

SEVENTY WEEKS PROPHECY : WHAT IT MEANS - PART 1

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Many Christians today believe that Daniel 9:24-27 is one of the most important passages of prophecy in all of Scripture. Commonly known as Daniel's Seventy Weeks Prophecy, the real meaning of this tightly-woven group of verses has been the source of debate for literally centuries. In fact, over the years, almost every single mistake I have run across where Bible prophecy is the topic of discussion, can be traced to a gross misunderstanding of these particular Bible verses.

But before we plow into the actual verses themselves, let's back up a little and review the context surrounding these verses. By the time he received this particular prophecy, the Prophet Daniel was an old man, probably in his eighties. He had been a captive in Babylon for nearly seventy years, having been taken there in his youth when Nebuchadnezzar II -- the king of Babylon -- first laid siege to Jerusalem. He in fact remained in Babylon during the reigns of several of the Babylonian, Mede and Persian -- or Achaemenian -- kings, as we can determine by the following group of Bible verses:

"In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his

god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god. And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the kings seed, and of the princes; Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the kings palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego."

Daniel 1:1-4, KJV

"And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus."

Daniel 1:21, KJV

"So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian."

Daniel 6:28, KJV

As he tells us in his own words, from reading the writings of the Prophet Jeremiah, Daniel came to understand that the seventy-year period of captivity which God had ordained for Israel due to their stiff rebellion and deep apostasy was just about over. I discuss this apostasy in great detail in such articles as the seven-part series entitled "The Fruits of Disobedience". Consider the following group of verses where Jeremiah pronounces God's judgment against Israel:

"Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Because ye have not heard my words, Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations. Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle. And this whole land

shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years."
Jeremiah 25:8-11, KJV

Regarding Daniel's discovery in the writings of the Prophet Jeremiah, we also find the following two verses in Daniel chapter nine:

"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; 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 9:1-2, KJV

As I mentioned a moment ago, the reason for the captivity in the first place had been Israel's insistence upon worshipping the many false gods of their pagan neighbors. Regarding the length of God's chastisement being seventy years, it came from the fact that for 490 years, the Israelites had failed to let their farmland lie fallow one year out of every seven as God had commanded them to do in Leviticus 25:1-7, as we see by the group of Bible verses below:

"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, KJV

As I explain in "The Fruits of Disobedience", the Lord had been very patient during all of that time. However, their rebellion, defiance and apostasy had become so great, that He finally lowered the axe of His judgment when He ordained

Nebuchadnezzar II to lay a siege against Jerusalem on three different occasions, with the final siege actually leading to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple compound itself. This would result in the second Jewish diaspora, in which many thousands of Jews were carried off as slaves to Babylon. The first diaspora -- or dispersion -- had been carried out by the Assyrians over a century earlier. Thus, in this way, the land was finally given the seventy years of rest that it required. Consider the following Bible verses which verify these points:

"Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of the LORD. And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel. Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: 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 all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. 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."

2 Chronicles 36:11-21, KJV

To continue then, as we begin reading Daniel chapter nine,

we discover that in the first nineteen verses, the Prophet Daniel is offering a sincere prayer up to God, in which he humbly acknowledges the sins of his people, recognizes God's judgments upon Israel as being righteous, and also begs God to withdraw His wrath from the Jews. Before he could finish his prayer, the Angel Gabriel appears to Daniel, and speaks the words that we know today as Daniel 9:24-27. Let's read the whole thing to get the overview and then take it apart verse by verse and phrase by phrase.

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 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. 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. 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 9:24-27, KJV

As I mentioned earlier, quite a few Christians recognize the critical importance of understanding this group of verses as they pertain to Bible prophecy. Sadly, as I amply explain in a number of other articles such as "Fight Against Futurism" and "The Last Seven Years", the problem is that because they have been deceived by the doctrines of Futurism, they have misinterpreted what the previous verses actually mean. For those of my readers who may not be familiar with Futurism, in the simplest of terms, it is a belief system which takes ancient, already-fulfilled prophecies, and places them in our current time, or in the near future, as if they have not been fulfilled yet. Doing this is a tragic mistake.

It is in fact because so many modern Christians now approach Bible prophecy from this false base, and this very misguided understanding -- meaning Futurism -- that they have become

so terribly confused. You see, if you start off on a false premise, and a false assumption, then everything you believe after that is false as well. It is just one lie built upon another, and one deception built upon another. That is just the way it works. As I said, these Daniel verses have fallen victim to the very same thing, and there are many Christians who are now convinced that Daniel's amazing prophecy has not yet been completely fulfilled, but will be fulfilled in the very near future. That is to say, during the twenty-first century.

My dear friends, if you doubt that this is so, simply visit some of the many popular social networks and see what some of those Christians are saying and teaching, and you will be convinced. There is now so much doctrinal confusion out there, that it is mind-boggling. But the real tragedy is that while many of said Christians may be very sincere and well-meaning with regard to their beliefs, nevertheless, they don't even realize that they've become deceived, and that through their actions of sharing their false beliefs, they are unknowingly spreading the deception even further.

So if Daniel's Seventy Weeks Prophecy isn't really about the near future -- meaning in our current century -- as so many Futurists erroneously believe, then exactly what is it really about? In the remainder of this article, I will be sharing my personal thoughts with you regarding this important matter. You can then decide for yourself whether or not you believe that I am correct, based on the Scriptural and the historical information I have shared with you.

The very first thing you need to understand is that not only does Daniel's prophecy have absolutely nothing to do with our current time, but contrary to what so many Futurist-leaning Christians believe, it is NOT about the world as a whole. As I have explained a number of times before, this prophecy is about Israel and the Jewish people. In fact, most of Bible prophecy centers on Israel and the Jews, although God does pronounce judgments against certain other nations as well in the pages of the Bible. Nevertheless, Israel still remains the primary focus of Bible prophecy. To reiterate, this, and many other prophecies, is most certainly NOT about America, or American Christians, or anything similar.

In fact, if you are observant, you will notice that not only is Daniel specifically praying for his Jewish countrymen in the opening verses of Daniel chapter nine, but the very first

verse in the prophecy clearly states "thy people", meaning of course, the Jews. Furthermore, there are a few other verses in the Book of Daniel which clearly reveal that all of these prophecies revolve around the fate of Israel and the Jewish people. Please consider the following three verses:

"Seventy weeks are determined upon THY PEOPLE and upon THY HOLY CITY, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy."

Daniel 9:24, KJV

"Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall THY PEOPLE in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days."

Daniel 10:14, KJV

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of THY PEOPLE: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time THY PEOPLE shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

Daniel 12:1, KJV

So tell me, my friend, are you convinced now that this is truly the case? Or do you still think that we can somehow manage to squeeze the whole world -- or at the very least America and American Christians -- into this prophecy as some Christians try to do? Okay, then. So let's start to take apart these verses and analyze them phrase by phrase and see what is revealed.

Phrase:

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city"

Explanation:

The next point that you need to understand is that in these verses, the word "weeks" does NOT literally mean a seven-day period as we understand it today. In fact, the word "weeks" is translated from the Hebrew word "shabua" -- or "shabuwa" -- which literally means "seven". Thus, we could translate the phrase as "seventy sevens" instead of as "seventy weeks".

It is obvious from the nature and contents of the prophecy itself, as well as the time in history when the prophecy was given to Daniel, that it actually signifies a total number of years, and NOT just a total number of literal weeks. In other words, each "week" is actually a period of seven years. It is similar to the way that a decade corresponds to ten years. So now it is just a matter of performing a simple math operation like the following:

$$70 \times 7 = 490 \text{ years.}$$

As we have already seen, the phrase "thy people" obviously means the Jews themselves, and the phrase "thy holy city" is obviously referring to Jerusalem. Next we are informed that during this 490-year period, the omnipotent God who reigns from Heaven as He sits upon His eternal throne has decreed that six things will be accomplished for, through and to Daniel's people. These six things are the following:

1. to finish the transgression.
2. to make an end of sins.
3. to make reconciliation for iniquity.
4. to bring in everlasting righteousness.
5. to seal up the vision and prophecy.
6. to anoint the most Holy.

As all Christians should already know, the almighty God is indeed more than capable of accomplishing all that He sets out to do. Why is that? Because there is no God like unto Him. That's why. Some of my favorite Bible verses regarding this particular subject are the following:

"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"
Numbers 23:19, KJV

"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:"

Regarding the aforementioned six points, we will come back to them in just a minute. Before getting into the meanings of the different phrases which are found in Daniel's amazing prophecy, let us first establish that the 490-year prophecy is divided into three distinct sections. Furthermore, what I have discovered is that these sections do NOT appear to be contiguous in nature. In other words, they don't happen one after the other. I have become convinced that there are gaps between each of the three sections. Lastly, God has ordained for some significant event to occur during each of the three time sections. Thus, the prophecy is divided up as follows:

07 weeks = 049 years

62 weeks = 434 years

01 week = 007 years

Total = 490 years

The next point we need to discuss is that as the Jews neared the end of their Seventy Years of Captivity in Babylon, God Almighty had already been working behind the scenes to raise up someone who would serve as their liberator from Babylon. In fact, this individual was none other than Persian king, Cyrus -- who is also known as Cyrus II or Cyrus the Great -- who had been prophesied to come by the Prophet Isaiah in the following group of Bible verses:

"Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. 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."

