: From God, on Behalf of God's People

*"At the beginning of thy supplications the **commandment** came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision" (Daniel 9:23).*

Many scholars have concluded that this "commandment" or divine decree is mentioned only to create an awareness that **this** decree (*dabar*) is what Gabriel brought to Daniel from God, fulfilling 9:25.¹⁰ The reasoning is based on:

1. Daniel 9:23: "at the beginning of your supplications the **word** [*dabar*] went forth."
2. Then Daniel 9:25 says: "from the going forth of the **word** [*dabar*]."

The assumption is made that the decree represents "the key" revelation **from God** through Gabriel. Thus, the 490 years must begin at the time of Darius the Mede (539–537 B.C.) when Daniel prayed.

Resistance to this understanding comes from many: "vs 25 surely refers to a different proclamation: the word vs 23 introduces – the whole of vv 24-27 – does not focus on the building of a restored Jerusalem. The term [*dabar* in vs 23] is one for a solemn royal proclamation (e.g., Esther 1:19), and thus, not for the proclamation of Yahweh (e.g., Isaiah 2:3, 45:23, 48:30, 51:4, 53:11; Ezekiel 33:30)." "To restore and build [vs 25] is a rich and suggestive phrase that combines references to the restoring of the community and the rebuilding of the city" [literal or symbolic]¹¹ by an earth-bound leader.

In support of a deliverance mandate from the "word" of Yahweh to Daniel, is God's promise to Jeremiah!

1. *"For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and **perform my good word** toward you, in causing you to return to this place" (Jeremiah 29:10).*
2. Moreover, in Jeremiah 29:14 God promises: *"And **I will be found** of you, saith the LORD: and **I will turn** away your captivity, and **I will gather** you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive."*
3. In Jeremiah 30:18 a similar phrase is used in parallel with the *"city shall be rebuilt."* *"Thus saith the LORD; Behold, **I will bring again** the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwellingplaces; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof.... And ye shall be my people, and **I will be** your God" (Jeremiah 30:18, 22).*

In keeping with Daniel's prayer, his pleas are underscored by the anticipated completion of these promises. Before the exile, God promised that Daniel's prayer would be answered. The

¹⁰ Collins, John J.; *Daniel* (Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN – 1993), pp. 354-355.

¹¹ Goldingay, John E.; *Daniel – Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 30 (Word Books, Publisher – Dallas, TX), p. pp. 260-261.

covenant bonding would resume within the context of an independent people. But, there is a difference between the decrees that ended the 70-year captivity and the restoration decree which brings in everlasting righteousness. Was Gabriel's Daniel 9 visit reiterating a restoration promise, "the" decree to restore? It is impossible because the message was conditional!

Let's look at Cyrus, the next "king."

Cyrus the Great

When Cyrus became emperor of the Persian province of Anshan, approximately 558 B.C., the area was subject to the Medes. His career was punctuated with many military conquests. This led to his being called the "king of the four corners of the world."¹² His form of centralized government was known as a model for peace and fairness to its subjects (referred to as the Achaemenid Dynasty).¹³

The Median Empire was ruled by Cyrus' own grandfather, King Astyages, when he came to power in Anshan. In 553 B.C. Cyrus led a revolt against that Median Empire, conquering it in 549 B.C.¹⁴

Cyrus assumed the title "King of Persia," but not of Medo-Persia, in 546 B.C. He would first conquer the Lydian Empire, then the Babylonian Empire, where Bible history/prophesy enters the scene.

In 540 B.C.¹⁵ Cyrus moved into the Mesopotamia area and fought the battle of Opis. Nabonidus, Belshazzar's father, the actual king of Babylon, had sought to thwart an attack on the capital city, Babylon. But the Babylonian army was routed. Gubaru (a Median general – Darius the Mede) joined Cyrus, and they marched together on Babylon. On October 13, 539 B.C. the city fell (Daniel 5:30-31).

Many historical documents claim this as Cyrus' "first year," when he then decreed that Daniel's people could return to Jerusalem. That, however, would be shy of the divine sentence of 70 years in Babylonian captivity (Jeremiah 29:10). This is where Darius the Mede, in Babylonian rule, noted in a previous section, guides our understanding and correlates the Biblical regnal events.

In that night (October 13, 539 B.C.) Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans was slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom (Daniel 5:30-31).

In the Cyrus Cylinder, Cyrus calls himself "King of Babylon, King of Sumer and Akkad, King of the four corners of the world." He was the supreme ruler of the Medo-Persian Empire. But from the Biblical perspective, the king over Babylon had lordship over the Jewish people until Darius' death. That is the interpretive key to guide us.

¹² Xenophon, *Anabasis* I. IX; see also M.A. Dandamaev "Cyrus II," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.
<http://www.iranica.com/articles/cyrus-iii>

¹³ Schmitt, *Achaemenid Dynasty* (i. The clan and dynasty). <http://www.iranica.com/articles/achaemenid-dynasty>

¹⁴ Briant, Pierre; *From Cyrus to Alexander* (Eisenbrauns, 2006), pp. 31-33.
http://www.eisenbrauns.com/ECOM/_2ZR1BFSRP.htm

¹⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrus_the_Great

It appears as though Cyrus' accession year directly over Babylon was 537 B.C. and his first regnal year was 536 B.C.¹⁶

It was in that year – the 70th for the Jewish people – that Cyrus issued the next decree.

Decree Three: From Cyrus, in Support of God's People

"Religious policy of Cyrus is well documented in Babylonian texts as well as Jewish sources. Cyrus initiated a general policy that can be described as a policy of permitting religious freedom throughout his vast empire. He brought peace to the Babylonians and is said to have kept his army away from the temples and restored the statues of the Babylonian gods to their sanctuaries." Another example of his religious sympathy, as evidenced by the Cyrus Cylinder (see below), was his kind treatment of the Jews during their remaining exile in Babylon. The Jewish Bible's Ketuvim ends in Second Chronicles with the decree of Cyrus, which returned the exiles to the Promised Land from Babylon along with a commission to rebuild the temple.

"Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth hath Yahweh, the god of heaven, given me; and He hath charged me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whosoever there is among you of all His people – may Yahweh, his god, be with him – let him go there.' (2 Chronicles 36:23; cf. Ezra 1:1-4)."¹⁷

*"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a **proclamation** throughout all his kingdom, and **put it also in writing**" (Ezra 1:1).*

This edict is reproduced in the book of Ezra, chapter 6:

*"In the first year of King Cyrus, Cyrus the king issued a **decree**: 'Concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, let the temple, the place where sacrifices are offered, be rebuilt and let its foundations be retained, its height being 60 cubits and its width 60 cubits; with three layers of huge stones and one layer of timbers. And let the cost be paid from the royal treasury. 'Also let the gold and silver utensils of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be returned and brought to their places in the temple in Jerusalem; and you shall put them in the house of God.'" (Ezra 6:3-5).*

This decree brought the 70-year captivity to an end. God's Spirit moved on Cyrus:

"The year that Cyrus succeeded Darius the Mede to the throne of Medo-Persia marked the completion of seventy years since the first company of Hebrews had been carried captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel, who was familiar with the prophecies of Jeremiah and Isaiah regarding the duration of the captivity, and with the prophecies of Isaiah regarding the restoration by decree of Cyrus, was still living, and was occupying a position of leading responsibility in the Medo-Persian court. His faith in these prophecies led him to

¹⁶ www.biblestudents.net/library/firstyearofcyrus.pdf

¹⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrus_the_Great

plead with God in behalf of his people. And now, when the time came for the temple in Jerusalem to be rebuilt, God moved upon Cyrus as his agent to discern the prophecies concerning himself, and to grant the Jewish people their liberty. And furthermore, Cyrus furnished them the necessary facilities for rebuilding the temple of the Lord.”¹⁸

Though the recorded decree involves the temple, **prophecy affirms** that **Cyrus would be the king who would help rebuild Jerusalem**. Clearly, those returning would need a place to reside.

*“Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else.... I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: **he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts**” (Isaiah 45:1-6, 13).*

Josephus also connects Cyrus’ command with the rebuilding of both the temple and the city, as prophesied by Isaiah.¹⁹

This decree became effective in the seventh month of Cyrus’ first regnal year (536 B.C.) (Ezra 6:3). If the Danelic decree of 490 years commenced then, Messiah the Prince and His anointing work would have been in ~53 B.C., known historically to be too early. That means 9:25 is dealing with another issue than the physical city.

How can we know further that it was not Cyrus who fulfilled 9:25? In the first year of Darius the Mede, Daniel 11 records four Persian kings that would arise, supplementing the prophecies of Daniel 7–9. Historically, the reigns of Darius and Cyrus were **concurrent**. But from a Babylonian and Biblical perspective Darius was **first**; then two to three years later, Cyrus. We can then understand the list of those Medo-Persian kings pertaining to the end of the captivity and after! *“Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia”* (Daniel 11:2b). Who were these four key kings future to Darius the Mede? Cyrus, Darius I, Xerxes I and Artaxerxes I (specifically named in Ezra). The Biblical focus **is on the fourth** and last Medo-Persian king, Artaxerxes I (the transition ruler between Persia and Greece – 10:20).

- This prophecy was given during Darius the Mede’s reign. Thus, these kings would be future to then.
- Daniel 11:2-20 introduces future earthly kings of Biblical significance.

¹⁸ White, Ellen G.; *The Review and Herald*, March 28, 1907.

¹⁹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, 11:1-18, quoted in Steinmann, p. 468.

- Verse 2 tells of three kings “yet” to come. That is a distinct bloc that most concur represents Cyrus, Darius I, Xerxes I and then a fourth (Daniel 11:2), Artaxerxes I (cf. Ezra 4:6, 6:14).
- Verse 2 isolates the fourth king as someone who uses his riches for power and is against Greece.
- Xerxes I (the third king) was known to attack Greece, and became the catalyst for Alexander the Great’s military ventures. But Artaxerxes I provided riches to the enemies of the Athenians to undermine that government, which created weakness in the administration of Grecian areas.

There is an interesting “king” that ends this Daniel 11 list, and which also ends the key kingdom leaders during the 490-year period.

- *“Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle”* (Daniel 11:20).
- This is Caesar Augustus, who brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-6). He was the first ruler of the Roman Empire (63–14 B.C.).
- The tax decree was issued between 6 and 4 B.C., making the 490-year prophecy reach at least till then, to the birth of Christ. But the prophecy goes to the anointing and Cross of Messiah the Prince. That would then be 30 years after this time.
- Intriguing – Cyrus could not be that king. He went back too far. It would need to be in the time of that fourth king – Artaxerxes I (465–425 B.C.)!

Cyrus’ decree addressed the physical assets with honor to the Jewish God. The next two Biblically unnamed Persian kings had no direct interest in that theocracy (Cambyses – 529–522 B.C. and Smerdis – 522–521 B.C.), thus are not on that list. Then comes Darius I.

Decree Four: From Darius I, in Support of God’s People (not Darius the Mede)

From Cyrus through Darius I (521–485 B.C.), adversaries did much to delay and thwart the building of the temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 4:5). As the work of rebuilding the temple began under counsel of Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 5:1), local governors demanded, *“Who hath commanded you to build this house, and to make up this wall?”* (Ezra 5:3). That led to a communiqué to Darius I with a request to search the historical documents. That was done, and in a palace in the old Median Empire, Cyrus’ record (decree) was found.

That led to another **decree** in favor of God’s people to finish the temple (likely 520 B.C.).

- *“Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in his place ... I Darius have made a **decree**; let it be done with speed”* (Ezra 6:7, 12b).
- cf. Nehemiah 12:22, Haggai 1:1
- The temple was finished in 516 B.C. under Darius I.

Thousands of the Jewish people have already been in Jerusalem now for over 20 years.

Isaiah had said that Cyrus would not only deliver God's people, but the cities of Judah would be rebuilt (Isaiah 44:26). Before the work on the temple began, *the people were* inhabiting the cities: *“And when the seventh month was come, and **the children of Israel were in the cities**, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem.... And they set the altar upon his bases; for fear was upon them because of the people of those countries: and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD, even burnt offerings morning and evening.... From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the LORD. But the foundation of the temple of the LORD was not yet laid”* (Ezra 3:1, 3-4a, 6).

This is confirmed further by Haggai at the time the temple foundation was laid. *“Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, **to dwell in your ceiled houses**, and this house lie waste? ... Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.... Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house”* (Haggai 1:3-4, 7, 9b).

Daniel 9:25 notes that the decree is to *“restore and build Jerusalem.”* The decree of Cyrus, recorded in Ezra, is only for the temple. But, it is assumed that the 50,000 who returned would establish homes upon his permission – as God had decreed.

Darius I's decree only affirmed the prior orders of Cyrus.

Decree Five: From Xerxes I in Support of God's People

Xerxes I – Ahasuerus (487–466 B. C.) was the famous king who married the Jewess Esther. He was one of the key kings mentioned in Ezra 4:5-7. Xerxes I's first interest lay in the restoration of Susa and the completion of the royal palace. It had been destroyed by Ashurbanapal in 639 B.C. The story of Esther enters in 484–483 B.C. The fall of the previous queen, Vashti, may have occurred at a feast celebrating the completion of the new palace.

Many incorrectly consider him the “fourth king” of Daniel 11, who was against Greece because of his military exploits against that country. But – was he a king who would fulfill Daniel 9:25?

Xerxes I was a warrior initially suppressing revolts in Egypt, then Babylon.²⁰ He later attacked Greece in 480 B.C. for their interference with a major revolt in the province of Ionia, Asia Minor, in 498 B.C., and later helped to defeat an Athenian army in the battle of the Marathon, also in Asia Minor. The Greeks were humiliated, and resentment against the Medo-Persian Empire mounted. Artaxerxes I, the next king, reinforced this feeling by undermining the Athenian government so severely that it was preoccupied with civil unrest. He used his riches to bribe the internal enemies to oppose those leaders, just as Daniel 11:2 noted of the fourth king.

The story of Esther begins in the third year of Xerxes I's reign (484–483 B.C). At this time the king reigned over 127 provinces. Following the dramatic encounter with Haman, and his death, Xerxes issued a **decree** to the Jews of the empire to “slay their enemies.” The Bible says, *“And all the rulers of the provinces, and the lieutenants, and the deputies, and officers of the king, helped the Jews; because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them”* (Esther 9:3). That decree and the action of the Jews led to the death of over 75,000 individuals considered enemies of Esther's nationality.

²⁰ Ghirshman, R.; *Iran*, p. 191, as quoted in Wikipedia.

God's people were once again in great favor throughout the Medo-Persian Empire. Yet few returned to their homeland until King Artaxerxes I succeeded Xerxes I.

Thus, the decrees of Xerxes I did not fulfill the restoration requirements of the Danelic prophecy. They were protective, secular documents that dealt directly with the Jewish right to exist as a Jewish people – regardless of location.

Decree Six: From Artaxerxes I – Restore Theocracy

See the article “The Decree to Restore and Build.”²¹ (Appendix II). For details of the various Medo-Persian kings and decrees, see Appendix III.

Xerxes I, or King Ahasuerus of Esther's time, was murdered in 465 B.C. His son, Artaxerxes I, took his place after much violence. His accession year was 465–464 B.C. Tishri 1 of 464 B.C. was the onset of his first regnal year.

The seventh year – a timing noted in Ezra 7:8 – would be 458–457 B.C. The Persian capital had been in Persepolis with a palace in Susa, along the Ulai River. Artaxerxes I moved the capital to Babylon. That is where he became friends with Ezra. In that special relationship, Ezra requested that the Jewish people be permitted to return to their homeland to worship and to re-establish life. Clearly, God's Spirit moved on Artaxerxes' heart. *“And the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him”* (Ezra 7:6).

Ezra was a scribe and priest (Ezra 7:12). There were also unique leadership/administrative skills in Ezra that were recognized by Artaxerxes. He not only permitted him to lead a pilgrimage to Palestine but appointed him as provincial governor of the land east of Jordan (assumed from the phrase “beyond the river” – Ezra 7:25). Life and death power was given to him. He also was provided freedom to appoint magistrates and judges.

This unique power was legally conveyed by a decree (“I make a **decree**” – Ezra 7:13 and “I, even I, Artaxerxes the king, do make a **decree**” – Ezra 7:21).