Isaiah 44:24-45:4, KJV

What is interesting about this is the fact that as we have seen before in the Scriptures, God is NOT limited to just using those people who are believers to perform His Will. If it suits His divine purposes, He can even use the heathen to carry out His Will. This prophecy is direct proof that this is so. After all, the reason why it became necessary in the first place, is because as I mentioned earlier, God had used heathen king Nebuchadnezzar II as His tool of chastisement to punish the Jews for their ongoing rebellion and apostasy. Furthermore, as I have mentioned before, even though he was a heathen king, God referred to Nebuchadnezzar as His servant on three occasions, as we see by the following group of Bible verses:

"Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, MY SERVANT, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations."

Jeremiah 25:7, KJV

"And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, MY SERVANT; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him."

Jeremiah 27:6, KJV

"Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying, Take great stones in thine hand, and hide them in the clay in the brickkiln, which is at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah; And say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, MY SERVANT, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid; and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them. And when he cometh, he shall smite the land of Egypt, and deliver such as are for death to death; and such as are for captivity to captivity; and such as are

for the sword to the sword."

Jeremiah 43:8-11, KJV

As we saw a minute ago, God said the very same thing when He called Cyrus to perform His divine will. You will notice at the end of the verses we just read in Isaiah 44, God clearly said to Cyrus "though thou hast not known me." So again, God will use whomsoever He will in order to carry out His divine plans.

Even today in our modern world, while people may think that who becomes the next leader of their country is based on an agreed upon popular voting system, this isn't really so. Of course, there are exceptions to the rule in the case of the dictators, authoritarian rulers, and others who are placed into power, or who grab the power, through very intentional manipulation of the voting system. Yet regardless of how a national leader comes to power, according to the Scriptures, we need to recognize that whether for good or for evil, it is God who has allowed that particular individual to rise to power, as becomes evident by the following group of verses:

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. FOR THERE IS NO POWER BUT OF GOD: THE POWERS THAT BE ARE ORDAINED OF GOD. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."

Romans 13:1-5, KJV

"Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck. For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But GOD IS THE JUDGE: HE PUTTETH DOWN ONE, AND SETTETH UP ANOTHER."

Psalms 75:5-7, KJV

"BY ME KINGS REIGN, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth."

Proverbs 8:15-16, KJV

"Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: HE REMOVETH KINGS, AND SETTETH UP KINGS: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:"

Daniel 2:20-21, KJV

"This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that THE MOST HIGH RULETH IN THE KINGDOM OF MEN, AND GIVETH IT TO WHOMSOEVER HE WILL, AND SETTETH UP OVER IT THE BASEST OF MEN."

Daniel 4:17, KJV

"I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, AND HAVE GIVEN IT UNTO WHOM IT SEEMED MEET UNTO ME."

Jeremiah 27:5, KJV

"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."

Proverbs 21:1, KJV

"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king. And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD. And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel."

1 Samuel 15:23-26, KJV

"And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost."

Acts 12:21-23, KJV

As you can see by the previous set of verses, not only does the eternal God raise up national leaders, but neither will He hesitate to demote them and remove them from power when

they no longer serve His purposes, or become displeasing in His sight. So as we have seen, as the time of liberation approached for the Jews in Babylon, God was working behind the scenes to raise up Persian king Cyrus, or Koresh, as he is known in Hebrew. As I mention in other articles, Cyrus in fact founded what would later become known as the Achaemenid Empire, thus becoming its very first "King of Kings". Being of Persian descent, he rose to power by defeating the empire of the Medes.

In fact, we see this political development being symbolized in King Nebuchadnezzar II's dream image -- which is found in the second chapter of the Book of Daniel -- by the arms and breast of silver which are located directly below the head of gold -- symbolizing Babylon -- in the statue. Just as one arm is usually stronger in the human body, Persia was also stronger than Media in the Medo-Persian Empire, and thus it eventually came to dominate.

Now that we have established all of these various Scriptural and historical points, as we continue this discussion in the second part of this series, we will continue to analyze the rest of the amazing prophecy which was given to Daniel by the Angel Gabriel.

Please go to part two for the continuation of this series.

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SEVENTY WEEKS PROPHECY : WHAT IT MEANS - PART 2

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God Raises Up Cyrus, Assyrians, Nabopolassar Nebuchadnezzar And Neo-Babylonian Empire, Cyaxares And The Medes, Nineveh Is Destroyed, Pharaoh Necho Is Defeated, Two-Faced Zedekiah, Jerusalem Falls To Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar Unable To Defeat Tyre, Nebuchadnezzar Conquers Egypt, Four More Kings

After Nebuchadnezzar, Jehoiachin Is Released By Evilmerodach, Nabonidus And Belshazzar, Medo-Persians Overcome Babylonians, Belshazzar: Writing On The Wall, Daniel Interprets Writing, Darius The Mede Takes Babylon, Daniel's Age, Battle At Opis, Did Darius The Mede Serve As Viceroy Of Babylon Under Cyrus?, Two Prophetic Visions Of Medo-Persia, Persians Were Dominant

Continuing our discussion from part one, as we have seen, as the end of the Jews' prophesied Seventy Years of Captivity was approaching its conclusion in Babylon, God was working behind the scenes to raise up a particular ruler who would liberate them from their Babylonian bondage. This was Cyrus the Great, who became the first "King of Kings" of the new Persian -- or Achaemenid -- Empire, following his victory over the Medes.

If we go back even further in history to about ninety years before Cyrus the Great signed his edict to free the Jews, we learn exactly how we arrive at this particular point. It all began with a ruler by the name of Nabopolassar, who was the founder and first king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. He was the king of Babylon from 626 BC to 605 BC, and was succeeded by his son, Nebuchadnezzar II. Prior to Nabopolassar's rise to power, Babylonia had been ruled for about a century by the Assyrians.

According to one historical source, the turning point in Assyrian dominance occurred around 626 BC with the death of King Assurbanipal, whom the Babylonians called Kandalanu. This was when Nabopolassar's reign began. Possibly being of Chaldean descent, Nabopolassar rose from the position of general in the Assyrian army. He invaded and annexed the Mesopotamian provinces of Assyria, and when Sinsharishkun -- the last King of Assyria -- tried to cut off his return and threatened Babylon, Nabopolassar received help from the Manda, who were the nomadic tribes of Kurdistan. Another source states that the Manda were actually the Medes. They were in fact the first to unify the nation as a political entity under their leader, Cyaxares, in the seventh century BC. In fact, Cyaxares was the first and only king of the Medes while Media remained a solitary empire, prior to its absorption by Persia.

As I just said, Cyaxares then joined his forces with the Babylonians under Nabopolassar to defeat the Assyrians, who

had been oppressing the Medes. The Assyrian defeat resulted in the destruction of Nineveh. The exact date of Nineveh's destruction is a small source of debate. Some scholars place it at the beginning of Nabopolassar's reign in 625 BC, while others place it towards the very end of his reign in 606 BC. The year 612 BC seems to be a commonly agreed upon date. But what is certain, is that by the time Nebuchadnezzar ascended to the throne of his father, Assyria had fallen. One very interesting side note is that within archeological circles, the ruins of Nineveh are believed to have been found in the north of Iraq near the bank of the Tigris River, opposite the modern-day city of Mosul.

Just as the Scriptures prophesy the judgment and fall of a number of different empires and nations within its pages, the Assyrian Empire was no exception. In fact, a number of God's different Prophets mention the issues, including the Prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, Nahum and Zephaniah, as we see by the following group of Bible verses:

"Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height; I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen; he shall surely deal with him: I have driven him out for his wickedness."

Ezekiel 31:10-11, KJV

"Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man . . . Behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror: and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled."

Isaiah 10:12-13, 33, KJV

"Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts; and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame. And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazingstock. And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee shall flee from

thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste: who will bemoan her? whence shall I seek comforters for thee? . . . Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria: thy nobles shall dwell in the dust: thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them. There is no healing of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous: all that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee: for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?"

Nahum 3:5-7, 18-19, KJV

"And he will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness."

Zephaniah 2:13, KJV

Regarding Cyaxares, the sole king of the Medes, there are some scholars who have suggested that he may possibly have been the Darius the Mede who is mentioned in the following verses. However, this remains a point of debate:

"But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince. Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him."