The decree was in the fall of 458 B.C. at Atonement [that would help to establish the onset of the 2300 evenings and mornings of Daniel 8:14 (Atonement language)] – also, for the *mareh* vision of Daniel 9. That would make it possible for Ezra to leave the next spring and arrive five months later in Palestine in 457 B.C. (Ezra 7:9).

Artaxerxes I's decree stands alone among all the decrees. It is a directive to re-establish a theocracy – civil/religious – with God at its head. There is no provision in that document for the restoration of physical assets. Many scholars have commented on this. But – the view that Daniel 9:25 is a buildup of physical assets has confused the elevated understanding of returning to God.

It is fairly well established that the temple was completed in 516 B.C. by Darius I, as we have noted above (Ezra 5:15, 6:8-12). That brings us to a provocative issue. 516 B.C. was long before Artaxerxes came on the scene. Yet, the Bible clearly shows that he issued one of the de-

²¹ <http://endtimeissues.com/Articles/Article304-Decree%20to%20Restore%20and%20Build.html>

crees to **build** and **finish** the temple. What “decree” or “commandment” would Artaxerxes I issue to embellish or make ready “that temple”?

That **is** an issue many scholars recognize, but they fail to move beyond “the question.” **If** the temple is already completed in Artaxerxes’ day, then his decree has **nothing** to do with its *physical structure*, per se. If the commencement of the 70 *Shemita* cycle mandate (490 years) is to **restore** and **build** the city, street (singular) and walls, it is either a physical mandate that Cyrus long ago ordered (as God had predicted) **or** it represents a spiritual metaphor for Artaxerxes I. Since Artaxerxes must also be tied to a decree related to the temple (Ezra 6:14), could that possibly be part of a spiritual mandate of Daniel 9:25 also?! Could this all be totally spiritual?

The “house of God” “which is at Jerusalem” (Ezra 6:12, 14) was “*builded and finished*” according to the commandment of God and according to the commandment or decree of:

Cyrus’ decree – physical restoration (temple and cities)

Darius I’s decree – physical restoration (finished temple)

Artaxerxes I – decree related to spiritual restoration, **providing implements for the temple worship**. To accomplish this, the vessels of the temple were returned with funds to purchase sacrificial animals plus wheat, wine and oil for the various ordinances (Ezra 7:13-26). In addition, he mandated a return to the worship of God. That completed the needs of the temple, finishing its restoration.

It now takes a secular king to re-establish the theocracy, set Ezra in a position for a revival and establish consequences for disobedience:

“Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven: for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons?” (7:23).

“And thou, Ezra” (7:25)

“And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment” (7:26).

In the setting of **covenant restoration** in Daniel 9, no decree matches that of Artaxerxes I. No letter/decree or law after this time has any tangible association to the deliverance theme of Daniel 9. Ezra was a revivalist; his authority came from God and was facilitated by Artaxerxes I. This is the decree that fulfills Daniel 9:25, detailed shortly in this narrative. He is the “fourth” king of Daniel 11:2, once again revealing the precision of Biblical prophecy.

Decree Seven: Artaxerxes I – Rebuild Wall

“And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been before-time sad in his presence.... And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers’ sepulchres, that I may build it. And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,)

For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time. Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah; And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.... Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work” (Nehemiah 2:1, 5-8, 17-18).

These were not formal decrees but “letters of accommodation.” Contrary to a common interpretation, though it notes that “Jerusalem lieth in waste,” the need to build and restore involved **only** the gates and walls. In verses 17 and 18 the “reproach” (*herpa* – H) or scorn against the city would be removed when they were restored.

The view that these letters from Artaxerxes I was the decree to “restore and build” Jerusalem of Daniel 9:25 is widespread. It began with the publishing of Sir Robert Anderson’s theories in the book, *The Coming Prince*, in 1895 (London). In 1978 Harold Hoehner, Ph.D., Dallas Theological Seminary, published *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, bringing “corrections” to Anderson’s original work.

Based on Hoehner’s work, the “decree” that begins the Daniel 9 prophecy was issued on Nisan 1 (March 5), 444 B.C. This date has been challenged by Bob Pickle.²² Anderson and Hoehner mix 360-day years with solar years. In addition, the basis of the 70 weeks of years is the Sabbatical year system mandated in Leviticus 25, ignored by Hoehner and Anderson.

“In that system, agricultural pursuits were to be put on hold every seventh year. Israel was explicitly told that if they did not let the land rest in that seventh year, the land would become desolate and they would be taken captive. The length of time of desolation and captivity would correspond to the number of sabbatical years that they had not kept (Lev. 26: 34, 35).

“Jeremiah later specified that the Jews would be captives in Babylon for 70 years (Jer. 29:10), and this 70 years of desolation is explicitly said by the writer of 2 Chronicles to correspond to the number of sabbatical years that had not been kept (36:21). Therefore, Daniel's reference to 70 years of desolation in Daniel 9:2 implies a time period of 490 years, for that is the precise number of years in 70 sabbatical cycles.

“It is apparent, then, that Daniel 9 begins with a reference to 490 years or 70 sabbatical cycles, and ends with a reference to 490 years or 70 sabbatical cycles. It therefore behooves us, if at all possible, to make our calculations of Daniel's 70 weeks align with actual sabbatical cycles.”²³

²² <http://www.pickle-publishing.com/papers/harold-hoehner-70-weeks.htm#alt>

²³ *Ibid.*

Thus, the 444 B.C. theory places the crucifixion at Nissan 14, 33 A.D. It is true that on that date there was a full moon on Friday (intercalated method), but that cannot be the crucifixion date because it is based upon faulty calculations, using a 360-day year.

*“Yea, also I continued **in the work of this wall**, neither bought we any land: and all my servants were gathered thither unto the work.... So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days”* (Nehemiah 5:16, 6:15). The focus of this 445–444 B.C. decree was on the protective gates and walls.

If this was a decree to restore a theocracy or a city, how could all be accomplished in 52 days “to cease the reproach of the enemies” of God’s people?

The only decree that fulfills the purpose of Daniel 9 is related to Artaxerxes I’s first proclamation of Ezra 7.

Focusing Deeper on that Spiritual Restoration Issue

Times of Uncertainty

During the second year of Darius I’s reign, Zechariah was given amazing visions and messages from God. Many Jews had returned to Canaan following Cyrus’ decree. But again apostasy was quickly rampant. Zechariah was a Levite born in Babylon (Nehemiah 12:1, 16) and had administrative and spiritual interest in his people.

- *“Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto thee”* (Zechariah 1:3) (written ~520 B.C.).
- *“Turn ye now from your evil ways.”*

Then the “angel of the Lord” asked the “Lord of hosts” a question:

- *“How long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah?”* (Zechariah 1:12).
- The “Lord of hosts” answered, *“I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy”* (Zechariah 1:14).
- *“The Lord shall yet comfort Zion and shall yet choose Jerusalem”* (Zechariah 1:17; cf. 2:12).
- This is amazing. The people of captivity had returned to unmitigated apostasy. Yet God is prophetically conveying a spirit of mercy and restoration. That 490 years of mercy given to David would not change!

Verse 14 above is a beautiful embellishment of this, regarding God’s people.

- Jerusalem is a metaphor for His people.
- He will judge and restore it spiritually again.
- The jealousy for Zion (God’s dwelling place with His people) and Jerusalem (His people) represent a spiritual restoration totally unrelated to buildings, walls and streets.

This is further emphasized by the additional story of Joshua (the high priest), Satan and that Angel of the Lord:

- “*I will clothe thee with a change of raiment*” (Zechariah 3:4).
- “All who have put on the robe of Christ's righteousness will stand before Him as chosen and faithful and true. Satan has no power to pluck them out of the hand of the Saviour. Not one soul who in penitence and faith has claimed His protection will Christ permit to pass under the enemy's power. His word is pledged: ‘Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me.’ Isaiah 27:5.”²⁴
- “As the people of God afflict their souls before Him, pleading for purity of heart, the command is given, ‘Take away the filthy garments,’ and the encouraging words are spoken, ‘Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.’ Zechariah 3:4. The spotless robe of Christ's righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, faithful children of God. The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, nevermore to be defiled by the corruptions of the world. Their names are retained in the Lamb's book of life, enrolled among the faithful of all ages. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon's roar. Now they are eternally secure from the tempter's devices. Their sins are transferred to the originator of sin. A ‘fair miter’ is set upon their heads.”²⁵
- At a time when the cities were being restored and the temple foundation being laid, God's key messages to Zechariah related to spiritual restoration and rebuilding. **That** is the forward-moving, pivotal issue in these prophecies!

Also, we must reflect on the imagery of spiritual restoration seen in Daniel's prayer before he is approached by Gabriel (Daniel 9:4-19).

- Since Gabriel came in response to this prayer
- The prayer contains what Gabriel is answering!

Again, the desolation of the land and the bondage of the people related to their rebellion against the Sabbatical year (II Chronicles 36:21).

- That year symbolized a time when everyone was “one” (just like in the heavenly Canaan) – spiritually restored.
- The land belonged to God.
- During this year, the land and people rested from all distractions, labor and secular activity.
- The focus was the “Lord of hosts.”

Now – with their apostasy having been punished and the work on the physical assets proceeding, what must be changed or restored to deal with this “new rebellion”?

²⁴ White, Ellen G.; *Prophets and Kings*, p. 587.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 591.

- Did Israel need walls, streets and buildings?
- They needed the Lord.
- They needed a true, spiritual revival and a setting to once again worship.

As Daniel's prayer progresses, he sees the spiritual restoration as paramount.

- "**Thy** city Jerusalem, **thy** holy mountain" (vss 16-17)
- "**Thy** city which is called by **thy** name" (vs 18)
- "**Thy** city and **thy** people are called by **thy** name" (vs 19)
- "Supplication ... in behalf of the holy mountain (vs 20) of **my God**"

In Daniel 9:11-14 "us" represents "Jerusalem" – God's people.

The Spiritual Decree!

Approximately 73 years after Zerubbabel and Joshua brought back to Judah the first wave of Jewish people:

- Artaxerxes I (Longimanus) came to the throne.
- This was the era of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Artaxerxes was acquainted with these men and "talked freely regarding the power of the God of heaven and the divine purpose in restoring the Jews to Jerusalem."²⁶

- Artaxerxes I gave a Biblically oriented decree (Ezra 7:12-28).
- There is **nothing** in it that articulates buildings, streets or walls.
- It is a beautiful invitation and directive to **re-establish the theocracy in Jerusalem.**

"Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven: for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons?" (Ezra 7:23).

This decree and Ezra's leadership led to a great revival in Israel.

- It was given in the seventh year of Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:7).
- Nehemiah, a contemporary of Ezra (Nehemiah 8:1, 9), noted that the year was calculated as a fall-to-fall period (Nehemiah 1:1, 2:1).

Again, archeological and astronomical data show that Artaxerxes came to power in the fall of 464 B.C.

- His seventh year would be 458-457 B.C.

Once revival was underway:

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 608.

- Ezra went about dealing with ruins still obvious in Jerusalem (Ezra 4:11-16).
- It was during this time that the western governors of the empire wrote to Artaxerxes.
 - That “they are rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city; they are finishing the walls and repairing the foundations” (vs 12) (clearly a dishonest report from enemies).
 - Then, impulsively, Artaxerxes decreed that this **city** not be rebuilt (vs 21) “until a decree is made by me.”
- This reveals that the original decree in 458 B.C. did **not** include building the city structure!

This rebuilding was likely in 456 B.C.

- BUT – that is not the issue in Gabriel’s prophecy (Daniel 9).
- The restoration of “Jerusalem” is the re-establishment of the theocracy of God’s people (commensurate with Daniel’s prayer) [“to build” (*banah*) can refer to the restoration of God’s people (Jeremiah 12:14-16)].

What is the street (plaza) and wall (moat)?

- The wall (moat) is symbolic for something firmly decided (cf. Isaiah 10:23).
- The street (plaza or square) refers to the center of the city. This suggests that all the people of God will have firmly centered their loyalty on Him.

The damage later against the walls and gate by the Samaritans led Nehemiah, cupbearer of Artaxerxes I, to go to Jerusalem to repair the wall and gates (Nehemiah 1:3, 2:3). That work took only a little over a month to complete. The restoration of the city itself was **not** his object.

Daniel 8–12 contains elevated spiritual metaphors, rich divine imperatives, prophetic imagery of war between good and evil and God’s final deliverance of mankind from sin. That is the understanding God desires us to see within the context of the decree in 9:25 – Artaxerxes I from several vantage points.

APPENDIX IV

SABBATICAL YEAR – THE *SHEMITA*

Introduction

God introduced many time clocks during the creation week.

- Fourth day – the sun and moon became the basis for signs, seasons, days and years (Genesis 1:14).
- What that meant in that perfect world is unclear.
 - Why would human life need signs?
 - What kinds of seasons existed?
 - Were the days 24-hour days?
 - Did the earth circle the sun at a different speed?

Though God's foreknowledge anticipated sin, there is nothing to suggest that the creation of this earth was modified to prepare for its intrusion.

- The seventh day was not created but appointed.
- *“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made”* (Genesis 2:1-3).

Several unique principles were established in this last day of the creation week.

1. The “seventh” was the last period before a “first” began a new cycle.
2. It was set apart from the six work days that preceded it.
3. It was a day of rest (*shabath*) to honor God because He rested and was the Creator.
4. Man and God could uniquely share this time together.
5. God honored this intangible “time” by:
 - Blessing it – it was to benefit man
 - Sanctifying it – it was holy and wholly for Him

The word “rested” implies “an end has come” – something ceased.

- No residual work remains.
- When man rests on the seventh day – all residual work is completed or set aside.

In the Decalogue:

- More space is given to the fourth commandment than any other directive (Exodus 20:8-11, Deuteronomy 5:12-15).

- **Time (six days):** Common, secular
- **Time (seventh day):** Unique, holy
- *Not only is His sovereignty over creation remembered, His sovereignty over time is to be acknowledged.*

Once sin came into the world – the Sabbath took on new meaning. BUT:

- There is no record of the Sabbath rest during a 2500-year period – until the Jewish exodus.
- Neither is there a record of the Decalogue.
- The Bible does note: *“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”* (Genesis 6:5).
- *“Wickedness”* and evil relate to behavior contrary to God’s wishes – *there was a known divine standard.*
- It later notes: *“and Noah walked with God”* (Genesis 6:9).
- Again revealing that parameters on behavior were known.

The Sabbath acted as a check on man’s unbridled selfish behavior.

- He was to stop “man”-related activity.
- And then participate in God-accepted activity.
- This check on man was unique, and required to maintain loyalty to God.

Expositor White captured the significance of this when she said: “Every man in God's world is under the laws of His government. God has placed the Sabbath in the bosom of the Decalogue, and has made it the criterion of obedience. Through it we may learn of His power, as displayed in His works and His Word. But today the world is following the example of those that lived before the flood. Now, as then, men choose to follow their own inclinations, rather than to obey the commandments of God. The inhabitants of the antediluvian world glorified themselves instead of commemorating the glorious works of creation. They did not obey the law of God; they did not honor the Sabbath. Had they done this, they would have recognized their duty to their Creator. This was the original and supreme object of the command, ‘Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.’”¹

The Re-introduction of the Sabbath Rest

Why did God wait till He had a chosen people before making explicit the meaning of the Sabbath?

- That is not clear.
- BUT – when it was re-explained and set in stone, it was with the admonition to *“Remember the Sabbath”* related to the creation.
- The link with its original purpose was confirmed and validated.

“Hallowed by the Creator's rest and blessing, the Sabbath was kept by Adam in his innocence in holy Eden; by Adam, fallen yet repentant, when he was driven from his hap-

¹ White, Ellen G.; *The Signs of the Times*, March 31, 1898.

py estate. It was kept by all the patriarchs, from Abel to righteous Noah, to Abraham, to Jacob. When the chosen people were in bondage in Egypt, many, in the midst of prevailing idolatry, lost their knowledge of God's law; but when the Lord delivered Israel, He proclaimed His law in awful grandeur to the assembled multitude, that they might know His will and fear and obey Him forever.”²

When did God first confirm that Creation link?

- Between the Red Sea and Mt. Sinai He provided manna to a complaining multitude (Exodus 16:18-26)
- It reminded Israel of His creative power.
- It reminded them also of that sacred seventh.

Egypt became a symbol for wickedness – this earth.