Daniel 10:21-11:1, KJV

Once the Assyria Empire had fallen, King Nebuchadnezzar next turned his attention to Egypt which had already established its beachhead in Carchemish, Syria. When proud Pharaoh Necho attempted to cross the Euphrates River to try to grab more of the former Assyrian Empire, he met with stiff resistance from Nebuchadnezzar who chased him all the way back to the borders of Egypt. This was around the year 604 BC. Upon hearing of his father's death, Nebuchadnezzar stopped his Egyptian campaign, and returned to Babylon to begin his forty-three year reign.

However, as we have already discussed, it wasn't long before Nebuchadnezzar II was forced to return to Judah to put down the rebellion which had been instigated by King Jehoiakim who foolishly refused to pay Babylonian tribute. When King Hophra -- who had succeeded Pharaoh Necho II to the Egyptian throne in about 589 BC -- secretly tried to unite all of the Syrian States in a conspiracy against Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar once again found the need to go to Judah. Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon had already entered into the confederacy; and going against Jeremiah's warnings, King Zedekiah broke his oath of

allegiance to Babylon and joined the league as well. This eventually resulted in the fall of Jerusalem in about 587 BC during the third and final Babylonian siege.

Having defeated and destroyed Jerusalem and carried the Jews captive to Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar next waged war against Tyre, which was a Phoenician island nation. As I explain in my series "Satan: King of Tyrus, King of Empires", this was likewise a judgment from the Lord because Tyre had ridiculed Jerusalem when it fell to the Babylonian king. Consider the following group of verses:

"Son of man, because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken that was the gates of the people: she is turned unto me: I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock . . . For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people."

Ezekiel 26:2-4, 7, KJV

Being as Nebuchadnezzar II could not reach the island nation due to his lack of a marine fleet, his thirteen year campaign ended in about 572 BC with only a partial victory. Therefore, a few years later, in approximately 567 BC, he invaded Egypt and let his wrath be felt there as he plundered her of her riches in fulfillment of the words of the Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel, as we see by the following Bible verses:

"The daughter of Egypt shall be confounded; she shall be delivered into the hand of the people of the north. The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saith; Behold, I will punish the multitude of No, and Pharaoh, and Egypt, with their gods, and their kings; even Pharaoh, and all them that trust in him: And I will deliver them into the hand of those that seek their lives, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of his servants: and afterward it shall be inhabited, as in the days of old, saith the LORD."

Jeremiah 46:24-26, KJV

"Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army."

Ezekiel 29:18-19, KJV

Following the conclusion of King Nebuchadnezzar II's reign in 562 BC, the Babylonian Empire had four more kings before being taken over by the Medes and the Persians. The first was Evil-Merodach, who became king in approximately 561-562 BC. Historically, he is known as Amel-Marduk, or as Awil-Marduk. He was responsible for releasing Jewish king Jehoiachin from prison after he had been in captivity for thirty-seven years. Even though Zedekiah -- the final rebellious king of Israel before the Babylonian invasion -- and his royal family were destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar, in His foresight, the Lord protected the royal blood of the tribe of Judah through the captivity of Jehoiachin and his family in Babylon, as I point out in other articles as well. Consider the following group of Bible verses:

"And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, that Evilmerodach king of Babylon in the year that he began to reign did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison; And he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon; And changed his prison garments: and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life. And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life."

2 Kings 25:27-30, KJV

After not even two years sitting on the Babylonian throne, King Evil-Merodach was overthrown and assassinated by his wicked brother-in-law, Neriglissar -- or Nergal-sar-usur -- in the year 560 BC. Although he was not directly related to Nebuchadnezzar II or to Evil-Merodach -- he was a general in Nebuchadnezzar's army -- he did marry one of Nebuchadnezzar II's daughters. But only four years later in 556 BC, he died and was thus succeeded by his young son, Labashi-Marduk, who

reigned for only one to three months before he too was also assassinated in a coup.

The conspirators who were involved in the royal coup then proclaimed Nabonidus -- or Nabu-na'id -- as the new king of Babylon. One source states that Nabonidus was the final king of Babylon and ruled from about 556 BC to 539 BC when Cyrus the Great became the first king of the Medo-Persian Empire. However, I came across yet another source which states that Belshazzar succeeded Nabonidus to the throne towards the end of Nabonidus' reign making him the final king. As I dug even deeper into this, I discovered that not only was Belshazzar the son of Nabonidus and the crown prince, but he had also most likely orchestrated the murder of Labashi-Marduk, who had been his father's predecessor.

Furthermore, while Nabonidus was away for a period of about ten years being engaged in war campaigns, and likewise in a self-imposed exile in Arabia, his son Belshazzar served as regent in Babylon in his father's stead. While such sources say that Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus, the Bible says that he was the son of Nebuchadnezzar II. However, it should be noted that the Hebrew word "ab" doesn't always mean one's physical father. It is also applied to one's forefathers or predecessors. As the son of Nabonidus, it would thus at very best make Belshazzar Nebuchadnezzar II's grandson. But even that's debatable because no historical evidence exists which points to Nabonidus belonging to Nebuchadnezzar II's family. One theory suggests that similar to Neriglissar, he may have married one of Nebuchadnezzar's daughters. Having said that, the interpretation of the following verse -- which is being spoken to Belshazzar -- is open to debate:

"There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers;"
Daniel 5:11, KJV

Just as the Lord had used Nebuchadnezzar -- "the mighty one of the heathen" as the Prophet Ezekiel referred to him -- as His sword to punish Israel and other nations, He then used the Medes and the Persians to likewise punish Babylon for her many sins in similar fashion. Again the Prophets spoke very clearly regarding these events, as we see by the following

sample Bible verses:

"Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it. Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah."

Isaiah 13:17-19, KJV

"A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease . . . And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground."

Isaiah 21:2, 9, KJV

Please note that in the previous verses, Elam is an ancient name for Persia, which, as we have already seen, is in our modern day known as Iran. Thus, the previous verses are in fact describing how the dual empire of Medo-Persia overcame the Babylonians and became the new dominant empire. Isaiah was not alone in prophesying the demise of the Babylonians. The Prophet Jeremiah also warned of the coming conquest of Babylon once the Lord had removed His sword from the hand of the Babylonian king, and placed it in the hands of the Medes and the Persians. Consider the following verses as proof of this:

"And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations."

Jeremiah 25:12, KJV

"The word that the LORD spake against Babylon and against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet. Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces. For out of the north there cometh up a nation against her, which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein: they shall

remove, they shall depart, both man and beast."

Jeremiah 50:1-3, KJV

"Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he goats before the flocks. For, lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country: and they shall set themselves in array against her; from thence she shall be taken: their arrows shall be as of a mighty expert man; none shall return in vain. And Chaldea shall be a spoil: all that spoil her shall be satisfied, saith the LORD."

Jeremiah 50:8-10, KJV

"Behold, a people shall come from the north, and a great nation, and many kings shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. They shall hold the bow and the lance: they are cruel, and will not shew mercy: their voice shall roar like the sea, and they shall ride upon horses, every one put in array, like a man to the battle, against thee, O daughter of Babylon."

Jeremiah 50:41-42, KJV

"Make bright the arrows; gather the shields: the LORD hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for his device is against Babylon, to destroy it; because it is the vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance of his temple . . . Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz; appoint a captain against her; cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillers. Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion. And the land shall tremble and sorrow: for every purpose of the LORD shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant."

Jeremiah 51:11, 27-29, KJV

Turning to the Book of Daniel, we also find the frightful warning which the Lord gave to Babylonian king Belshazzar in the fifth chapter. While Nebuchadnezzar II had greatly sinned by stealing the sacred vessels from the temple in Jerusalem, and placed them in his own temple in Babylon, Belshazzar sinned even more greatly when he ordered the sacred vessels be brought, so that he and his wives and his concubines could drink wine out of them. Belshazzar

was so very frightened, that he ordered that someone be called who could interpret the words which had been seen on the wall.

But none of Belshazzar's astrologers, soothsayers or wise men could interpret what the king had seen. Finally, the queen brought to the king's attention that a wise man by the name of Daniel had been brought into the kingdom by his father, Nebuchadnezzar. Let me mention that in Daniel chapter five, Belshazzar is in fact addressed as the king, and Nebuchadnezzar II is referred to several times as his father, both by the queen, as well as by Daniel. In the first verse below, the queen is talking to Belshazzar. In the second verse, Belshazzar is talking to Daniel:

"There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers;"
Daniel 5:11, KJV

"And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom."
Daniel 5:16, KJV

After an exchange of words between Belshazzar and Daniel, in which Daniel showed no interest in accepting the king's gifts, the Prophet then explained to the king how God had blessed his father with greatness and wealth, but he had refused to humble himself due to his pride. After that, it got very serious in the royal court as Daniel informed the king that he too was guilty, just like his father had been, because he knew what had happened to Nebuchadnezzar II, and yet here he was drinking out of the holy vessels which had been stolen from the temple in Jerusalem. And then Daniel let Belshazzar have it with both barrels with these words:

"And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy

kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."
Daniel 5:25-28, KJV

Well, God's anger against the king must have been very great; because we are next told that His righteous judgment against Belshazzar was very quick, and he was slain that very night. Thus, Darius the Mede took over the Babylonian Empire, and so transitioned it into the Medo-Persian Empire. Consider these two Bible verses:

"In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old."
Daniel 5:30-31, KJV

Regardless of whose actual biological son he was, the Bible clearly indicates that Belshazzar was indeed in power when Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, following the famous "Mene Mene Tekel Upharsin" writing on the palace wall. Now considering that Daniel was still a young boy when he had been taken to Babylon in 606 BC -- that is to say, during the third year of the reign of Jewish king Jehoiakim -- and considering that Belshazzar was slain in about 539 BC -- or about sixty-seven years later -- Daniel must have been at least in his seventies by the time Babylon fell to the Medes.

At the time that Belshazzar had been slain, Nabonidus -- who by this time had returned to Babylon from his self-imposed exile in Arabia -- had gone to the strategic riverside city of Opis, which was located about fifty miles to the north of Babylon on the Tigris River. His goal was to fight against Cyrus the Great. The reason why the city was so strategically important and needed to be defended is because it was located at one end of the Median Wall which Nebuchadnezzar had built a few decades earlier. Once Cyrus' forces breached that wall, it would be an open way to Babylon itself.

Cyrus had already subdued the Medes, and so he had begun to stir up trouble against the Babylonians. Well, upon losing the important battle at Opis, it is said that Nabonidus fled back to Babylon where he was soon captured. While Belshazzar his son had been killed during the takeover of Babylon, his own life may have been spared, and it is said that he was allowed to go to the province of Carmania, where he may have lived in exile up until the reign of Darius the Great. With the victory at Carmania, Cyrus the Great was soon declared

the king of Babylonia, and all of its territories, when he entered Babylon.

If you are sharp-eyed, you may have possibly noticed that while Daniel 5:31 states that "Darius the Median took the kingdom" on the night that Belshazzar was slain -- that is to say, in 539 BC -- I just stated that after defeating Nabonidus at the Battle of Opis, not long after that, Cyrus the Great entered Babylon and was proclaimed the new king of Babylonia. So what is going on here? Was it Darius the Mede, or was it Cyrus the Great? Actually, it is not as complicated as you think. A minute ago I informed you that by this time, Cyrus had ALREADY subdued the Medes, and he was in charge. In short, the Medes were fighting along side the Persians, and when Darius the Mede took Babylon, he did so on behalf of Cyrus the Great. Furthermore, according to Easton's Bible Dictionary, Darius the Mede served as the viceroy of Babylon for a period of two years, before Cyrus actually arrived there and was declared king of Babylonia. A viceroy is a ruler who exercises authority on behalf of a sovereign. Following is some additional information that we find in Easton's Bible Dictionary:

----- Begin Quote -----

"Cyrus, (Heb. Ko'resh) . . . was the son of Cambyes, the prince of Persia, and was born about B.C. 599 In the year B.C. 559 he became king of Persia, the kingdom of Media being added to it partly by conquest. Cyrus was a great military leader, bent on universal conquest. Babylon fell before his army, (B.C. 538), on the night of Belshazzar's feast, and then the ancient dominion of Assyria was also added to his empire. Hitherto the great kings of the earth had only oppressed the Jews. Cyrus was to them as a "shepherd". God employed him in doing service to his ancient people. He may possibly have gained, through contact with the Jews, some knowledge of their religion. The 'first year of Cyrus' is not the year of his elevation to power over the Medes, nor over the Persians, nor the year of the fall of Babylon, but the year succeeding the two years during which 'Darius the Mede' was viceroy in Babylon after its fall. At this time only, (B.C. 536), Cyrus became actual king over Palestine, which became a part of his Babylonian empire."

"The edict of Cyrus for the rebuilding of Jerusalem marked a great epoch in the history of the Jewish people. This decree was discovered "at Achmetha, ("Ecbatana"), in the palace

that is in the province of the Medes". A chronicle drawn up just after the conquest of Babylonia by Cyrus, gives the history of the reign of Nabonidus (Nabunahid), the last king of Babylon, and of the fall of the Babylonian empire. In B.C. 538 there was a revolt in Southern Babylonia, while the army of Cyrus entered the country from the north. In June the Babylonian army was completely defeated at Opis, and immediately afterwards Sippara opened its gates to the conqueror. Gobryas (Ugbaru), the governor of Kurdistan, was then sent to Babylon, which surrendered "without fighting," and the daily services in the temples continued without a break."

"In October, Cyrus himself arrived, and proclaimed a general amnesty, which was communicated by Gobryas to "all the province of Babylon," of which he had been made governor. Meanwhile, Nabonidus, who had concealed himself, was captured, but treated honourably; and when his wife died, Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, conducted the funeral. Cyrus now assumed the title of 'king of Babylon,' claimed to be the descendant of the ancient kings, and made rich offerings to the temples. At the same time he allowed the foreign populations who had been deported to Babylonia to return to their old homes, carrying with them the images of their gods. Among these populations were the Jews, who, as they had no images, took with them the sacred vessels of the temple."

----- End Of Quote -----

Putting all of this information together then, what we see is that, while it was indeed Darius who "took the kingdom" from Belshazzar, as I said earlier, this does not mean that he was the overall king of the Medo-Persian empire at that time. Cyrus the Great and Darius the Mede separately ruled their kingdoms for a while. However, ultimately, it was Cyrus the Great who gained the upper hand. So to reiterate this key point, at the time Darius the Mede took Babylon, he was ALREADY serving under Cyrus the Great and the now-united Medo-Persian Empire, as viceroy of Babylon, and NOT as king. This expansion of the Medo-Persian Empire, and the fact that Cyrus and the Persians would become dominant in it, is also mentioned in Daniel chapter eight, where Medo-Persia is "a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last", as we see by the following group of Bible verses:

"Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great . . . The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia."

Daniel 8:3-4, 20, KJV

Thus from all of these verses, and from all of the other info I have shared with you thus far, we indeed see how the Medes and the Persians served as the sword of the Lord in the conquest of the once mighty Babylonian Empire.

Please go to part three for the continuation of this series.

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SEVENTY WEEKS PROPHECY : WHAT IT MEANS - PART 3

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Incomplete Historical Records, Disagreement Amongst Scholars, Different Names Dates Or Places, Ahasuerus Xerxes Artaxerxes, List Of Median Kings, Babylon: A Capital Of Multiple Empires, Jews Return To Jerusalem Under Medo-Persian Empire, Iran And Persia, Israelis And Iranians Are Former Allies, Pre-Muslim Persia, Indo-Iranian People, Cyrus Tolerated Other Religions, From The Going Forth Of The Commandment Edict Of Restoration, 538 BC 536 BC And 534 BC, Cyrus' Decree Was For Building The Temple Only, The Captivity Didn't Begin With King Jehoiachin, Captivity Began With Daniel, 70 Years From 606 BC To 536 BC, Temple Foundation Laid In 2nd Year Of Return, Captivity Ended In 536 BC, Daniel Was God's Time Gauge, Fluctuation In Dates

Continuing our discussion from part two, it is important to point out that when it comes to the names of kings, places, ancestors and descendants, and even historical dates, there can be a certain level of confusion, because while we have a lot of historical records in the form of parchments, clay tablets, cylinders, etc., simply due to the passage of time and other reasons, these records are not always complete. In some cases, all we have are partial fragments, or maybe a partial tablet, which may tell only half of a particular story. To add to this challenge of acquiring an accurate understanding of ancient history, historians and scholars do not agree on every single point, for the very reasons which I just mentioned to you.

For this reason, the names given and the dates provided may vary. For example, even as I have written this series, I've seen how historical dates between different scholars often vary by as much as one to three years. Furthermore, while one scholar may utilize one name for a particular king or historical figure, another scholar could use a different name. This is not to say that either one of them is wrong. It is simply that different conquerors, emperors and kings were known by different names, depending on who is talking about them, and what specific language is being used.

A good case in point is the Bible itself which uses Hebrew names, even though regular historical records use secular names. Let me give you one example. Many of my readers will no doubt be familiar with King Ahasuerus who is mentioned in the Book of Esther. Well, in the secular world, the king is known as Artaxerxes I or Artaxerxes Longimanus, due to his right hand supposedly being longer than his left hand. He was the son of Xerxes I. For his part, Artaxerxes I had five progeny, two of whom were Xerxes II and Darius II. It is said that Xerxes II only ruled for a very brief period of forty-five days in 424 BC, at which time he was murdered by his half-brother Sogdianus. However, six months later, Sogdianus was murdered by Darius II, who then ruled as the King of Kings of the Achaemenid -- or Medo-Persian -- Empire from 424 BC to 404 BC. Darius II was succeeded by his eldest son, Artaxerxes II, who ruled from about 404 BC to 358 BC.