- Deliverance from Egypt was celebrated by the Passover.
- Then God added a wonderful new reason to keep the Sabbath.
- *“And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and [that] the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day”* (Deuteronomy 5:15).
 - It not only honored the Creation past
 - But now is to honor the recreation future
 - Man’s deliverance was now tied to the Sabbath.

The Sabbath is a prophecy of what man might become through Jesus Christ.

- Thus, it became a unique identifier of loyalty to Him.
- *“Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you.... Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed”* (Exodus 31:13, 16-17).

In the Sabbath, God is seen as a liberator, an emancipator.

- Thus, it is a sign of the covenant.
- It unites God’s law with His grace that cleanses.
- God was enthroned between the cherubim (Psalms 80:1, 99:1).
 - When blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat seven times on Atonement Day (Leviticus 16:15-16)
 - It brought cleansing:

God Blood Law	}	Suddenly came together
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² White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, p. 453.

- Christ provides yet today the link between God’s standard and His throne.
- “*And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled [it] on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words*” (Exodus 24:8; cf. Hebrews 9:19).
- The Sabbath brings honor to that covenant restoration theme.

New Sabbaths were Given to Israel

The march from Egypt to Canaan was to have been fairly brief (a few months).

- At Sinai the structure of the Theocracy was established.
- Camp order and worship rites were all implemented.
- Then 40 years of wandering because of rebellion.

God then introduced a special plan for a ***Sabbatical year*** called in Hebrew the ***Shemita***.

- This was to be observed ***only after*** they entered the Promise Land (just like the feasts).
- It would be a celebration ***in Canaan***.
- Every seventh year was to be a Sabbath “unto the Lord” (Leviticus 25:1-7).

From a *wandering people* to the *nation of Israel*, it afforded God the chance for His people to recognize special principles of His kingdom.

- Citizenry of the earthly Canaan would represent
 - Citizenry of the heavenly Canaan
- Only through a sacred seventh year could God fully reveal the holiness of that final deliverance.

God didn’t stop this special instruction here.

- Ten represents a complete number in God’s prophetic plan.
- When seven *Shemitas* were completed (49 years), the next year would also be a Sabbath – called the *Yovel*.

The *Yovel* was called a Jubilee Year – a Sabbath of Sabbaths.

When ten of these 49 Jubilee cycles are complete, we have 490 years, which show up later in God’s restoration plan in Daniel 9.

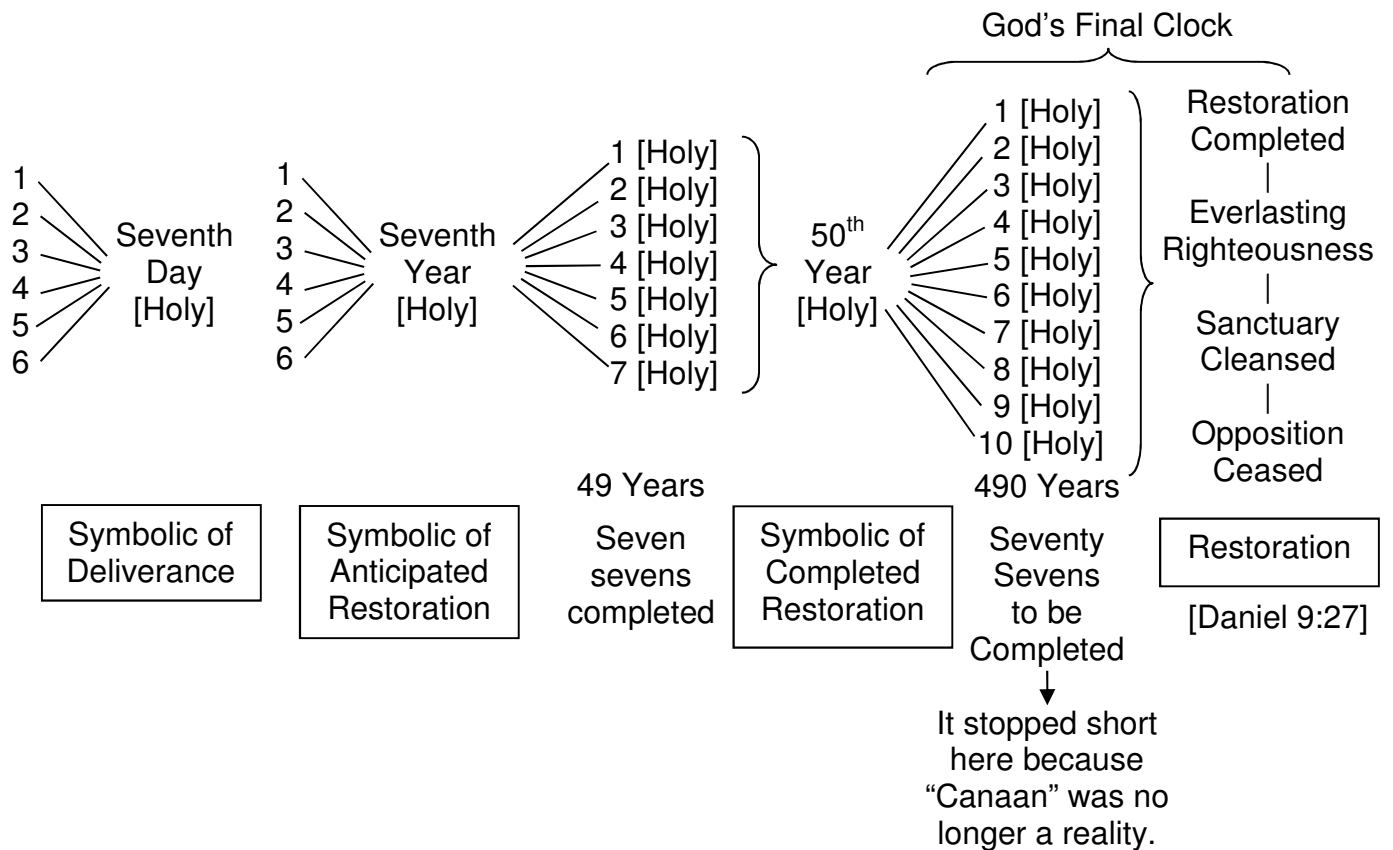
Why did God need more Sabbaths?

Why did He permit a pagan king to destroy Jerusalem, kill thousands and take the inhabitants of Judah captive over a lack of the *Shemita* observance? (II Chronicles 36:20-21).

Are those Sabbaths of any special value to us today?

- There is something vital we must discover.
- There must be something more than a liturgical Jewish worship in that Sabbath year.

First, there is this pattern – it *is* symbolic of God’s redemptive, forward-moving clocks:



Seven is the number of holiness

Ten is the number of completion

How does this process fit into God’s scheme of redemption?

Why were each of these steps dovetailed into the other?

Were the *Shemita* clocks to go on indefinitely?

Were the Jubilees to recycle without a *predicted* end?

The Story Begins with the Babylonian Captivity

In Nebuchadnezzar’s first year of reign, Jeremiah prophesied warnings because Judah had:

- “Not harkened, nor inclined your ear to hear” (Jeremiah 25:4).
- And did not turn “from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land” (Jeremiah 25:5).

God will use Nebuchadnezzar as His “servant” (Jeremiah 25:9).

- And “this whole land shall be a desolation.”
- They will serve this Babylonian king 70 years (25:11).
- Deliverance would come at the end of 70 years (29:13).

What was God’s wrath against His people over?

- It related to improper land use (Jeremiah 25:5).
- It related to idolatry (Jeremiah 25:6).
- The great records, called the Chronicles, *refines* our understanding.

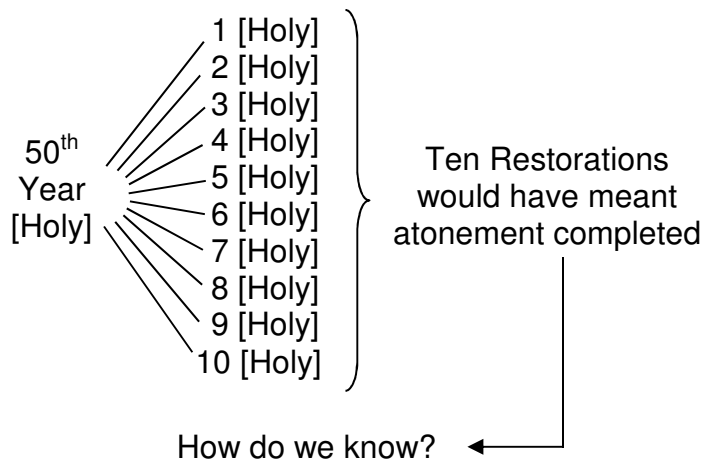
“And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: [for] as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years” (II Chronicles 36:20-21).

Idolatry led to other gods – that, in turn, led them away from the *Shemita* or Sabbatical Year.

- This was symbolically expressed “so the land could not enjoy her Sabbaths.”
- *Something urgently important is being conveyed.*

Seventy years in Babylonian captivity under heathen kings:

- One year for each *Shemita* missed (70).
- How many years did that cover? 490.
- That is *ten Jubilees*.



Daniel 9 tells us:

- Daniel’s people, representing all of God’s people – spiritual Israel (12:1).³
- Are given another chance of 490 years, 70 *Shemitas*, 10 Jubilees.

³ Keil, C. F.; Delitzsch, F.; *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Henderson Publishers, Massachusetts), vol. 9, pp. 718-719.

Around 100 B.C. the Dead Sea Scrolls of 11Q13 were written. Here is the document from column 2 of that find:



DEAD SEA SCROLLS TEXTS⁴



The Coming of Melchizedek

11Q13 – Col. 2

(...) And concerning what Scripture says, "*In this year of Jubilee you shall return, everyone of you, to your property*" (Lev. 25;13) And what is also written; "*And this is the manner of the remission; every creditor shall remit the claim that is held against a neighbor, not exacting it of a neighbor who is a member of the community, because God's remission has been proclaimed*" (Deut.15;2) the interpretation is that *it applies to the Last Days* and concerns the captives, just as Isaiah said: "*To proclaim the Jubilee to the captives*" (Isa. 61;1) (...) just as (...) and from the inheritance of Melchizedek, for (... Melchizedek) , who will return them to what is rightfully theirs. He will proclaim to them the Jubilee, thereby releasing them from the debt of all their sins. He shall proclaim this decree in the first week of the jubilee period that follows nine jubilee periods.

Then the "Day of Atonement" shall follow after the tenth jubilee period, when he shall atone for all the Sons of Light, and the people who are predestined to Melchizedek. (...) upon them (...) For ***this is the time decreed for the "Year of Melchizedek's favor,"*** and by his might he will judge God's holy ones and so *establish a righteous kingdom*, as it is written about him in the Songs of David; "*A godlike being has taken his place in the council of God; in the midst of divine beings he holds judgment.*"

(Ps. 82;1). Scripture also says about him; "*Over it take your seat in the highest heaven; A divine being will judge the peoples*" (Ps. 7;7-8) Concerning what scripture says; "*How long will you judge unjustly, and show partiality with the wicked?*" (Ps. 82:2), the interpretation applies to Belial and the spirits predestined to him, because all of them have rebelled, turning from God's precepts and so becoming utterly wicked. ***Therefore Melchizedek will thoroughly***

⁴ <http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/library/commelc.htm>

prosecute the vengeance required by God's statutes. Also, he will deliver all **the captives from the power of Belial**, and from the power of all the spirits destined to him. Allied with him will be all the "*righteous divine beings*" (Isa. 61;3).

(The ...) is that whi(ch ...all) the divine beings. The visitation is the Day of Salvation that He has decreed through Isaiah the prophet concerning all the captives, inasmuch as Scripture says, "*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion "Your divine being reigns."*" (Isa. 52;7). This scriptures interpretation: "*the mountains*" are the prophets, they who were sent to proclaim God's truth and to prophesy to all Israel. "**The messengers**" is the **Anointed** of the spirit, of whom Daniel spoke; "**After the sixty-two weeks, an Anointed shall be cut off**" (Dan. 9;26) The "*messenger who brings good news, who announces Salvation*" is the one of whom it is written; "*to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, the day of the vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn*" (Isa. 61;2).

This scripture's interpretation: he is to instruct them about all the periods of history for eternity (... and in the statutes) of the truth. (...) (... dominion) that passes from Belial and returns to the Sons of Light (....) (...) by the judgment of God, just as it is written concerning him; "*who says to Zion "Your divine being reigns"*" (Isa. 52;7) "*Zion*" is the congregation of all the sons of righteousness, who uphold the covenant and turn from walking in the way of the people. "*Your divine being*" is Melchizedek, who will deliver them from the power of Belial. Concerning what scripture says, "*Then you shall have the trumpet sounded loud; in the seventh month ...*" (Lev. 25;9). (See Appendix VI.)

What does this tell us? This group of conservative Jewish people (we assume the Essenes) concluded that the time periods of Daniel 9 are relative to:

1. The last days
2. When Melchizedek returns
3. Proclamation of a Jubilee (that follows nine others).
4. Judgment of the wicked and Belial (Satan) then occurs.
5. Associated with Him at that time will be righteous "divine" beings.
6. All this will be announced by an anointed messenger after 62 weeks.
7. This messenger and prophecy concern periods of history related to the first Advent but culminates at the end of all things.
8. Then the trumpet will sound in the seventh month.

Most scholars view this document as referring to the *very end of time*, when Daniel 9 timing prophecies finally come to an end.

- This is not dispensationalism.
- It is textual exegesis of the expressions and references used.
- Intriguingly, a book with earmarks of spiritualism, called the Uranta Book, agrees with this also.
- Satan (belial) knows when his time is short.

The 490-year prophecy appears to have a final application at the very end when a tenth Jubilee occurs.

- “*Whatever is to come has been already, and God summons each event back in its turn*” (Ecclesiastes 3:15 – NEB).
- This would fit the tarrying time concept when a waiting period ends at the time Jesus announces “time will no longer be [delayed]” (Revelation 10:6b; cf. Habakkuk 2:2-3).
- He makes this announcement in the context of Sabbath language – it is as if He is announcing “let’s move forward to the *Shemita* Sabbath and finally the *Yovel* Sabbath so long awaited.”
- What follows in this Revelation 10 message?
- Two three-and-a-half-year prophecies related to the time of trouble (Revelation 11:2-3), representing *two events* during a *single time period*.
- That period contextually is the final time remaining on the clock (the last year – a *Shemita*) – then Jesus returns (Revelation 11:12).

Thus, the *Shemita* Sabbath would bring a time the *land begins to rest* – or in the very end – *becomes desolate*. This would coincide with the first four Trumpets and the sixth Seal.

- The weight of evidence suggests that from Trumpet One into Jacob’s Trouble and deliverance is one year.

The *Yovel* Sabbath would be the time when complete liberty of God’s people becomes a final reality. The afternoon of the 49th Day of Atonement (or seventh *Shemita* cycle) the Jubilee began.

- It would be the ultimate time when God’s corporate body is complete and holy.
- Let’s explore this issue deeper.

Salvic Meaning of the Land Rest

The *first key* to how the Sabbath year and Jubilee were to be *unique periods* came from *three* guidelines related to their observance (Leviticus 25:1-7; Exodus 23:10-11; Deuteronomy 15:1-6, 31:10-13).

1. God ***must have*** a special people or “host” to make it effective.
2. God’s people must be *in* the Promised Land – to associate it with a land at rest.
3. The Sabbath relates to “*land use*” directives.

Repeatedly, ***God’s Shemita*** instruction uses the Sabbath as a metaphor tied to *land directives*: “*shall the land keep a Sabbath,*” “*a Sabbath of rest to the land,*” “*the Sabbath of the land shall be meat for you.*”

- The Executive Committee of the Jewish encyclopedia noted: “The septennate or seventh year and the laws regarding the Jubilee were so important, like the Decalogue, they were ascribed to the legislation of Mount Sinai.”⁵

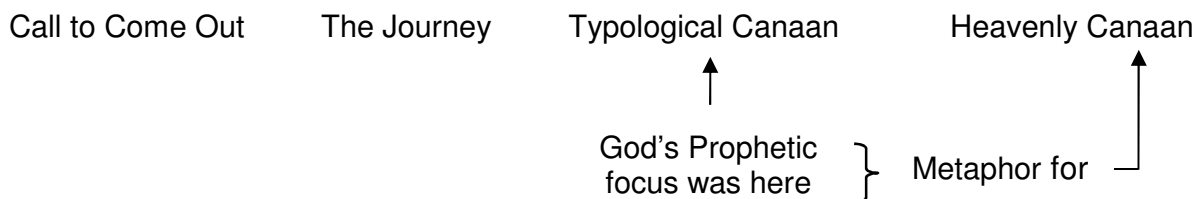
⁵ jewishencyclopedia.com – “*Shemita*.”

- Those Sabbaths would not, however, be observed for 40 years (a full generation) – because of the three restrictive points noted above.

We get an introductory meaning to these Sabbaths by looking at Abraham:

- He was chosen to **leave** Ur and **journey** to Canaan, the Promised Land.
- “*Get thee out of thy country ... unto a land*” (Genesis 12:1).

Paul later said: “*By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God*” (Hebrews 11:7-10 – NIV).



Jacob, after his ladder dream between earthly Canaan and heavenly Canaan, said:

- “*Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven*” (Genesis 28:16-17).
- Canaan was more than a geographic promise – it was to be the “gate to heaven,” where eternal promises awaited.

The “land” became a prophetic reminder of the covenant promise:

- When Israel would arrive at their “inheritance” – Canaan
- A new and deeper significance was to come to the “land of promise,” which was begun with Abraham.
- God wanted *special time* in that land where the “Land of Promise”
 - Would not have any work or secular activity
 - Would get them as close to the typology of the heavenly Canaan as possible

Thus – the *Shemita* land Sabbath and the *Yovel* Sabbath.

- Israel had 40 years to prepare for that wonderful time and experience.
- When they arrived, God stipulated that during the seventh year (Leviticus 25:1-7):
 1. The land was to rest.
 2. No crops could be planted – no harvest made.
 3. Permanent vines (i.e., grapes) and trees (i.e., olive) were to remain unpruned and
 4. All the people – everyone – could glean from the fields, vines and trees.
 5. The land became, in essence, a borderless place.
 6. All Israeli debts were to be forgiven (Deuteronomy 15:1).

7. At *Yovel* slaves were released and purchased land was returned to original tribal owner/families.

God miraculously provided excess crops on the sixth (man's day), so the seventh (God's day) and at *Yovel* (God's super Sabbath), the eighth, there would be enough food for all.

- The people were reminded that the land was really His.
- They saw the provisions He provided miraculously.
- Property and plants were accessible to everyone.

Suddenly, everyone was equal, at peace and free.

In the great prayer of Christ, recorded in John 17, He asked regarding His people (He is now one with them):

- That they might be one (vss 20-23)
- That they might be gifted to enter the heavenly Canaan (vs 24) (they were figuratively no longer in the world – vs 11).

The *Shemita* and *Yovel*

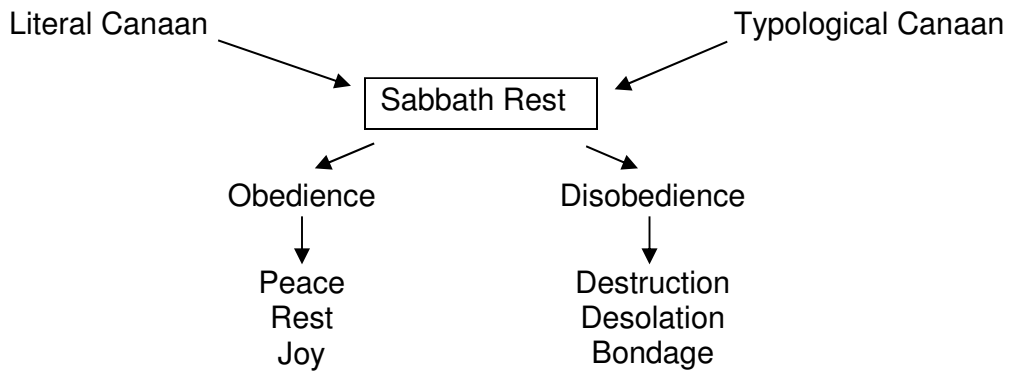
1. Tested man's dependence on God
2. Put a check on his aggressiveness to attain and achieve
3. Revealed the importance of how sacred God's laws are
4. Added a new dimension to the Sabbath
5. Became a metaphor of the heavenly Canaan
6. Represented the ultimate bonding with heaven and each other

Conditional Promise and Loss

The *Shemita* Sabbath and *Yovel* sacredness were so important and such holy events that God warned:

- The people would be destroyed
- And the land made desolate
- IF – they dishonored His Sabbath commands (Deuteronomy 28:63-67)
 - “I will make your cities waste” (Leviticus 26:31, 33)
 - “Bring your sanctuaries into desolation” (Leviticus 26:31)
 - “Bring your land into desolation” (Leviticus 26:32-33)

God had prophetically warned through Jeremiah that this would occur (25:11).



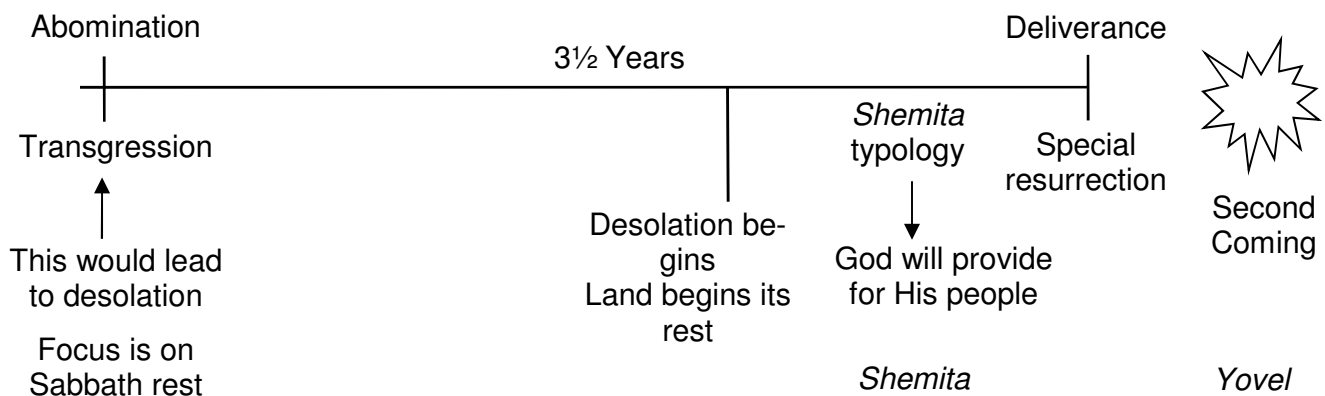
- As long as it lay desolate, the land would rest and enjoy her Sabbaths (Leviticus 26:34-35).
- Land rest [*eres – Shabbath (Shabbat)*] is a metaphor for all Sabbath rest.

Daniel talks of a sin (transgression) that leads to desolation and an abomination that leads to desolation.

- Both represent mockery of the seventh-day Sabbath at the end of time.
- What happened to Judah over the sabbatical year is symbolic for what will occur to those dishonoring the Sabbath day at the end.

A **special three-and-a-half-year period** lies ahead to bring honor back to that Sabbath, put away sin and reconcile all issues related to iniquity.

- It is during that 42 months that the *Shemita* will once again have significance – this time with special prophetic meaning.
- It is right after that *Shemita* that the *Yovel* will have its final significance.



APPENDIX V

ABOMINATION ASSOCIATED WITH DESOLATION

Only at the *es qes* – time of the end!

Introduction

It may be one of the Bible's most frightening words! It describes how God **feels** about a behavior or a worship practice that He despises. When He calls something an "abomination," you know He has raised His voice. He uses such language against cross-dressers (Deuteronomy 22:5). Solomon lists seven things that the Lord hates: "Yea, seven are abomination[s] to him" (Proverbs 6:16-19). "Lying lips" are an abomination to the Lord (Proverbs 12:22). He also hates heathen idols – they are an abomination (Deuteronomy 12:29-32). That is an especially sensitive issue with our sovereign God!

There are many deep religious issues that God addresses with this word. Even "new moons," Sabbaths and church gatherings are abominations if the worship experience is filled with vain oblations or liturgical mysteries (Isaiah 1:13). Jeremiah noted that building edifices to worship Baal in "high places" and causing children to walk through fire to the god Molech (Jeremiah 32:35) was an abomination. Molech was a heathen deity of the Ammonites. Babies were placed into the red hot hands of Molech's statute and sacrificed. Baal had been adopted from the Phoenicians. It morphed into many forms in different cultures. But everywhere its place of honor was on a hill or an elevated eminence so the *heavens* could be seen and worshiped, *especially the sun*. Many ancient records even equate Baal worship with sun worship.

An abomination always represents something God **detests**. Frequently the issue relates to a *substitute* of Himself or something that tarnishes His character. The matters He abhors also include *changing what He has irrevocably instituted*. That is why homosexuality is an abomination to Him (Leviticus 20:13). It is a *substitute* for God's plan of sexuality. It changes the nature and meaning of procreation instituted in Eden.

Jesus Points Out "the" Abomination

The pivotal time Jesus addressed a detestable matter was in His expose regarding the "end of time." The disciples had inquired what signs would tell them that the end of the world was about to arrive and what clue would reveal that His second advent was imminent. They also asked the "when" question. He unfolded crucial information in Matthew 24:15 (cf. Mark 13:14) that should rivet every Christian's attention. Those verses come right in the middle of other timing clues that tell "when" the end of time will occur. "*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:)*" Matthew 24:15.

Jesus revealed in literal and typological language that there would be two ends of time.

1. When **physical** Jerusalem would fall
2. When **spiritual** Babylon would fall

Each of those, He said, would be preceded by an “abomination” (*bdelugma*); the latter *had already been detailed* by Daniel. That tie is found in chapters 8–12 of his book. Then Jesus personified this abomination by saying, “It stands where it shouldn’t be” (Mark 13:14 – paraphrased). Matthew also said that the abomination is a sign of the end when it “stands in the holy place” (Matthew 24:15). Something God hates comes into the very precincts of the church. It will be specific and definable, and becomes a warning to God’s true people – the remnant.

An additional clue to its meaning is: “Ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies” (Luke 21:20). That was a literal event in 68-70 A.D. A literal event often becomes a great spiritual metaphor for the very end of time! Often words or phrases illustrate deep truths which act like mini-prophecies. They become God’s coded way of conveying, to a serious Bible student, wonderful messages about the future. The word “Jerusalem” is also in that category. It was literal. But Jesus personified it in Matthew 23:37: “*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!*” There, Jerusalem is a symbol of *God’s people*. When enemies surround Jerusalem (God’s people), they will soon stand where they shouldn’t be and finally come right into the church.

The key introductory statement that begins Jesus’ “abomination” message is that timing word “when.” “When you see” – it will be apparent. It will be so obvious, it shouldn’t be missed. “When” you are aware that something detestable to God:

1. Takes its place among God’s people where it shouldn’t
2. Armies ready to impose their will or presence on them
 - You will know that a time of supreme danger has arrived.
 - It is time for you to act.

We can historically see that when Jerusalem, now seen as an apostate city, was surrounded by armies (beginning in 68 A.D.), it was about to fall (three-and-a-half-year period). To His faithful, that was the “when” sign that gave them a chance to escape, to “come out.” In Revelation there is a message to another apostate “city:” “Babylon is fallen, *come out* of her my people” – escape.

The “Holy Place” (Matthew 24:15), when apostasy comes in, refers to the sanctuary, temple or church – at the very center of religious activity. That “abomination” is what His people are to urgently distance themselves from – “come out of her.” What detestable *element* comes into God’s church that destroys its purity? In Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus doesn’t say. He only urges, “Go to Daniel.”

Originally, the Jewish phrase “abomination of desolation” was an expression of contempt towards the heathen deity Zeus or Baal. The pagans referred to Zeus as “Lord of Heaven.” The Jews referred to



Zeus

him as *siqqus somem* – the “abomination which desolates.” The sky, celestial bodies, especially the sun were part of that worship.¹

We will find that worship in a way God didn’t command, tied to sun worship, is the abomination He is referencing.

Daniel Picks Up the Story

The word “desolation” (*somen* or *shamen*) is found in seven places in Daniel. It simply means **nothing is left**. Except for one (9:27), all the references *relate to* the consequences of an *abomination* or *sin*. This word is a helpful key in our quest to understand this “abomination.” It all begins when Gabriel asks Jesus about the little horn vision that Daniel just saw (8:13) (that relates to the end-time antichrist). His key question relates to the little horn and its behavior. Daniel was told *in this vision setting*:

The Little Horn of Daniel 8:

1. Came from the north (vs 9)
2. Had power against the host of heaven (vs 10) – mighty power not of himself (vs 24) (it came from Satan) – “Host” is God’s people
3. Persecuted them (vs 10) – even destroyed the holy people (vs 24)
4. Magnified himself to the prince of that host (vs 11) – Shall magnify (arrogant over another) himself (vs 25)
5. Then he stood up against the Prince of princes (Jesus) (vs 25)
6. This all caused the “place” of the sanctuary to be cast down (vs 11) – The place God’s church held in the world was tarnished. Gabriel now describes how!
7. Because of a “transgression,” truth was cast to the ground (vs 12). Now comes the **clue**: That “transgression” is what led to “desolation” (vs 13)!
8. All this occurs by a fierce-looking king (vs 23; cf. 11:40) (vicious in heart – another way to describe that “little horn”) at a time when “transgressors” (those promoting **this** abomination) are come in full (vs 23).

This description relates to the antichrist, who sets himself against God and sits “in the temple of God (the Christian church), showing himself that he is God” (II Thessalonians 2:4). There it is again. He “stands” or occupies a place where he shouldn’t be. He lords over the church in some remarkable way.

An antichrist, the “little horn,” not only tries to displace God, but Daniel alludes to how this is done! There is a “transgression” that casts truth to the ground. The church is filled with transgressors. More than that, in Gabriel’s follow-up timing question (8:13), he asked Jesus “when” this (the “transgression of **desolation**”) would happen. Gabriel uses a very specific word to render its meaning more precise: transgression or *pesha* (H) results in desolation. As we will see, *pesha is* the abomination.

¹ Brown, Colin; *Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI) vol. 1, pp. 74-75.

Pesha is one of several Hebrew words for sin. It has a special connotation, describing man committing a willful deed to spite God. It symbolizes rebellion, defiance by resisting God's authority. It represents an act that goes "beyond the limits" of God's law.² It also describes sin against His covenant. All this was acknowledged as one of Israel's great failures in Daniel's prayer. In Daniel 9:24a it is the first "sin" that God's people must address.

We have the misdeeds of the little horn of Daniel 8 defying Jesus, His people and truth, taking over and destroying what the sanctuary or church really represents. Now Gabriel tells us how, in arrogance, that is done *through* his questions (8:13). The "sin" or "transgression" (*pesha*) challenges:

1. God's authority
2. God's covenant
3. God's law

Where is the center of those three things? Right in the center of the Decalogue. Study especially Deuteronomy 5:12-15. This foundational apocalyptic prophecy shows that the Sabbath will be a pivotal issue at the end. Gabriel notes that that is the transgression that leads to "desolation."

The next important use of "desolation" is in Daniel's prayer: "O my God, incline thine ear and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our *desolations*." Isn't that interesting? Daniel, in great humility, acknowledges their sin and now appeals to God to rescue his people from its desolating consequences. "Look God, how **desolate** our people and land are. Respond to this plea!"

How does God respond? Through Gabriel – while Daniel was yet praying. He outlined several steps that would bring *restoration*. Amazing, amazing, the very first issue that God's people must address is *pesha* or transgression against the Sabbath! We must discover even more what that refers to!

This is so vital! It ties directly to Jesus' counsel regarding the end of time! Let's look at more verses in this chapter where "**desolation**" is used.

Daniel 9:26:

Gabriel states that the end of resistance against Jesus and the "church" or "holiness" is *desolation*.

Daniel 9:27:

The covenant will be confirmed by the Prince and God's people. The last week of the seventy weeks is split into two. One half is set aside for God to complete His part of that covenant. The other is set aside for His people to finish the covenant obligation (a separate timing study). Then a distinct thought is introduced (really like a separate paragraph).

Paraphrased: "Because abominations have spread everywhere, God is going to make everything desolate (*shamen*) at the time Jesus comes again." (The Second Coming is distinctly alluded to.)