To make matters even more difficult, as you can see by the previous paragraph, some of the historical figures had the same name -- or a very similar name -- as someone else. In fact, as you'll learn in the next part of our series, there

were four rulers by the name of Darius, two rulers with the name of Xerxes, and four rulers with the name of Artaxerxes. The Darius who came to power in 522 BC, or about eight years after the end of Cyrus the Great's reign, was Darius I, who was also known as Darius the Great. The information below is from an unpublished work called "Compendium of World History" by Dr. Herman Hoeh. It may help to clarify this issue to some degree. Or may confuse you even more. Note that when he says "Cyrus the Persian", he is actually referring to Cyrus the Great:

----- Begin Quote -----

"Here are the Median kings according to Ctesias' record from the Persian archives.

"House of Arbaces, Median Kings After Overthrow of Assyrians at Rehoboth.

Arbaces	816-788 B.C.
His son Mandaucos	788-768
Sosarmus	768-738
Artycas	738-708
Arbianes	708-686
Artaeus	686-646
Artynes	646-624
Astibaras	624-584
Aspadas (called Astyigas	584-549
or Astyages)	(584-546)

"The successor of Aspadas was Darius the Mede, mentioned in Dan. 5:31 and 9:1. The Hebrews called Aspadas 'Ahasuerus'. The Greeks called Darius the Mede Cyaxeres II.

"Historians have completely misunderstood the events surrounding the end of Median independence. The reason is this. There were two Median kings reigning at the same time with the same name --- Astyages, or similar spelling. One was the grandfather of Cyrus the Persian; the other, Aspadas called Astyigas, was father of Darius the Mede. Before explaining any more details, it is necessary to introduce the second Median royal house and the second Astyages.

"In the year 700-699, following the death of Shalmaneser III, the Medes successfully completed a second revolt against the Assyrians. Not until this year were all the Medes completely free from Assyrian dominion. Herodotus

preserves the names of these Median kings who ascended the throne in 699.

"House of Deioces: Median Kings Following Revolt in 700-699.

Deioces	699-646
Phraortes	646-624
Cyaxeres I	624-584
Astyages, Grandfather of Cyrus	584-549

"Certain late Greek and Roman writers used figures other than those given by Herodotus and Ctesias. The preceding are the original and true figures. The variants may have risen from otherwise unknown events occurring in the Median realm, or from joint reigns.

"In 549 Astyages was overthrown by his grandson, Cyrus the Persian. Cyrus had come to the Persian throne, which he shared with his father in the year 558. He reigned altogether 29 years (558-529).

"The chronological evidence from Ctesias and Herodotus indicates the last three kings of each Median line shared the throne jointly. Each was succeeded by a son in 646, 624 and 584. An exception occurred in the case of Astyages, son of Cyaxeres I. This man, declared Herodotus, had no son, only a daughter. He ruled with a harsh hand. His daughter he gave in marriage to the king of Persia, Cambyses, who became the father of Cyrus. By contrast, Josephus stated that Astyages had a son -- Darius the Mede. Historians have -- for no justifiable reason -- assumed the testimony of Josephus and Herodotus were irreconcilable. A little thought would have made it plain that each writer was discussing a different Astyages. Josephus, and Daniel too, wrote of the Astyages or Aspadas who was of the house of Arbaces. Herodotus' account was of Astyages of the house of Deioces.

"The confederation of Persians and Medes, often stressed in the Bible, resulted from a political union of the house of Arbaces, which began in 816, with the young Persian monarch Cyrus. Cyrus could never have come to power had there not been strife between the two Median royal families."

----- End Of Quote -----

Another important point worth mentioning here is that while Cyrus was of Persian descent, in the Bible he is referred

to once as "the king of Babylon". Artaxerxes is likewise referred to as "king of Babylon". This may simply be due to the fact that, because of its grandeur -- and possibly because of other geographical or political considerations -- some of the Medo-Persian kings chose to rule the empire from captured Babylon, while others chose to rule it from Achmetha.

In like manner, while Darius the Mede took over Babylon in the Book of Daniel, in the Book of Ezra we find a ruler who is referred to as "Darius king of Persia". This may possibly be because he ruled over the Medo-Persian Empire, or because of the mixed marriages between the two families of Cyrus and Darius. However, the most plausible explanation is that they are referring to two different kings of the same name as I mentioned previously. Thus, we find what appear at first to be conflicting verses such as the following. However, once we understand all of this properly, we see that there is no conflict. It is just different historical naming conventions:

"Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia."

Ezra 4:24, KJV

"But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon the same king Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God."

Ezra 5:13, KJV

"But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem: for in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon came I unto the king, and after certain days obtained I leave of the king:"

Nehemiah 13:6, KJV

"So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian."

Daniel 6:28, KJV

"The Levites in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, and Johanan, and Jaddua, were recorded chief of the fathers: also the priests, to the reign of Darius the Persian."

Nehemiah 12:22, KJV

"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;"

Despite these sometimes confusing spots in the historical record, we should not lose sight of the overall picture in Bible prophecy. From a Scriptural perspective, one of the most significant events which occurred during the time of the Medo-Persian Empire, was that in accordance with the prophecies of Jeremiah, the Jews were permitted to return to Jerusalem, and rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, after having served their Seventy Years of Captivity under the various kings of Babylon. This was made possible by Cyrus the Great, and those Persian kings who succeeded him.

As some of my older readers will probably already know, the modern Iranians are actually descended from the Persians. Furthermore, before being renamed as the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979 following the dreadful Islamic Revolution which plunged the country into a period of darkness and extreme religious oppression, the country was simply referred to as Iran. However, even before that, due to the Persians being one of the major ethnic groups in the country for centuries, Iran was known as Persia up until 1935. It was at that time, that due to a variety of political reasons, the Shah of Iran -- Reza Shah Pahlavi -- requested that from that point and forward, his country be known as Iran by the international community.

Before returning to our main discussion regarding Daniel's Seventy Weeks Prophecy, let me share one more interesting point with you. While as I write this article a major war has erupted between Israel and Iran, with both countries currently dropping bombs on each other's cities, it might surprise you to know that Israel and Iran were at one time strong allies. One reason for this association is that just as the Jews are kind of a sore thumb surrounded by the much larger Arab world, in similar fashion, prior to the Islamic Revolution, while not exactly the same, Iran found itself in a somewhat relatable situation. While today the Iranians practice Islam -- and have done so for more than a thousand years -- nevertheless, they aren't ethnically Arabs either.

As I said a moment ago, the Iranians are actually Persians. The religion of the Persians before the Arab/Muslim conquest of Iran during the seventh century was Zoroastrianism. Going even further back, before Zoroastrianism became the dominant religion, the Iranians practiced a form of Vedic religion. This was an ancient form of Hinduism which, as you may know,

is the primary religion of India today. The Iranians and the people of India are in fact distantly and culturally related to each other, and are both known as Indo-Iranian people. On a final note, the official language of Iran is Farsi, which is Persian. At any rate, after pro-Western Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi was ousted from power during the Islamic Revolution, relations between Israel and Iran quickly deteriorated to the current state of constant competition and hostility.

So, with this background information, it will now become a lot easier for you to understand the Seventy Weeks Prophecy. Regarding Cyrus the Great, one notable thing about him was that during his reign, he was quite tolerant of the customs and religions of the people within his empire over whom he ruled. This, of course, included the many thousands of Jews who still remained within Babylon, but who long desired to return to what was now the Achaemenid Empire's province of Judah. And thus we arrive at the following point in this well-known prophecy:

Phrase:

"from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem"

Explanation:

As had been prophesied, Cyrus the Great signed the "Edict of Reconciliation" -- also known as the "Edict of Restoration" or the "Edict of Cyrus" -- in the first year of his reign. While the historical record places this proclamation having been made in 539 BC, as I mentioned earlier, it's important for us to remember that the Biblical record is written from a Jewish perspective. You will recall that I informed you that immediately following the capital city of Babylon being taken by Darius the Mede, he remained viceroy of Babylon for a period of two years while Cyrus was away still putting down resistance in other areas of the empire.

Easton's Bible Dictionary states that Babylon fell in 538 BC and not in 539 BC. Remember again how I told you that it all depends on which historical source you're reading. I tend to agree with the 538 BC date, and you will see why this is so important in a moment. So, accepting the 538 BC date, that means that Cyrus entered Babylon two years later in 536 BC, at which time he was proclaimed the king of Babylon, and all of its provinces. This would include the province of Judah,

or Judea. So, when the Bible speaks of "the first year of Cyrus king of Persia", from the Jewish perspective, that would be 536 BC when the province of Judah officially came under Cyrus' authority, and NOT 539 BC according to secular historical records.