² http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Meditations/Chata_ah/chata_ah.html

That information is astounding. The Hebrew word there for “abomination” (*shiqquwts*) is the Greek equivalent of *bdelugma*, which Jesus talked about in the gospels when He said, “Go to Daniel!” It represents something detestable or abhorrent in God’s sight. Now that we have brought together many clues from the gospels to the words “transgression” and “desolation,” we know that some abominable sin will become universal, associated with the antichrist and against God’s authority, law and covenant. In Gabriel’s question of 8:13, he noted that it “cast truth to the ground.” We will discover that it relates to a worship issue that *substitutes* a false Sabbath, something in place of God’s directive to keep the seventh day.

“Desolation” will be a focus later in 11:31 related again to the antichrist and in a stunning timing prophecy that describes the very end of all things (12:11).

Background to the “Abomination”

The word *shiqquwts* is a very strong Hebrew word. It is meant to illustrate the *extreme* seriousness and wickedness of a particular sin. God is appealing to all to see it from His perspective and not man’s (Deuteronomy 7:26).³

There’s more in Daniel that we will visit, but we have come to a point where we must discover what God specifically means by transgression/abomination. What exactly makes it so detestable? The story begins with the Creation week. Those seven days represent a divine clock. It was set into man’s flow of life by decree. Unrelated to any celestial body, God said right from the beginning that “days” would **be grouped into “sevens.”** That may seem simplistic, and perhaps it is. But God associated that week with three important issues:

1. The sixth day was related to man.
2. The seventh day was related to God.
3. The days were declared to be an *evening and morning*. That signals not only its sequence but, in sacred *redemptive thought*, they were *set apart*.

The week motif became a metaphor for many sequential prophecies of “seven.” There was a week of days (Creation week), week of months (Feast “year”), week of years (the key to understand end-time prophecy), seven weeks of years (related to man’s final probation) and a week of seven millenniums (a timeframe in which to finish the great controversy issues).

Our focus here will be on the “week of years.” God used language and phrases in that special seven-year cycle, which are like keys to unlock similar language concepts elsewhere, including the *abomination* and *desolation*. Jesus already told us that we must know those issues as it relates to the end of time.

The Sabbath was made as a grand finale to the Creation week. It was a day called “holy.” Uniquely set as a block of time within a group of seven, God designed it for the Creator and the created to communicate and enjoy each other’s company. When sin arrived, its meaning grew:

1. The Sabbath remained holy; therefore, it became a “sign” that man could become holy once again (Exodus 31:13).

³ Harris, R. Laird; *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980, p. 955.

2. It also became a *forever* promise of the covenant agreement God made *with* man that he could become holy (Exodus 31: 16-17).
3. It embodied a promise that within the Sabbath rest there would eventually come “deliverance” from sin into an eternal rest (Deuteronomy 5:12-15).

In that context we visit the “week of years.”

“And the LORD spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land. And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee, And for thy cattle, and for the beast that are in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be meat” (Leviticus 25:1-7).

Every seventh year, called a *shemita*, the land was to rest. It was far more than an agricultural order. That year was a Sabbath. It brought also *deliverance* to all Hebrews who had been bought as slaves (Exodus 21:2). The “week of years” established several principles:

1. The seventh represented deliverance.
2. The seventh symbolized restoration.
3. The seventh characterized man becoming holy, like God is holy.
4. The seventh became a great symbol of finishing the everlasting covenant.

What did God do to assure that there was adequate food for the year the land was at rest and for the following year when new crops were started? God said He would give double crop production on the *sixth*. The land would produce enough food that it would last through the seventh, into the eighth, when the new crop would be planted to harvest the ninth! God made *supernaturally clear* on the sixth that the Sabbath rest *could* be observed. He provided evidence that preparations on the sixth could be so complete that the Sabbath *could* be kept holy (Leviticus 25:20): “And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase: Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years. And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in ye shall eat *of* the old *store*.”

In this great illustration God revealed how all timing sequences of seven are to be viewed and applied. The *week of years* became typological and serves as a beautiful metaphor of redemption’s story over seven millenniums – the “week of millenniums.”

There is another amazing part to this story. Not only does the typology of the week of seven years define a success story related to the redeemed, it also includes elements which reveal the outcome of those who rebel and resist the “Sabbath” year provisions.

In Leviticus 26:14-39 God outlines what will happen to those who reject His decrees, abhor His commandments and, thus, violate the covenant. The:

1. Highways will become **desolate** (*shamen*) (vs 22)
2. Cities will lie in waste and churches will become **desolate** (vs 31)
3. The land will become **desolate** (vs 32)

Interesting! Resistance to God's "seventh" would result in "nothing left" – desolation.

God then said: As long as it (the land) lieth desolate, it will *rest* and *keep the Sabbath* because *they* did not keep the Sabbath! The desolation curse is tied directly to the Sabbath – *the sacred seventh!* Over and over the Jewish dispersion and desolation warnings relate to the great Sabbath theme.

"The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them: and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity: because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes" (Leviticus 26:43).

When desolation (*shamen* – Hebrew; or *eremosis* – Greek) is used, it is the outcome of some sin or iniquity related to despising God's laws and statutes, especially the Sabbath!

Break my sabbaths, statutes and laws (abomination)

Mock my messengers – despise their words

Scattered – bondage

Desolation

Land enjoys her Sabbaths

The *shemita* was so sacred it was the leading reason for the Babylonian captivity and desolation of Jerusalem! (II Chronicles 35:21). (When Jesus introduced us to the two ends of time, the Jews already had a lesson book from history regarding the pivotal abomination. But they weren't very attentive students.)

*"But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand.... And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay **desolate** she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years" (II Chronicles 36:16-17, 20-21).*

Desolation is the final outcome of rebellion against the Sabbath! The above sequence not only applied to the Jews, it became a symbol for how God will deal with apostasy against His Sabbath at the very end of time! This is a key prophetic concept.

Defining Look at Abomination

God's throne relates to the "north" in direction: *"Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the **north**, the city of the great King"* (Psalm 48:2). Satan,

once Lucifer, said in his heart (when he began to act on his passions) that he would ascend into heaven, exalt his throne above the stars, to be like the Most High and sit on the “mount of the congregation” (representing Zion), which is on the sides of the “**north**” (Isaiah 14:12-14).

Apostasy leads to displacement of God from His rightful place. It *stands where it ought not be*. A false leader or standard is set up symbolically in the “north,” trying to either represent God or be God. This is referred to as an abomination [*towebah* (Ezekiel) – or *shiqquwts* (Daniel)].

Ezekiel was given additional insight into the meaning of abomination. It began by his going into vision, associated with a dramatic encounter with God (Ezekiel 8:1-4). He was about to **see** and **hear** examples of things that God despises. Actions of individuals that violated the fundamental principles of a covenant relationship: “You shall have no other gods before me” and “You shall not make any idolatrous images for yourselves to worship and serve” (Exodus 20:3-6; Deuteronomy 4:1-20, 5:7-12).

Ezekiel is brought in vision to Jerusalem, symbolic of the center of God’s people. He was initially brought to the north gate of the inner temple court. The glory of God was supposed to be in that area. But in that gate was a seated statue, “an image of jealousy.” That begins the story of things God detests. God’s glory is contrasted with this pathetic statue. Yet, the statue guarded the gate that led to the inner court and temple! The Hebrew message seems to describe the statue from God’s viewpoint: “The outrageous statue of jealousy.” Its appearance provoked His jealousy, thus, the “statue of jealousy.” Amazing! In the northern gate – trying to be like God is a detestable idol!

God takes Ezekiel on a temple tour, introducing him to what “drives Him out of the sanctuary.” These are things that *stand where they ought not be*. Verse 6 begins by God asking him to “look up.” This is an eschatological phrase. Whatever historic application it might provide, there is a greater end-time typological meaning. He was to look up to the north at the statue and *then contemplate the abomination* of the people in the temple he was about to see. God then said, “You’re going to see even greater abominations.”

The flow of thought at the onset of this vision creates an anticipation of reprehensible activity. It envisions a remarkable picture of what God is extremely emotional about! Maybe we should say, “things He hates!” Ezekiel is then shown seventy elders or leaders of God’s people, each with an incense censer, worshiping crawling creatures, beasts and idols. Scene one was an idol at the north entrance to the inner court and temple. Scene two is where church leaders are worshiping idols and creatures in the temple. They were doing it in the “dark” and claimed that “God won’t see us.” But He does. He calls this another abomination (*towebah*).

The number seventy recalls the number of leaders who assisted Moses in guiding the affairs of His people (Exodus 24:1, 4; Numbers 11; 16, 24-25). Symbolically, it represents all of the key leaders of God’s church here in apostasy. In the center of this group was another individual whose name was Jaazaniah, meaning “Yahweh listens.” He apparently was a civic leader, suggesting a bond in apostasy between church and state. That is fascinating and has thematic ties to Revelation 13 and 17. God said, once again, that worse abominations were to come.

In the next scene, number three, Ezekiel comes toward the entrance of the north gate. He apparently had been inside the temple and now moves outside. The inner court is in full view. There are women sitting facing the temple (God’s house), crying over the heathen god Tam-

muz. This god was raised to life annually. Their cry is for her virility and life to return once again.

The nature of the Hebrew expression, “*the Tammuz*,” suggests that it is a chant for Tammuz, who is now dead. This means that these women are lamenting or even praying for or to the dead.

God again told Ezekiel that he would see even greater abominations. Though all are hideous and detestable to God, the last is worse than the previous!

He now is ushered into the east temple court and observes a ritual, a religious drama between the porch and altar of sacrifice. There are twenty-five men (not characterized) with their backs towards the temple. These individuals were prostrating themselves towards the sun. This represented physical homage to a celestial object. The imagery is specific – rejecting Yahweh, they gave obeisance to the sun (god). Solar or astral cults were strictly forbidden in Deuteronomy 4:19 and 17:2-5. Yet, these are God’s people worshipping the sun.

Suddenly God says, “Does this all seem trivial to my people? This, along with violence occurring in the land, has now provoked me to anger. Mercy is ended, probation closed” (Ezekiel 8:17-18 – paraphrased).

What does this collectively state regarding God’s hatred of all this specific behavior – abominations?

1. Man-made forms of worship are detestable – though it may be a tradition or even cultural.
2. Worship of nature, relics, and idols causes God to flee.
3. Prayer for and to the dead is abhorrent.
4. Worshipping the sun or any sun symbol disconnects man from God.

Worship on Sunday, the first day of the week, is a tradition that is idolatrous. It is a rebellious break from the sacred seventh. It is like turning one’s back to God’s Sabbath commands. Instead of honoring the resurrection of Jesus – something Christ never commanded – it’s like honoring the resurrection of Tammuz, which mythologically occurred annually. Sunday was also the day when the sun was honored by worship. Even in Christ’s day the Romans honored Mythrianism, where the first day was seen as sacred.

Abomination in the Cup

The harlot named “Mystery,” “Babylon the Great” of Revelation 17 had a golden cup in her hand. Gold suggests purity, perfection or flawlessness. That was its veneer. It was in her hand so that it could be offered to others. The Word says that it was “full” (*geno* – unable to fit in anymore) of abominations. What abomination (*bdelygmation*)? Jesus used the same word to relate, once again, to significant end-time issues. He referred us to Daniel (which we will once more visit). But, it has led us now to the end-time harlot, the apostate church, with abominations she spreads around the earth.

This time another clue is added to the meaning of “abominations.” It is described as the “**filthiness of her fornication**.” The Greek word for “filthiness” or “unclean thing” is *akatharta*. This

is cultic and implies an illicit relationship and/or religious blasphemy. In Revelation 16:13 John saw three **unclean** spirits going out to deceive the nations. Some deceptive or illicit religious teaching enamors the world. The saints clearly reject it because the harlot is there depicted as drunk with the blood of the saints.

The abomination refers to a religious “rite” she idolizes. *Akatharta*, with fornication (*porneras*), reveals that she is intimately relating with others over this “rite,” belief or action.

What deceptive religious teaching or philosophy does the harlot bring to the world? The clues we have reviewed regarding the abomination, desolation and uncleanness all point to a false worship related to the “sun!” God’s sacred seventh is rebelled against. As ancient Israel broke that “sacred seven,” the *shemita*, and brought desolation, so at the end, apostate Christianity breaks a Sabbath, which will lead to desolation.

The beast is a political power. The woman/harlot represents a blasphemous religious system. Slandering the name of God permeates Revelation 17. The Sabbath commandment was designed for people to “remember” God as Creator; it was designed to be a sign of His sovereign power, to be a reminder of the covenant promises and, finally, to be a symbol of deliverance from this world and restoration to God’s original purpose. We are reminded that the harlot is the mother of the *abominations* on the earth resisting this truth. It is the *pesha* found in Daniel 8.

The collective evidence suggests that the harlot, epitomizing the antichrist, is a church that leads all other churches (her daughters) into rebellion against the Sabbath. This is end-time imagery. It becomes a mark of her power and authority since the world submits to her seductive influence. The world eventually seeks to kill the saints who resist this mark. This, then, fulfills a subsequent description of what is also in the cup – the blood of God’s people.

The King of the North Connection

We were introduced to the antichrist – the papal little horn power (its second rise), back in Daniel 8. There is a sequel to that story. God uses varied symbols to describe prophetic powers and events. In chapter 11 the little horn is first referred to as a “vile person.” Then in another section, it is “king of the north.” The latter represents the *rest of the story* in Jesus’ command to look at Daniel.

This king hates God’s covenant (11:30). His practices pollute God’s sanctuary (because he *stands where it ought not be*). **Then it says that he places** or decrees the abomination that leads to desolation (11:31). This is amazing! The King of the North not only seductively pollutes the church, but is associated with a decree or law that enforces it!

The “mother church” is the Roman Catholic Church. She admits it, and the Bible supports it. But – in the latter, only in a setting of apostasy! The question is raised: Is the Roman Catholic Church interested in civil decrees to enforce Sunday keeping? If it is, the issues of that church related to the abomination would raise an alarm of fearful magnitude. It would be a fulfillment of end-time prophecy that threads its way from the very words of Jesus back to Daniel and forward to Revelation!

On July 5, 1998, the late Pope John Paul II wrote an *apostolic letter*, *Dies Domini*, of 50 plus pages. These are a few quotations:

66. "In this matter, my predecessor Pope Leo XIII in his Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* spoke of Sunday rest as a worker's right which the State must guarantee." (110)
67. "Therefore, also in the particular circumstances of our own time, ***Christians will naturally strive to ensure that civil legislation respects their duty to keep Sunday holy.***"
47. "Even if in the earliest times it was not judged necessary to be prescriptive, the Church has not ceased to confirm this obligation of conscience, which rises from the inner need felt so strongly by the Christians of the first centuries. It was only later, faced with the half-heartedness of negligence of some, that ***the Church had to make explicit the duty to attend Sunday Mass: more often than not, this was done in the form of exhortation, but at times the Church had to resort to specific canonical precepts.***"
- "The present Code reiterates this, saying that 'on Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to attend Mass.' (82) ***This legislation has normally been understood as entailing a grave obligation: this is the teaching of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, (83) and it is easy to understand why if we keep in mind how vital Sunday is for the Christian life.***"
48. Bishops must ensure that Christians appreciate Sunday. [Hmmm, how does that happen? By using the power of civil law – decrees!]

This document was a communiqué to Catholic Church leaders around the world and directly reflects the ties that Daniel predicted would come at the end of time! Rebellion against the Sabbath is a detestable issue with God. He ties it to the words *pesha* and *shiqquwts*, which prophetically leads to utter *desolation*.

This all happens when the "daily" or true Sabbath is taken away. Daniel's message is nearly finished. There is one more factoid that is vital to the understanding of the abomination. God tells us how long that decree to observe a false sabbath will last.

From the onset of the decree or command to take away the "daily" and set up the abomination which makes the desolation of the earth will be 1290 days (12:11). That represents the last segment of time before Jesus returns (another study).

What an amazing amount of information tucked into the crevasses of so many prophecies. They all have a *consistent* message. They all define how God addresses the Sabbath. It is clear – its holiness never changes. Equally important, it is the pivotal issue at the end of time.

Coming now full circle, we return to Matthew 24. In verse 20 Jesus invited His people to "pray that your flight (escape) be not ... on the Sabbath day." Why? It would make observing that sacred day difficult. Jesus is consistent. This end-time issue is not Sabbaths (plural). The grand finale of history relates to a single holy day that began at Creation week a little over 6000 years ago.

APPENDIX VI

PROPHETIC ALLUSIONS TO THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

(144,000 – 12 TRIBES)

A Moral “Dilemma”

Satan had been cast out of heaven like a bolt of lightning (Luke 10:18). John the Revelator saw him as a star that had fallen from heaven to earth (Revelation 9:1 – written in past tense). When the decision to terminate heaven’s Luciferian conflict came, Satan’s separation occurred instantly. This brought an intensified spirit of revenge to that pernicious heart. He then began his earthly mission of deception and terror against mankind, seeking to instill distrust against God, whom he now hated perfectly. Man succumbed to his specious work and veiled treachery.

- God activated a plan that Paul described as *“the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal”* (Romans 16:25).
- It required Christ to become a man – *“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory”* (I Timothy 3:16).
- This “mystery” was introduced by a series of prophecies that would be given over a 4000-year period – which revealed, by the deeper issues of this conflict, the inspiring revelation that Satan would be defeated.
- At that end, we are informed that: *“In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets”* (Revelation 10:7).

That “mystery,” though hid in ages past, was initially unfolded to God’s people – the saints – by Paul (Colossians 1:26).

- *“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory”* (Colossians 1:27).
- But much of that mystery would remain “sealed” until the “time of the end” (Daniel 12:4, 9), defined when that book would be opened and eaten (Revelation 10).
- Who are those saints, that “body” of individuals within whom Christ can actually reside? What rescue mission is activated to restore fallen man to such honor?
- Who are those who will discover and reveal at the prophetic end the final beauty of God’s character?

These questions begin a story that penetrates into the mind of God. God’s character – His glory – His thoughts – are unfolded through Christ. The redemptive plan put Him in competition

with Satan. How could a “Christ appeal” be made more attractive than a “devil appeal”? To reveal that divine mystery, Jesus had to first reside on earth as an inhabitant. Then to recover fallen man, He had to live as a man while revealing the character of God. So dramatic was this God–man move that in “taking our nature the Savior has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. Through eternal ages He is linked with us.”¹ The mystery of godliness included a divine being assuming a nature that became fully subject to heaven’s laws. The assumption of the nature of a created being as an eternal submission is almost impossible to comprehend. Christ became a singular new order of being.

That, however, confronted God with a unique problem.

Satan Becomes a Judicial Activist

1. Satan – that brilliant but scurrilous fallen star made charges against God’s laws and, thus, His character – “they were unfair,” “they couldn’t be kept,” “God really is a tyrant for having made them.” His drive to be a superior “statesman” “like the most high” (Isai-ah 14:14) unveiled his sinister intent to destabilize God’s government.
2. God’s “mystery” in presenting a Savior refuted virtually all his charges, except one. Je- sus talked about a “kingdom of God” that would come (Luke 17:20). There, He would have subjects just like He was! Jesus even said that little children represented the very nature of that kingdom (Luke 18:17). The issue: Man already had fallen. Could it be possible that a corporate body might emerge that was divine-like? Satan charged that it was impossible.
3. The very question became a legal matter. God permitted Himself to be put on trial be- fore the court of the universe. Much of prophecy that relates to the termination of sin and its provocateur and that emergent corporate kingdom is in this judicial setting.

Christ was His first star witness. Yes, He had others like Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Elijah as examples. But the covenant provisions of that kingdom were not ratified. That re- quired a signature in blood. Jesus Christ signed it. But that unresolved issue still remained: Could a “kingdom body” emerge from subjects who had been sinners? A giant 1000-year fail- ure had just occurred with the Jewish people. Was there indeed a flaw in that divine admin- istration?

Satan “had represented him [God] to man as arbitrary, stern, and unforgiving. All the misery and suffering he had brought upon man, he charged to God. He declared that man could not keep the law, and that God was arbitrary and cruel in demanding of him something that he could not do.”²

“He argued [as the chief attorney for the opposition] that man could not keep the law of God, and therefore that God had been obliged to change the laws which he had made, and had abolished the rule of his government. Satan’s work was to keep the agitation against God in progress, and keep the question to the front as to whether God was light and love or not.

¹ White, Ellen G.; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 25.

² White, Ellen G.; *The Youth’s Instructor*, February 22, 1900.

Satan had charged God with his own attributes, and thus sowed in the hearts of men the seeds of enmity against God”³

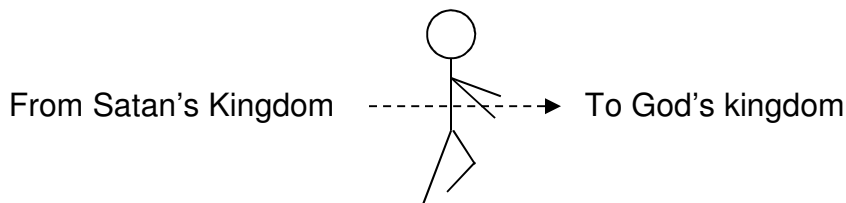
“The plan of Satan was by his lying philosophies to widen the breach that existed between God and man.”⁴

The moral law did embody demands of mankind. It was mandated within the everlasting covenant provisions (Exodus 31:16, Ecclesiastes 20:12). Its legal basis was housed in the Ark of the Covenant. But – to enjoin its moral purpose for man, “blood” had to be sprinkled on the Ark and before the Ark to cleanse sin from leaders and people. This was in anticipation of permanent atoning sacrifices. At one amazing time that blood, noted in Exodus 24:8, was even sprinkled directly “on the people,” symbolizing what must still occur at the cross. Could that loving purpose legally contain a way to transform man into Christ’s likeness? Would there be any loyal subjects to God’s kingdom from mankind that had been loyal to Satan previously? Or was the redemptive plan all symbolic and without substance?

We must then elevate our probing analysis.

Can there be a Moral People?

If so, that would imply a kingdom switch on man’s part:



Man had failed to lastingly connect with Him. Before the Cross, God’s giant Abrahamic experiment of creating a kingdom led by priests did not succeed. But a fascinating prophetic beacon of hope had previously been given Daniel:

- The last two Hebrew words in Daniel 8:14 are *qodesh nisdaq* – “holiness vindicated” (adjudicated).
- Vindicated (*nisdaq*) is passive – something **else** brings in that holiness.
- It is a committed people whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life, initially described in Daniel 9 (with details in verse 24).

At or after the end of the 2300 years a holy people (morally pure) would be recognized. Who are they? Ezekiel 9 tells us that a group will be sealed who “sigh and cry for the sins” that exist within God’s church. Who might that be? “I heard the number that were sealed: and they that were sealed were” 144,000 (Revelation 7:4).

“The sealing is a pledge from God of perfect security to His chosen ones (Ex. 31:13-17). Sealing indicates you are God’s chosen. He has appropriated you to Himself. As the sealed of God

³ White, Ellen G.; *The Signs of the Times*, March 7, 1895 (emphasis added).

⁴ *Ibid.*

we are Christ's purchased possession, and no one shall pluck us out of His hands. The seal given in the forehead is God, New Jerusalem. 'I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God' (Rev. 3:12)."⁵

The 144,000 are God's group of kingdom citizens who recover the covenant blessings He originally had given to ancient Israel. Supporting this is this beautiful note: "a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads" (Revelation 14:1). They will eternally be part of that kingdom. In fact, in Revelation the prophetic imagery portrays that they will be part of the "family of heaven." The story of a kingdom switch is foundational to all apocalyptic prophecies.

There are other fascinating allusions to this special group – let's explore that further.

The Priesthood – Moral Representatives of God

The Melchizedek priesthood is a "royal priesthood" or a kingly priesthood. It is an elevated group who serve the risen Christ who became High Priest and King of kings within that order (see *EndTime Issue... #95* – "Called to a Higher Order").

Peter unfolded what Christ's followers will become when he noted: "*Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. But ye are a **chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people**; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light*" (I Peter 2:5, 9).

This beautifully parallels John's thoughts that Christ has made us "kings and priests unto God" (Revelation 1:6). The actual Greek rendition is "hath made us to be a kingdom of priests unto God." Dominion rule will become one of the gifts awarded the saints: "*And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him [Christ]*" (Daniel 7:27). All this unequivocally reveals eventual failure of Satan's dominion.

In the royal priesthood of Melchizedek Jesus is the High Priest forever, assigned by God the Father under oath (Hebrews 6:20; 7:17, 21). Since we are a kingdom of royal priests, Jesus functions as our High Priest in that "holy nation." The priestly kingship of Jesus is described by Zechariah: "*And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both*" (Zechariah 6:12-13).

It is those who are members of the Philadelphia church who have God's name written on their foreheads (Revelation 3:19). They are the 144,000 who are standing on Mt. Sion with Jesus the Lamb (Revelation 14:1). This unique group are sealed in their foreheads and are represented as the twelve spiritual tribes of Israel (Revelation 7:4).

⁵ White, Ellen G.; *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 15, p. 225.

In a previous study, Melchizedek means: *Malki (melek) zedek (tsedeq)* – king of righteousness. Daniel was told that his people (those written in the book of life – 12:1) would bring in everlasting righteousness if they separated from sin (9:24). What is the meaning of that word “righteousness” (*tsedeq*)? The people of God become part of the Melchizedekian kingdom of priests when they come fully under the banner of Jesus. They are without fault (Revelation 14:5). They are identified as the 144,000!

A wonderful link to this end-time prophecy is found in Ezekiel. There is a special room within the courtyard of Ezekiel’s temple (God’s final pure church). This area faced north (the symbolic direction of God’s throne – Psalm 48:2). This was for a high level of priests called Zadok (*tsadowq* – related to *tsedeq* – righteousness)!

The Zadokites were an elevated class of priests tied to Solomon’s temple. They were a group loyal to the covenant principles. In an archeological find in 1896, the Zadokite fragments were discovered – now in Cambridge University Library. In those documents (still being analyzed) the Zadoks were noted as the “elect of Israel.”⁶

In Ezekiel, these leaders were the only ones who could officiate at the altar, gate and in the temple. *“It shall be for the priests that are sanctified of the sons of Zadok; which have kept my charge, which went not astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray”* (Ezekiel 48:11).

The priesthood of Zadok is symbolic of the 144,000. Those will become the firstfruits unto God who are translated. They will eternally be represented as an “elect” group to God forever.

“Why were they [the 144,000] so specially singled out? Because they had to stand with a wonderful truth right before the whole world, and receive their opposition. And while receiving this opposition they were to remember that they were sons and daughters of God, that they must have Christ formed within them, the hope of glory. They were ever keeping in view the great and blessed hope that is before them. What is it? It is an eternal weight of glory. Nothing could surpass it.”⁷

Unlike the Levitical priesthood, no one belongs to this royal order by right of birth. Membership depends on qualification and loyalty to God’s constitution.

The “Remnant” – The Part that is Saved

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17).

The “remnant” are the final, converted group of people who are also called saints (Revelation 14:12). Those “living saints” are the 144,000.⁸

⁶ Tenney, Merrill C.; *Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, vol. 5, p. 1029 (Zondervan; Grand Rapids, MI), 1937.

⁷ White, Ellen G.; *Sermons and Talks*, vol. 1, pp. 72-73.

⁸ White, Ellen G.; *A Word to the Little Flock*, p. 14.

“As the people of God afflict their souls before Him, pleading for purity of heart, the command is given, ‘Take away the filthy garments’ from them, and the encouraging words are spoken, ‘Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment’ (Zech. 3:4). The spotless robe of Christ’s righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, yet faithful children of God. The despised **remnant** are clothed in glorious apparel, nevermore to be defiled by the corruptions of the world. Their names are retained in the Lamb’s book of life, enrolled among the faithful of all ages. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon’s roar. Now they are eternally secure from the tempter’s devices. Their sins are transferred to the originator of sin. And the **remnant** are not only pardoned and accepted, but honored. ‘A fair miter’ is set upon their heads. They are to be as kings and priests unto God. While Satan was urging his accusations and seeking to destroy this company, holy angels, unseen, were passing to and fro, placing upon them the seal of the living God.”⁹

“Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved” (Romans 9:27; cf. Isaiah 10:22).

These “remnant” are the ones who will be among the great multitude around the throne.

“And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 7:14).

Spiritual Israel – Metaphor for the “Israel” that Succeeds

God’s corporate body comes from both Jews and Gentiles. They are not identified by ethnic, parental or geographical differences. The 144,000 are a vast spiritual assembly tied symbolically to the twelve tribes of Israel. They are spiritual Israel.

“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:29). James gave one of the most convincing Scriptures proving that the apostles viewed those tribes in a spiritual sense. *“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greetings”* (James 1:1). The content of James’ letter is clearly addressed to Christians, and yet he plainly refers to them as spiritual Jews from the twelve tribes.

The 144,000 are made up of *“all the tribes of the children of Israel”* (Revelation 7:4). This group is so deeply committed to Jesus that the Bible says they *“follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth”* (Revelation 14:4).

*“The Lord has a people on the earth, who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. He has His thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Such will stand with Him on Mount Zion. But they must stand on this earth, girded with the whole armor, ready to engage in the work of saving those who are ready to perish.”*¹⁰

This leads us to another beautiful illustration of the 144,000:

⁹ White, Ellen G.; *Lift Him Up*, p. 377, 1908 (emphasis added).

¹⁰ White, Ellen G.; *In Heavenly Places*, p. 298.

A White Horse – A People Who are Righteous

In the Seven Seals of Revelation, the first four are accompanied by invitations to John to “come and see.” This comes from each of the four living creatures. Their symbolic heads (Revelation 4:7) represent the banners of the **lead** tribes of Israel. In turn, this end-time prophecy reveals that those creatures and the accompanying four horses represent the four key “tribal” players in the final conflict in earth’s history.

When the first Seal is broken the creature with the lion’s face says: “Come and see.” That tribe heads the list of the 144,000. Its leader is the “Lion of the Tribe of Judah.” Then John sees a white horse (Revelation 6:2).

- White is purity (Psalm 51:7), perfect righteousness of Christ (Revelation 7:14), victory (Isaiah 1:18), holiness (Revelation 7:13).
- The horse symbolizes people, especially ready for battle (Song of Solomon 1:9, Isaiah 63:13, Zechariah 10:3).
- “The appearance of them *is* as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run” (Joel 2:4).
- This creature represents the 144,000 – the first key player to arrive formally ready to engage wrong.

There’s more:

- They are going forth “conquering and to conquer.”
- That’s battle language (Job 39:19-25, Psalm 76:5-6).
- That draws on the aggressive imagery of the two witnesses (Revelation 11:5-6).

Jesus is the rider and He holds a crown of victory.

- The mission **will** end in victory.
- The task **will** be finished.

The end-time scenes reveal that as the sides in the conflict draw to a close, God will have a people – pure, representing Him and who, when the battle is over, become kings and priests of the kingdom of God. That group of saints is the 144,000! God calls them priests and kings because they know and follow His “royal law.”

144,000 Prophetic Representation

Royal Priesthood
Melchizedek Priesthood
Zadok Priesthood
White Horse
Philadelphia church
The Remnant } with the great multitude
Saints }

At the very end, Satan's final charges will be refuted. How? By a people who fully represent the righteousness of Christ, the impeccable character of the Father. The revenge of Satan's hatred will become more desperate in his final months; yet, he will fail. The court of the universe will acquit God of all charges. Satan will be found guilty of sedition.

The testimony of the 144,000 will bring to the court the concluding arguments. No wonder they will be of the high order of Melchizedek!

The Final Wait

"Of the Spirit Jesus said, 'He shall glorify Me.' The Saviour came to glorify the Father by the demonstration of His love; so the Spirit was to glorify Christ by revealing His grace to the world. The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity. The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people."¹¹

"In every true believer the character of Christ is to be reproduced."¹²

"Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. **When** the character of the Saviour shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim His own."¹³ We pray that you will be of that priestly "order."

God's kingdom of love will soon triumph. Passionately strive to be one of its citizens.

¹¹ White, Ellen G.; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

¹² White, Ellen G.; *The Review and Herald*, September 25, 1894.

¹³ White, Ellen G.; *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 324.

Appendix VII

THINKING ABOUT THE APPOINTED TIME

One of the New Testament's great themes is "Christ in you," which is noted as the "hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). This casts a wonderful descriptive hue on when the Holy Spirit will eternally possess God's people.¹⁴ That is the culmination of the saving power of the gospel (Romans 1:16). That is when God's people are "saints" – "holy" – with God tabernacling within them (Romans 8:5-11).