At any rate, the "Edict of Restoration" -- or the "Edict of Cyrus" -- authorized and encouraged the Jews to return to Jerusalem, and thereupon to rebuild the House of God -- that is to say, Solomon's temple -- which had been fully destroyed by the armies of Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II some five decades earlier in 587 BC. This great construction project would eventually become known as the Second Temple, and would initiate the Second Temple Period. We find Cyrus' royal edict mentioned in the Books of 2 Chronicles and Ezra, as we see by the following group of Bible verses:

"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, 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, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up."

2 Chronicles 36:22-23, KJV

"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. Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the LORD

which is in Jerusalem. And all they that were about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all that was willingly offered. Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods; Even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah. And this is the number of them: thirty chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, nine and twenty knives, Thirty basons of gold, silver basons of a second sort four hundred and ten, and other vessels a thousand. All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up with them of the captivity that were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem." Ezra 1:1-11, KJV

"But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon the same king Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God. And the vessels also of gold and silver of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that was in Jerusalem, and brought them into the temple of Babylon, those did Cyrus the king take out of the temple of Babylon, and they were delivered unto one, whose name was Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor; And said unto him, Take these vessels, go, carry them into the temple that is in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be builded in his place. Then came the same Sheshbazzar, and laid the foundation of the house of God which is in Jerusalem: and since that time even until now hath it been in building, and yet it is not finished. Now therefore, if it seem good to the king, let there be search made in the king's treasure house, which is there at Babylon, whether it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter." Ezra 5:13-17, KJV

"Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the rolls, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon. And there was found at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein was a record thus written: In the first year of Cyrus the king the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, and the

breadth thereof threescore cubits; With three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber: and let the expenses be given out of the king's house: And also let the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the temple which is at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and brought again unto the temple which is at Jerusalem, every one to his place, and place them in the house of God."

Ezra 6:1-5, KJV

"And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king."

Ezra 6:14-15, KJV

It is interesting to note that while Gabriel's prophecy says "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem", a close inspection of Cyrus' actual edict, as well as an examination of the actual activities in which the returning Jews engaged, reveals something worthy of our attention. That is the fact that Cyrus' decree concentrated on the rebuilding of the temple itself. In other words, we see no specific mention in it regarding rebuilding the city itself, or repairing the perimeter walls which surrounded the city. I believe this point has some significance, as I will be explaining to you later on in this same series.

This is not to diminish Cyrus' edict by any means. After all, his proclamation is very important, being as it is what got the ball rolling so that Gabriel's prophecy could begin to be fulfilled. In other words, it had to begin with allowing the Jews to return to Israel. I am convinced that this occurred in 536 BC when Cyrus first set foot in Babylon, after Darius the Mede had served as his viceroy there for a period of two years. It was at that time that Cyrus was publicly proclaimed the king of Babylon, and it was at that time that he made his famous proclamation. Now according to Jeremiah's warnings and prophecies, the Jews would serve a seventy-year sentence in Babylon due to their sins. So the question is this: When did this seventy-year period begin, and when did it end?

At first glance, it might appear to some people that in the

Lord's eyes, maybe the captivity began in 597 BC. Why that particular year? Because it was during that year that the second Babylonian siege occurred, during which Jehoiachin -- who was also known as Jeconiah and Coniah, and who was the son and successor of King Jehoiakim, and the grandson of King Josiah -- was taken as a prisoner to Babylon, along with his mother, wives, officers, servants and thousands of others. Consider the following set of verses as proof of this point:

"And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it. And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign. And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said. And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land. And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. And all the men of might, even seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand, all that were strong and apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon."

2 Kings 24:11-16, KJV

Based on the previous verses, this would certainly seem like when the Seventy Years of Captivity began. After all, both the king, and his entire household, and thousands of others, were shipped off to Babylon. However, when we do the math, we discover that it does not add up to the required period of seventy years in captivity. Allow me explain. According to historical records, King Nebuchadnezzar reigned from 605 BC to 562 BC. In the previous verses, we see that it was in the eighth year of King Nebuchadnezzar's reign that he took King Jehoiachin and the rest of the Jews to Babylon. Using simple math, this means that this event would have occurred in 597 BC, which perfectly aligns with the historical fact that the Jewish king only reigned for three months between 598 BC and 597 BC. So, upon doing the math, we arrive at the following:

597 BC minus 536 BC = 61 years.

Well, there is another possibility that we can try to see if it will add up to the required seventy years in Babylonian captivity. We learned in part one of this same series that it was in the "the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah" that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came "unto Jerusalem, and besieged it." This would have been the first of the three Babylonian sieges against Jerusalem. It was during this first siege that Daniel, Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego, as well as many other Israelite children, were taken to Babylon, in order to be taught in the ways of the Babylonians. The plan was to nourish them for three years, so that they could then be brought before the king. It was during that same time that Jehoiakim remained a subject of Babylon until he chose to rebel.

According to the historical record, Jehoiakim reigned from 609 BC to 598 BC, at which time Jehoiachin briefly became the new king, as we have already seen. So, that means that if Daniel and friends were carried to Babylon in the third year of Jehoiakim's reign, as the Scriptures state, then it would have occurred in 606 BC. So let's do the math and see what happens:

606 BC minus 536 BC = 70 years.

Well look at that, my friends! That equation gives us EXACTLY the seventy years that we need! It precisely matches with the date for Cyrus the Great's "Edict of Restoration" in the year 536 BC when he first entered Babylon and was declared king of Babylon. It gives us the full seventy years that they were in Babylonian captivity. Furthermore, where the Prophet Daniel mentions in Daniel 9:1-2 that he received his prophecy from the Angel Gabriel during "the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes", it must therefore be dated at 536 BC as well. Furthermore, according to the Book of Ezra, the Jews laid the foundation for the Second Temple in the second year of their return from Babylon -- in other words, in 534 BC-- as we see by the following group of Bible verses:

"Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem;

and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the LORD. Then stood Jeshua with his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henadad, with their sons and their brethren the Levites. And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off."

Ezra 3:8-13, KJV

As we saw earlier, in Daniel 9:1-2, Daniel came to understand the Prophet Jeremiah's Seventy Weeks Prophecy, and then what did he do? We are told that he began to pray for God's mercy upon his people. Why would Daniel even do that, unless he had come to the conclusion that the seventy-year period had been completed by that time, meaning in 536 BC? So it seems that no matter how we approach this issue, and what method we use, we still come up with 536 BC as being when the Seventy Years of Captivity were completed. In other words, my dear friends, Daniel himself was God's chosen marker to signify the actual beginning of the Seventy Years of Babylonian Captivity. Is it not appropriate then that it would likewise be to Daniel that the Angel Gabriel would reveal that the Seventy Years had now been accomplished? It makes perfect sense to me.

While there may be a small disagreement between the secular historical record, and the Biblical record, there are two remaining points which are worthy of our consideration in my view. When it comes to setting historical dates, we need to remember that doing so sometimes does require making certain approximations, depending on the amount of clear information that is available to us. Furthermore, we also need to realize that depending on in what month of the year some particular

event occurred, it could affect both the beginning and the ending dates. This could result in a year being shaved off of or added to each date. Now, regardless of whether or not we can precisely determine the exact dates for when the Jewish captivity began and ended, I remain convinced that the Word of the Lord was fulfilled to the very letter. I do not have any doubts about that.

Let me remind you again that if you conduct your own online research, you will quickly discover that there is a lot of scholarly debate concerning not only these dates, but the precise significance of the Seventy Weeks Prophecy itself. In other words, different scholars apply different dates and different meanings to different parts of the prophecy. Some of them view the prophecy as being about Jesus Christ, while others view it differently. As a Bible-believing Christian, I personally adopt the view that it is indeed regarding the arrival, and the eventual Crucifixion, of Jesus Christ.

Please go to part four for the continuation of this series.