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I Corinthians 3:16). There is soon to be a corporate body of God's people who are filled with holiness, when everlasting righteousness comes and God's character is legally and spiritually affirmed in their lives.

This elevated theme is prophetically unfolded in the *mareh* vision of Daniel 8–10 and 12! There, stunning missives reveal how the everlasting covenant will be fulfilled **and** when. This is dramatically introduced in Daniel 8:13 and 14.

Gabriel asked: When will the little horn tarnish God's church, cast truth to the ground, persecute God's people and blaspheme God (8:13). Jesus won't answer that for several years (12:11). But, in elevated language, He revealed that not until 2300 Atonement cycles have passed would *holiness be adjudicated (qodesh nisdaq)*! With intensity He wants the greater focus to be on the wonderful purpose of redemption – vindicating God through a holy people.

When man willfully gives up sin (Daniel 9:24b), the final result is the début of righteousness (*tsdeq*), which will never change. Christ, through His Spirit, will possess man once again – with man becoming His eternal and ceaseless dwelling place.

"From eternal ages it was God's purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator. Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God. Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple.... Only Christ can cleanse the soul temple. But He will not force an entrance. He comes not into the heart as to the temple of old; but He says, 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him.' Rev. 3:20. He will come, not for one day merely; for He says, 'I will dwell in them, and walk in them; ... and they shall be My people.' 'He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.' 2 Cor. 6:16; Micah 7:19. His presence will cleanse and sanctify the soul, so that it may be a holy temple unto the Lord, and 'an habitation of God through the Spirit.' Eph. 2:21, 22."¹⁵

That objective will be reached at the end by a body of individuals depicted as the "remnant" (Revelation 12:17), the "144,000" (Revelation 14:1-5), the "saints" (Revelation 14:12), even a

¹⁴ Sumney, Jerry L.; *Colossians*, (Westminster, John Knox Press, London), p. 106.

¹⁵ White, Ellen G.; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 161-162.

“white horse” (Revelation 6:2). This is **when** the mystery of God is finished (Revelation 10:7). We can now be ministers for Christ, stewards of those beautiful mysteries (I Corinthians 4:1).

Timing Markers

Within the six-thousand-year millennial flow of time, God has timing points and periods of time where prophetic missives are concentrated. This is especially true of the last three and a half years of earth’s history.

The first clue that a millennial “clock” was in God’s redemptive agenda was in Daniel 8:14. Daniel could easily know from the Torah record that by then over 3000 years had transpired since Creation and the fall. When the prophecy was given, that another 2300 years would pass until the covenant restoration **could** occur, a divine notice was announced that God’s plans for man would go beyond 5000 years. But – it also announced that a termination was anticipated.

In the next chapter, that *mareh* vision continues (Daniel 9:23). There, another time period was introduced by Gabriel. He had already told Daniel that the *ha hazon* vision (final period of conflict between good and evil) wouldn’t end until the “appointed time” (*moed*) at the “time of the end” (*es qes*) (Daniel 8:17, 19).

But, as the *mareh* continued in chapter 9, it became clear that:

Holiness would come in → after 2300 years, related to a 490-year prophecy
AND

The end of sin would not occur until → an “appointed time” (at the time of the end)

Gabriel introduced that 490-year prophecy, strongly noting that its purpose was to see God’s people and His church give up sin and usher in eternal righteousness. Concomitantly, the matter of sin in the Most Holy (Atonement language) would be resolved (Daniel 9:24).

God does not massage time like a piece of clay. When distinct time periods are entered into as part of apocalyptic prophecy, they are precise and unyielding. Daniel 9 **is** an end-time prophecy. It pointedly reveals the conclusion of sin, when Satan’s work ceases, everlasting righteousness enters the universe and the covenant is completed. Its objective is holiness within a distinct framework of time. Daniel 8:14 already put us on notice that these objectives would not occur until after the 2300 years!

Towards the end of Scripture’s most important apocalyptic prophecy are these words:

“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” (Daniel 9:27a).

“He” refers to Messiah the Prince – Jesus Christ. A week of years or seven years is the messianic period, when the everlasting covenant will be affirmed. Affirmed or confirmed is *gabar* in the hiphil or causative tense. *Jesus was that cause.*

“He [Christ] committed to them [the disciples] the **new covenant**, by which all who receive Him become children of God, and joint heirs with Christ. By this **covenant** every blessing that heaven could bestow for this life and the life to come was theirs.”¹⁶

At the end the covenant triumphs. This is when the Second Coming of Christ is anticipated.¹⁷ This point in time was in anticipation when expositor White noted:

“The mountains shook like a reed in the wind, and cast out ragged rocks all around. The sea boiled like a pot and cast out stones upon the land. And as God spoke the day and the hour of Jesus' coming and **delivered the everlasting covenant** to His people, He spoke one sentence, and then paused, while the words were rolling through the earth.”¹⁸

“But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jeremiah 31:33).

“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people” (Hebrews 8:10, cf. 10:16-17).

A *covenant* requires an agreement between two parties. God’s condescension and death fulfilled or affirmed His part of that covenant. But it cannot be fully implemented until “the other party” accepts and applies its terms or conditions.

Here is the problem: Gabriel initially told Daniel that this prophecy was for “thy people” (Daniel 9:24a). But by the 2300-year prophecy it was already intimated that something in covenant fulfillment was amiss. That’s why later Gabriel “redefined” who “thy people” were:

“Thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book” (Daniel 12:1).

Was the purpose of this prophecy completed in 33–34 A.D.? Was everlasting righteousness established and the end of the conflict between Christ and Satan finished? Daniel 9 still awaits fulfillment. The covenant of grace is yet to be demonstrated in a body of people. Holiness is yet to be vindicated [see *EndTime Issues* on Daniel 9 – endtimeissues.com].

Scripture notes that there will be a holy people:

“These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God” (Revelation 14:4-5).

¹⁶ White, Ellen G.; *Counsels for the Church*, p. 298 (emphasis added).

¹⁷ Miller, Stephen R.; *The New American Commentary*, vol. 18 (Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), p. 270.

¹⁸ White, Ellen G.; *Early Writings*, p. 34 (emphasis added).

The Failure of a People

Jesus had gone to the temple at Jerusalem to teach. The chief priests and the elders engaged Him with two questions: “By what authority doest thou these things?” and “Who gave thee this authority?” (Matthew 21:23).

In the course of His response He said: *“Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof”* (Matthew 21:43).

Though there would be opportunity to be “grafted back in” individually (Romans 11:23), they would never be His chosen people again. He then sealed their fate by these words:

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Matthew 23:37-38).

“Jerusalem had been the child of His care, and as a tender father mourns over a wayward son, so Jesus wept over the beloved city. How can I give thee up? How can I see thee devoted to destruction? Must I let thee go to fill up the cup of thine iniquity? One soul is of such value that, in comparison with it, worlds sink into insignificance; but here was a whole nation to be lost. When the fast westering sun should pass from sight in the heavens, Jerusalem’s day of grace would be ended. While the procession was halting on the brow of Olivet, it was not yet too late for Jerusalem to repent. The angel of mercy was then folding her wings to step down from the golden throne to give place to justice and swift-coming judgment. But Christ’s great heart of love still pleaded for Jerusalem, that had scorned His mercies, despised His warnings, and was about to imbrue her hands in His blood. If Jerusalem would but repent, it was not yet too late. While the last rays of the setting sun were lingering on temple, tower, and pinnacle, would not some good angel lead her to the Saviour’s love, and avert her doom? Beautiful and unholy city, that had stoned the prophets, that had rejected the Son of God, that was locking herself by her impenitence in fetters of bondage,—her day of mercy was almost spent!”¹⁹

“When Caiaphas rent his garment, his act was significant of the place that the Jewish nation as a nation would thereafter occupy toward God. The once favored people of God were separating themselves from Him, and were fast becoming a people disowned by Jehovah. When Christ upon the cross cried out, ‘It is finished’ (John 19:30), and the veil of the temple was rent in twain, the Holy Watcher declared that the Jewish people had rejected Him who was the anti-type of all their types, the substance of all their shadows. Israel was divorced from God. Well might Caiaphas then rend his official robes, which signified that he claimed to be a representative of the great High Priest; for no longer had they any meaning for him or for the people. Well might the high priest rend his robes in horror for himself and for the nation.”²⁰

Many will conclude that the gospel did go to the Jews, showing that they were a “select” group. The commission for the spread of the gospel was very directive:

¹⁹ White, Ellen G.; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 577-578.

²⁰ White, Ellen G.; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 709.

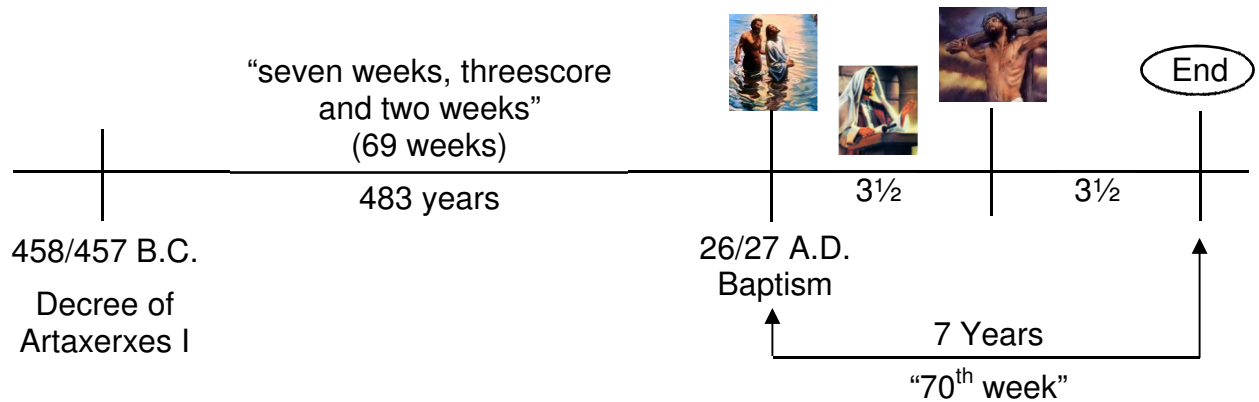
“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

The curse against the Jewish nation was pronounced and sealed (Matthew 23:1-38). In His apostolic mission statement He drew in the Judean area first, then Samaria and then the world. Nothing in that commission reversed the sentence that the Jewish nation had ceased to be His special people.

That Final “Week” is Divided

“And in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease” (Daniel 9:27b).

That seventieth week was divided in half. The Cross comes right in its middle – *“the midst of the week.”*

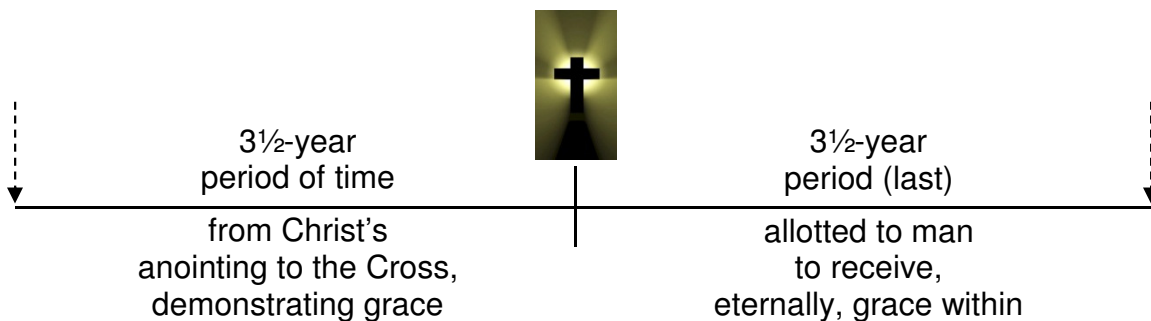


Christ completed His covenant promise. The challenge is, **When** will man?

What do those two 3 1/2 years mean?

This is one of the most contentious issues regarding the “clocks” of the Bible. Tradition and prejudice taint the beauty of this truth.

That last week:



The **purpose** of the 490-year prophecy has not yet been completed. The ministry of Christ demonstrates the meaning of grace. Man must demonstrate the transforming power of receiving grace! God purposes to have another *corporate* body that is His. A three-and-a-half-year period yet remains for that to occur. Acting against that, in Daniel 11:30-45 is a terrifying description of the operations and behavior of the antichrist.

*“And shall take away the daily [sacrifice] and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. And such as do wickedly **against the covenant** ...”* (Daniel 11:31b-32a). Everything will be done to thwart God’s objectives.

Moving into the last half of verse 27:

“And for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate” (Daniel 9:27c).

This verse is a summation of the *mareh* vision. Chapter 10 has additional *mareh* information, but it is more of a commentary, with additional thoughts and not part of the sequence we see in chapter 9. At the end of the 490-year prophecy, desolation comes because of abominations, as God had previously decreed in Daniel 8:13 (and alluded to by Jesus in Matthew 24:15). This occurs right at the very end of time.

The events related to the last three and a half years of Daniel 9 aren’t discussed. It is intimated, however, that that period is when a covenant people will come. A delay or break came at the Cross, and the timing prophecy cannot resume until Jesus announces (in future tense) *“time will no longer be [delayed]”* (Revelation 10:6). Then, a few verses later in Revelation 11:2-3, are the 42 months and the 1260 days (each equaling three and a half years).

That “break” is why there are so many three-and-a-half-year apocalyptic prophecies! They are presented in different ways to draw attention to specific issues. As examples:

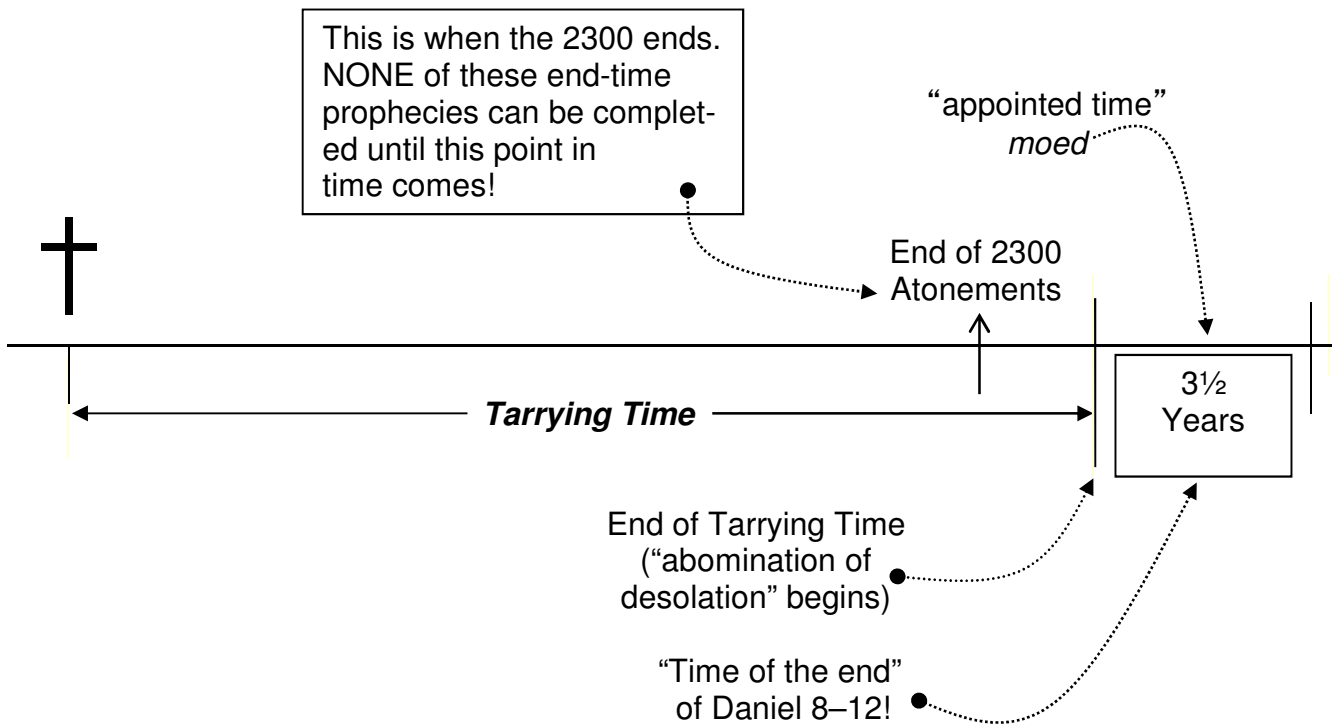
“42 months” relates to the time of persecution (Revelation 11:2, 13:5).