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SEVENTY WEEKS PROPHECY : WHAT IT MEANS - PART 4

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The Seventy Weeks Prophecy Verses, Shall Be Seven Weeks And Threescore And Two Weeks, 69 Weeks = 483 Years, The Street Shall Be Built Again And The Wall, Even In Troublous Times, Zerubbabel's Importance, Foreigners Stir Up Trouble Against The Jews, Assyrian Shalmaneser V Conquers Israel, Diaspora, Assyrian King Sennacherib's Failed Attempt To Conquer Judah, Xerxes I Orders Temple Construction To Stop, Troublemakers Write To Cambyses II Who Also Orders A Halt To Construction, Darius The Great Assumes Throne, Artaxerxes Smerdis Debate, Multiple Artaxerxes, Medo-Persian Kings List, Disagreements

Continuing our discussion from part three, let us proceed now to the next part of the amazing Seventy Weeks Prophecy which had been given to Daniel by the Angel Gabriel in the ninth chapter of the Prophet's book. But first, to refresh your memory, let me share the entire prophecy with you one more time:

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 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. 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. 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 9:24-27, KJV

Phrase:

"shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks"

Explanation:

Seven weeks -- or $7 \times 7 = 49$ years -- plus sixty-two weeks -- $62 \times 7 = 434$ years -- equals a total of 483 years. This division signifies two distinct events occurring. Something is to occur forty-nine years after "the going forth of the commandment", and then something else is to occur 434 more years after that first event occurs. At first glance, it seems that when the Jews actually left Babylon, that would be when the first forty-nine-year period would begin. So the question again is, when did Zerubbabel, Nehemiah, Ezra and the forty thousand plus other Jews finally depart from Babylon? According to the previous information we have now

examined, it would seem to have been in 536 BC. That is to say, two years after Darius the Mede had served as Cyrus' viceroy there, and when Cyrus himself entered Babylon, was declared the king of Babylon, and made his decree.

Phrase:

"the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times"

Explanation:

As we have already seen, with Cyrus' decree, the Jews were permitted to return to Jerusalem after serving their Seventy Years of Captivity under the various kings of Babylon. This edict was so that they could rebuild the destroyed temple of Solomon. This edict was first put forth by Cyrus II, king of Persia, in the first year of his reign as king over Babylon, which we have established as being in 536 BC. However, as you can see, this prophecy clearly states that it would be done "in troublous times." As we learned in part three, according to the Book of Ezra, the Jews laid the foundation for the Second Temple in the second year following their return from Babylon. In other words, in 534 BC. The following group of verses tell us exactly how many of the Israelites chose to return to Jerusalem and Judah following Cyrus the Great's decree:

"Now these are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of those which had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city . . . The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore,"
Ezra 2:1, 64, KJV

At this point in our narration, let me interject something important regarding the returned captives. We're informed by the Prophet Haggai that Zerubbabel -- who was the grandson of Jewish king Jehoiachin, who had voluntarily chosen to let Nebuchadnezzar carry him, his royal family and many others as captives to Babylon in order to spare the destruction of the city and the temple -- was specifically chosen by God to be one of the leaders of the Jews upon their return to the city of Jerusalem. After all, not only was Zerubbabel of the royal seed by God's own plan and design, but he was also one of the ancestors of Jesus Christ, as we see by his inclusion

in the genealogy that is found in the Gospel of Matthew:

"And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel;"

Matthew 1:12, KJV

In the Book of Haggai, we see exactly how the Lord revealed to Haggai the importance of Zerubbabel, and what role he was going to play with regard to the reconstruction of Solomon's temple. In fact, he had been chosen to be governor over the city of Jerusalem at that time. Likewise, the Lord revealed to the Prophet Zechariah how He would use Zerubbabel to both build and complete the new temple in Jerusalem. Consider the following group of verses where Zerubbabel is mentioned:

"In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORDS house should be built. Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD."

Haggai 1:1-8, KJV

"Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the LORD. Then spake Haggai the LORD'S messenger in the LORD'S message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the LORD. And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, In the four and twentieth day

of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king."
Haggai 1:12-15, KJV

"In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the LORD by the prophet Haggai, saying, Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying, Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts:"
Haggai 2:1-4, KJV

"Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother. In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts."
Haggai 2:21-23, KJV

"Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it. Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth."
Zechariah 4:6-10, KJV

But the prophecy states that their construction work would not be accomplished so easily. In fact, the enemies of the returned captives -- that is to say, the foreign people who had infiltrated Israel following the Assyrian conquest over 150 years earlier -- stirred up trouble so that the Jews'

work became rather difficult for the remainder of the reign of Cyrus the Great, through the reign of Darius the Great and to the very beginning of the reign of Artaxerxes, as we see by the following group of Bible verses. To make matters worse, these foreigners wrote a letter of complaint to King Artaxerxes in which they made accusations against the Jews:

"Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the LORD God of Israel; Then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither. But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us. Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia. And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, wrote they unto him an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. And in the days of Artaxerxes wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their companions, unto Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the writing of the letter was written in the Syrian tongue, and interpreted in the Syrian tongue. Rehum the chancellor and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king in this sort: Then wrote Rehum the chancellor, and Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their companions; the Dinaites, the Apharsathchites, the Tarpelites, the Apharsites, the Archevites, the Babylonians, the Susanchites, the Dehavites, and the Elamites, And the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Asnappar brought over, and set in the cities of Samaria, and the rest that are on this side the river, and at such a time. This is the copy of the letter that they sent unto him, even unto Artaxerxes the king; Thy servants the men on this side the river, and at such a time. Be it known unto the king, that the Jews which came up from thee to us are come unto Jerusalem, building the rebellious and the bad city, and have set up the walls thereof, and joined the foundations. Be it known now unto the king, that, if this city be builded, and the walls set up again, then will they not pay toll, tribute, and custom, and so thou shalt

endamage the revenue of the kings. Now because we have maintenance from the king's palace, and it was not meet for us to see the king's dishonour, therefore have we sent and certified the king; That search may be made in the book of the records of thy fathers: so shalt thou find in the book of the records, and know that this city is a rebellious city, and hurtful unto kings and provinces, and that they have moved sedition within the same of old time: for which cause was this city destroyed. We certify the king that, if this city be builded again, and the walls thereof set up, by this means thou shalt have no portion on this side the river."

Ezra 4:1-16, KJV

Please note that in the previous verses, Asnappar is simply the Biblical name for Ashurbanipal, who was the younger son of Esarhaddon. In turn, Esarhaddon was the son of Assyrian king Sennacherib of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Thus, Asnappar was the grandson of Sennacherib. You may remember that in fulfillment of the prophecies of Isaiah and other Prophets, Assyrian king Shalmaneser V invaded Israel from the north, first taking over Samaria. As I point out in articles such as the series "The Fruits of Disobedience", once the king had conquered Israel, and shipped thousands of Israelite slaves to other provinces of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, this Assyrian king brought foreigners into Israel. So these are the people who have written to Artaxerxes with complaints regarding the Jews in Jerusalem and Judah. Consider this group of verses:

"In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him. Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents . . . And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof."

2 Kings 17:1-3, 24, KJV

"And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes: Because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed his covenant, and all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and

would not hear them, nor do them."

2 Kings 18:11, KJV

The aforementioned Assyrian conquest of Israel occurred in the sixth year of the reign of King Hezekiah who was king over the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Please remember that due to the sins of King Solomon, Israel had been divided into the Northern Kingdom -- which was known as Samaria, Israel or Ephraim -- and governed from the capital city of Samaria by one king -- and the Southern Kingdom -- which was governed from Jerusalem in Judah -- or Judea -- and governed by a different king. In other words, at that time, Hoshea reigned in the North, while Hezekiah reigned in the South.

Shalmaneser V's successor was Sargon II who reigned from 722 BC to 705 BC. He is only mentioned one time by name in the Scriptures, as we see by the following verses. It was at this time that God ordered Isaiah to walk naked and barefoot:

"In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod, (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him,) and fought against Ashdod, and took it; At the same time spake the LORD by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot."

Isaiah 20:1-2, KJV

Sargon II in turn was succeeded by Sennacherib, as I noted earlier, who then ruled from 705 BC to 681 BC. Eight years after Shalmaneser V had conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel, Sennacherib made an attempt to conquer the Southern Kingdom of Judah in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's reign as well. However, Hezekiah became desperate with the Lord. As a result, Isaiah told him to not worry about, and that the Lord would take care of the situation. You will find Sennacherib mentioned in 2 Kings 18-19, as well as in 2 Chronicles 32, and in Isaiah 36-37. At any rate, after a lot of proud boasting from Sennacherib's emissary Rabshakeh, what happened to Sennacherib and his great Assyrian army is the following:

"So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah. And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have

blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land . . . Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard . . . Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD. For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead."

2 Kings 19:6-7, 20, 32-37, KJV

Returning to our main story regarding the troublemakers who had written to King Artaxerxes, after conducting a search of the records, Artaxerxes sent a return letter to the enemies of the Jews in which he ordered that the reconstruction of both Jerusalem and the temple of Solomon should be stopped immediately, as we can determine by the following group of Bible verses. In this way, the Angel Gabriel's Seventy Weeks prophecy, which he had given to Daniel, was fulfilled, and it was "troublous times" exactly as the prophecy states:

"Then sent the king an answer unto Rehum the chancellor, and to Shimshai the scribe, and to the rest of their companions that dwell in Samaria, and unto the rest beyond the river, Peace, and at such a time. The letter which ye sent unto us hath been plainly read before me. And I commanded, and search hath been made, and it is found that this city of old time hath made insurrection against kings, and that rebellion and sedition have been made therein. There have been mighty kings also over Jerusalem, which have ruled over all countries beyond the river; and toll, tribute, and custom, was paid unto them. Give ye now commandment to cause these men to cease, and that this city be not builded, until another commandment shall be given from me. Take heed now

that ye fail not to do this: why should damage grow to the hurt of the kings? Now when the copy of king Artaxerxes' letter was read before Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews, and made them to cease by force and power. Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia."