“1260 days” relates to the time for witnessing (Revelation 11:2)

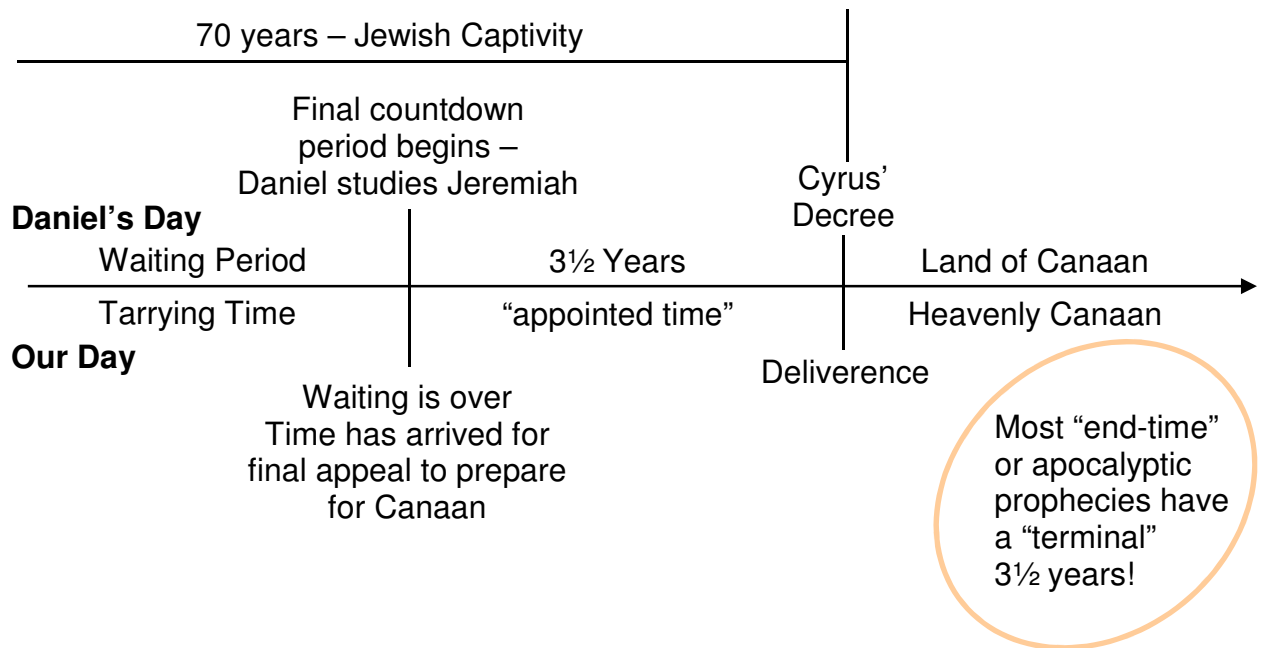
“time times half” relates to feast-cycles, drawing on Atonement imagery (Daniel 12:7, Revelation 12:14).

“appointed time” relates to God’s final prophetic period on planet earth (Habakkuk 2:2-3, Daniel 8:19) of three and a half years.

The delay is called a tarrying time (Habakkuk 2:2-3, Hebrews 10:36-37).



The following “timing model” is a “historical **and** a prophetic template,” reapplied at the very end of time!



Beyond the purpose of this document is the study of the great seventy Sabbatical years (*Shemitas*) within those 490 years, **including** 10 Jubilees. One *Shemita* and one *Jubilee* yet

remain! These add profound information to that final year of the three and a half years. Then will “commence the jubilee!”²¹

How the Three and a Half Years Must Begin

Jesus died on Passover, Abib 14, the first full moon after the spring equinox (John 19:31) (see endtimeissues.com, *Thinking about Abib* under “Articles”). That is when the Daniel 9 “clock” was put on hold – the greater end-time application. It will begin to “tick” at the “appointed time,” on a Passover, Abib 14, when a holy covenant people are prepared to go out “conquering, and to conquer,” when Jesus says that “time should be no longer [delayed]” (Revelation 10:6; cf. 11:2-3). His witnesses will be pure and “white,” with Jesus as their leader (Revelation 6:2, 10:3-7a).

“Wolff believed the coming of the Lord to be at hand, his interpretation of the prophetic periods placing the great consummation within a very few years of the time pointed out by Miller. To those who urged from the scripture, ‘Of that day and hour knoweth no man,’ that men are to know nothing concerning the nearness of the advent, Wolff replied: ‘Did our Lord say that the day and hour should never be known? Did he not give us signs of the times, in order that we may know at least the *approach* of his coming, as one knows the approach of summer by the fig-tree putting forth its leaves? Are we never to know that period, whilst he himself exhorteth not only to read Daniel the prophet but to understand him? And in that very Daniel where it is said that the words were shut up to the time of the end (which was the case in his time), and that ‘many shall run to and fro’ (a Hebrew expression for observing and thinking upon the time), and ‘*knowledge*’ (regarding that time) ‘shall be increased.’ Besides this, our Lord does not intend to say by this, that the *approach* of the time shall not be known, but that the **exact** ‘day and hour knoweth no man.’ He does say that enough shall be known by the signs of the times, to induce us to prepare for his coming, as Noah prepared the ark.”²²

“We are not impatient. If the vision tarry, wait for it, for it will surely come, it will not tarry. Although disappointed, our faith has not failed, and we have not drawn back to perdition. The *apparent tarrying* is **not so** in reality, for at the *appointed time* our Lord will come, and we will, if faithful, exclaim, ‘Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us’ (Isaiah 25:9).”²³

“The time of tarrying is almost ended. The pilgrims and strangers who have so long been seeking a better country are almost home. I feel as if I must cry aloud, Homeward bound! ‘Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.’ 2 Peter 3:14.”²⁴

That final three and a half years, then, must begin on a Passover, fitting the same template where it left off. We are reminded:

“The slaying of the Passover lamb was a shadow of the death of Christ. Says Paul: ‘Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.’ 1 Corinthians 5:7. The sheaf of first fruits, which at the time of

²¹ White, Ellen G.; *Early Writings*, p. 36

²² White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 359-360.

²³ White, Ellen G.; *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, p. 270.

²⁴ White, Ellen G.; *Our High Calling*, p. 367.

the Passover was waved before the Lord, was typical of the resurrection of Christ. Paul says, in speaking of the resurrection of the Lord and of all His people: 'Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming.' 1 Corinthians 15:23. Like the wave sheaf, which was the first ripe grain gathered before the harvest, Christ is the first fruits of that immortal harvest of redeemed ones that at the future resurrection shall be gathered into the garner of God."²⁵

"These types were fulfilled, not only as to the event, **but as to the time**. On the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month, the *very day and month* on which for fifteen long centuries the Passover lamb had been slain, Christ, having eaten the Passover with His disciples, instituted that feast which was to commemorate His own death as 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' That same night He was taken by wicked hands to be crucified and slain. And as the antitype of the wave sheaf our Lord was raised from the dead on the third day, 'the first fruits of them that slept,' a sample of all the resurrected just, whose 'vile body' shall be changed, and 'fashioned like unto His glorious body.' Verse 20; Philippians 3:21."²⁶

"In like manner the types which relate to the *second advent must be fulfilled at the time pointed out in the symbolic service."²⁷ Expositor White had keen insight into these prophetic periods!*

When might there be a Passover on a full moon on an Abib 14 that would begin this three-and-a-half-year period? There are many ways this can be ascertained. Two simple areas come from NASA and excellent Hebrew calendar resources.²⁸

Though not part of this study, Revelation 17 clearly reveals that after Pope Benedict XVI ceased his "reign," a demonic "beast" will arise that will eventually be affirmed by the ten horns or world divisions of a pending world order (Revelation 17:11-13). Also, we are nearing the end of the "one generation" timing allusion that Jesus gave related to the end-time prophecies (Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21).

As introduced by Christ on the day of crucifixion, He began its celebration on Thursday evening when the rite of communion was introduced ("In the evening he cometh with the twelve" – Matthew 14:17). Peter and John had prepared that evening to celebrate the Passover at Christ's directive (Luke 22:8). The next day, at the 9th hour (3:00 p.m.), Jesus died – before sunset. That day by the calendar was Abib 14. A Passover – full moon – in a soon to arrive spring of the year will begin God's final countdown. He then will come at the Feast of Tabernacles.

Looking Closer at the Sabbatical and Jubilee Years

The Sabbatical Year Yet to Come:

There is more to this timing issue. In the 490-year period there were 70 *Shemitas* (Sabbatical years) and 10 Jubilee periods/years. Those Sabbatical years were extremely important to God.

²⁵ White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 399-400.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ <http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/phase/phasecat.html> (last # of year searching for),
<http://www.cgsf.org/dbeattie/calendar/?roman=2012> and www.wolframalpha.com (use key words)

Every seven years, one year, that represented God's heavenly kingdom with full dependence upon Him, was set aside as a Sabbath (*Shemita*). It was choreographed as a miniature experience of heaven. Everyone's land was symbolically free to be used by others.

This *Shemita* was so important that its abuse and disgrace led to the Babylonian captivity of the Jewish people for 70 years.

"But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land," (Leviticus 25:4a).

*"And them that had escaped from the sword **carried he away** to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, **to fulfil threescore and ten years**"* (II Chronicles 36:21; cf. Jeremiah 25:11, 29:10).

They had missed 70 *Shemitas* over a 490-year period. That's why the 490-year prophecy is called the "second chance."

The last year of the three and a half years (or the seventh of that last full "week" in this Daniel 9 prophecy) is the 70th *Shemita*. That would complete the 490-year prophecy and the 70 *Shemitas* in which Gabriel had said that by the end of this period (Daniel 9:24) (important!):

1. God's people will have seen an end to transgression and sins, and reconciliation for iniquity will have occurred.
2. Everlasting righteousness will have made its debut.
3. The vision (*ha hazon*) of Satan's war against Christ and His people will have ceased.
4. And the sanctuary (implied) will have been cleansed ("anointed").

This is the time period in which "God would complete His plan of salvation."²⁹ That is when holiness is vindicated – or, better in this legal framework, adjudicated (8:14 – part of the Daniel 9 prophecy).

Intriguingly, in response to a very interesting Hebrew question of Daniel's (12:6), Jesus said that a "time, times and half" would bring an end to persecution and the antichrist era (12:7). That is three and a half years. The term used is *moed*, which implies an appointed time already set by God. Gabriel reminded us that the end comes at the appointed time (*moed*) (Daniel 8:19). This is a predetermined period of time and, again, ties to Habakkuk 2:2-3. We are reminded even in Revelation 12:14 that the period of persecution is time, times and half time, which directly relates to the finishing of the 490-year period, terminating in that Sabbatical year. That would be a year of unusual dependency on God just before Jesus comes. This likely is when we won't be able to buy and sell and when the Loud Cry sweeps over planet earth.

²⁹ Steinman, Andrew E.; *Daniel* (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis), p. 570.

That Celebrated Time – The Jubilee

But what about that tenth Jubilee? It would follow that seventieth Sabbatical year – that is, it is the 491st year. Historically, that would be 34–35 A.D. But that is never discussed in the 34–35 A.D. context, because that was only an incomplete fulfillment.

“And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family” (Leviticus 25:8-10).

Ellen G. White noted these incredible timing clocks:

“Then **commenced the jubilee**, when the land should rest. I saw the pious slave rise in triumph and victory, and shake off the chains that bound him, while his wicked master was in confusion, and knew not what to do; for the wicked could not understand the words of the voice of God. **Soon appeared** the great white cloud. It looked more lovely than ever before. On it sat the Son of Man. At first we did not see Jesus on the cloud, but as it drew near the earth, we could behold his lovely person. This cloud when it first appeared was the Sign of the Son of Man in heaven. The voice of the Son of God called forth the sleeping saints, clothed with a glorious immortality. The living saints were changed in a moment, and caught up with them in the cloudy chariot. It looked all over glorious as it rolled upwards. On either side of the chariot were wings, and beneath it wheels. And as the chariot rolled upwards, the wheels cried Holy, and the wings as they moved, cried Holy, and the retinue of Holy Angels around the cloud cried Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty. And the saints in the cloud cried Glory, Hallelujah. And the cloudy chariot rolled upwards to the Holy City. Jesus threw open the gates of the Golden City, and led us in. Here we were made welcome, for we had kept the ‘Commandments of God,’ and had a ‘right to the tree of life.’”³⁰

The Jubilee began on the Day of Atonement (after the “cleansing” process and all sins were transferred to the scapegoat). The coming of Christ is anticipated at Tabernacles. The *Shemita* or Sabbatical year began on Tishri 10 or on the great judgment day/transition time of Atonement, just preceding Tabernacles.

2016 (Tishri 10) to 2017 (Tishri 10) is a possible Sabbatical year. 2018 (Tishri 10) to 2019 (Tishri 10) is another possible Sabbatical year. These are used as examples.

Tishri 1-10	Feast of Trumpets – final call
Tishri 10	Day of Atonement – deliverance – end of the <i>Shemita</i>
Tishri 10	Jubilee begins – “then commenced the Jubilee”

It is generally held that Christ died on Passover in 31 (30) A.D. The final year or *Shemita* would have been 33–34 (32–33) A.D. for the literal or minor application.

³⁰ White, Ellen G.; *Broadside3*, April 7, 1847.

The weight of evidence mounts that somewhere between 2013 and 2015 begins the “appointed time,” making between 2016 and 2018 a Sabbatical year, when our dependency on God will be acute, and 2017 or 2019 when the *deliverance* of God’s people will occur. This is not the Second Coming.

“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:) ... For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.... ***Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:*** And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:15, 21, 29-30).

The last yearly feast is Tabernacles. That feast, intriguingly, lasted seven days.

“We all entered the cloud together, and were seven days ascending to the sea of glass, when Jesus brought the crowns and with His own right hand placed them on our heads. He gave us harps of gold and palms of victory. Here on the sea of glass the 144,000 stood in a perfect square. Some of them had very bright crowns, others not so bright. Some crowns appeared heavy with stars, while others had but few. All were perfectly satisfied with their crowns. And they were all clothed with a glorious white mantle from their shoulders to their feet. Angels were all about us as we marched over the sea of glass to the gate of the city. Jesus raised His mighty, glorious arm, laid hold of the pearly gate, swung it back on its glittering hinges, and said to us, ‘You have washed your robes in My blood, stood stiffly for My truth; enter in.’ We all marched in and felt that we had a perfect right in the city.”³¹

Conclusion

“The ***exact day and hour of Christ’s coming have not been revealed.*** The Saviour told his disciples that he himself could not make known the hour of his second appearing. But he mentioned certain events by which they might know when his coming was near. ‘There shall be signs,’ he said, ‘in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars.’ ‘The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall.’ Upon the earth, he said, there shall be ‘distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.’

“‘And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.’”³²

The thoughts of this narrative are based upon ***the weight of evidence.***

“Faith Rests Upon Evidence. – The word of the Lord, spoken through His servants, is received by many with questionings and fears. And many will defer their obedience to the warning and reproofs given, waiting till every shadow of uncertainty is removed from their minds. The unbe-

³¹ White, Ellen G.; *Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White*, p. 59.

³² White, Ellen G.; *The Review and Herald*, November 22, 1906 (emphasis added).

lief that demands perfect knowledge will never yield to the evidence that God is pleased to give. He requires of His people faith that rests upon the **weight of evidence**, not upon perfect knowledge. Those followers of Christ who accept the light that God sends them must obey the voice of God speaking to them when there are many other voices crying out against it. It requires discernment to distinguish the voice of God. – 3T 258 (1873).³³

Jesus is coming soon! The Holy Word is loaded with God's clocks to tell us what time it is. Every major event in God's dealing with man had a timing prophecy associated with it. The final days of earth's history are no exception. The events, clocks and warnings urge an irrevocable commitment to Christ.

We've looked at prophetic information based upon the "weight of evidence." We pray that God's Spirit will now lead in giving "convicting evidence."

³³ White, Ellen G.; *Mind, Character and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 535 (emphasis added).

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