Ezra 4:17-24, KJV

According to Jewish general and historian Flavius Josephus, even before the foreign troublemakers had written to King Artaxerxes in order to warn him, and to lie about, the Jews who were rebuilding the city and the temple, they had also written years earlier to Cambyses II -- who was the eldest son and the direct successor of Cyrus the Great -- with the same accusations. Josephus describes it as follows in Book 11 Chapter 2 of "Antiquities of the Jews". Please note that in this excerpt, Josephus uses Greek names:

----- Begin Quote -----

"When the foundations of the temple were laying, and when the Jews were very zealous about building it, the neighbouring nations, and especially the Cutheans, whom Shalmanezar, king of Assyria, had brought out of Persia and Media, and had planted in Samaria, when he carried the people of Israel captives, besought the governors, and those that had the care of such affairs, that they would interrupt the Jews, both in the rebuilding of their city, and in the building of their temple. Now as these men were corrupted by them with money, they sold the Cutheans their interest for rendering this building a slow and a careless work, for Cyrus, who was busy about other wars, knew nothing of all this; and it so happened, that when he had led his army against the Massagetae he ended his life. But when Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, had taken the kingdom, the governor in Syria, and Phenicia, and in the countries of Ammon, and Moab, and Samaria, wrote an epistle to Cambyses; whose contents were as follows: "To our Lord Cambyses; we thy servants, Rathumus the historiographer, and Semellius the scribe, and the rest that are thy judges in Syria and Phenicia, sendeth greeting: It is fit, O King, that thou shouldest know that these Jews which were carried to Babylon, are come into our country, and are building that rebellious and wicked city, and its market places, and setting up its walls, and raising up the temple: know

therefore, that when these things are finished, they will not be willing to pay tribute, nor will they submit to thy commands, but will resist kings, and will choose rather to rule over others, than be ruled over themselves. We therefore thought it proper to write to thee, O King, while the works about the temple are going on so fast, and not to overlook this matter, that thou mayest search into the books of thy fathers, for thou wilt find in them, that the Jews have been rebels, and enemies to kings, as hath their city been also, which, for that reason, hath been till now laid waste. We thought proper also to inform thee of this matter, because thou mayest otherwise perhaps be ignorant of it, that if this city be once inhabited, and be entirely encompassed with walls, thou wilt be excluded from thy passage to Celesyria and Phenicia."

----- End Quote -----

Upon reading their letter, and just as we read in the Bible with regard to Artaxerxes, Cambyses likewise ordered that the work in Jerusalem should be stopped. In agreement with what we already read in the Book of Ezra, Josephus explains that this interruption in the construction work continued until the second year of the reign of Darius, which would have been in 520 BC. Consider the following excerpt from Book 11 Chapter 2 of "Antiquities of the Jews":

----- Begin Quote -----

"When Cambyses had read the epistle, being naturally wicked, he was irritated at what they told him; and wrote back to them as follows: "Cambyses the king, to Rathumus the historiographer, to Beeltethmus, to Semellius the scribe, and the rest that are in commission, and dwelling in Samaria and Phenicia, after this manner; I have read the epistle that was sent from you; and I gave order that the books of my forefathers should be searched into, and it is there found, that this city hath always been an enemy to kings, and its inhabitants have raised seditions and wars. We also are sensible that their kings have been powerful, and tyrannical, and have exacted tribute of Celesyria and Phenicia: Wherefore I give order that the Jews shall not be permitted to build that city, lest such mischief as they used to bring upon kings be greatly augmented." When this epistle was read, Rathumus, and Semellius the scribe, and their associates, got suddenly on horseback, and made haste to Jerusalem; they also brought a great company with them,

and forbade the Jews to build the city, and the temple. Accordingly, these works were hindered from going on till the second year of the reign of Darius, for nine years more; for Cambyses reigned six years, and within that time overthrew Egypt, and when he was come back, he died at Damascus."

----- End Quote -----

Regarding the Darius who is mentioned by both Josephus and Ezra, we know without a doubt that this was in fact Darius I, who was also known as Darius the Great. Josephus offers us a clear indication that this is so in Book 11 Chapter 3 of "Antiquities of the Jews" where he mentions Darius' rise to power in the following excerpt. Please be advised that "the Magi" is referring to Bardiya -- who was also known as Smerdis -- who was another son of Cyrus the Great. He may have been an imposter, which is why Darius I is regarded as the official third King of Kings of the Medo-Persian Empire and not Bardiya. Furthermore, historical records do confirm that Darius I was the son of Hystaspes, exactly as Josephus writes below:

----- Begin Quote -----

"After the slaughter of the Magi, who, upon the death of Cambyses, attained the government of the Persians for a year, those families which were called the seven families of the Persians, appointed Darius, the son of Hystaspes, to be their king."

----- End Quote -----

As I explained in part three, for the sake of clarification, the name "Artaxerxes" actually applied to several different Persian kings. It is a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew "Artachshashta". Pronounced "ar-takh-shash-taw", it means "I will make the spoiled to boil: I will stir myself (in) winter." Now, it's claimed in certain Bible tools that this particular Artaxerxes who frustrated the plans of the Jews may have been Artaxerxes Smerdis, who as I mentioned just a moment ago, was a son of Cyrus the Great, and who was also known as Bardiya. Some scholars believe that he may have been an imposter, which is another story you can explore on your own, if you like. However, I'm not convinced that this is really the Artaxerxes of which the previous verses are speaking, and I will now explain to you why this is so.

Once you begin to seriously delve into all of this ancient history -- as I constantly and carefully do whenever I find myself writing an article which contains a certain level of historical information -- as I already mentioned, you will find a lot of disagreement amongst scholars and historians when it comes to the names of places, the names of kings and other persons of historical importance, and those dates in which certain events occurred. As I mentioned earlier, dates could vary as much as one to three years. In some cases, it may be even more. So to demonstrate to you the difficulty in understanding who is who in the Holy Scriptures as compared to the secular historical record, let me share with you the following list of thirteen Achaemenid -- or Medo-Persian -- rulers, beginning with Cyrus the Great, who the Holy Bible refers to as Cyrus or in one case, as Cyrus the Persian:

538 BC to 530 BC	Cyrus II	(aka Cyrus the Great)
530 BC to 522 BC	Cambyses II	(Cyrus' eldest son)
522 BC to 522 BC	Bardiya	(aka Smerdis and Tanyoxarces, Cyrus' son)
522 BC to 486 BC	Darius I	(aka Darius the Great, son of Hystaspes)
486 BC to 465 BC	Xerxes I	(aka Xerxes the Great and Ahasuerus in the Book of Ruth, son of Darius I)
465 BC to 424 BC	Artaxerxes I	(aka Ahasuerus and Longimanus, son of Xerxes I)
424 BC to 424 BC	Xerxes II	(son of Artaxerxes I)
424 BC to 423 BC	Sogdianus	(Artaxerxes I's illegitimate son?)
423 BC to 404 BC	Darius II	(aka Ochus, son of Artaxerxes I)
404 BC to 358 BC	Artaxerxes II	(aka Arses, son of Darius II)
358 BC to 338 BC	Artaxerxes III	(aka Ochus, son of Artaxerxes II)
338 BC to 336 BC	Artaxerxes IV	(aka Arses, son of Artaxerxes III)
336 BC to 330 BC	Darius III	(distant member of the Achaemenid dynasty)

Please go to part five for the continuation of this series.

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Bardiya/Smerdis Debate, Darius The Median Served As Viceroy, Importance Of Kings List Order, Ahasuerus Xerxes Artaxerxes, Smerdis Debate, The Danger Of Propagating False Information, Ezra Mentions Four Medo-Persian Kings, Temple Construction Resumed During Darius I, Second Temple Completed In 516 BC, Herod The Great Rebuilds And Expands Temple Compound, Wall Construction Halted By Xerxes I, 534-485 BC 49 Years Theory, Artaxerxes I Takes Medo-Persian Throne, Artaxerxes I Signs Decree For Ezra's Return To Jerusalem, Ezra's Main Interest Was The Laws Of God, Decree Was For Building The Temple Only

Continuing our discussion from part four, please notice that regarding the trouble which the enemies of the Jews stirred up, we are very specifically told that it occurred "all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia. And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, wrote they unto him an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. And in the days of Artaxerxes wrote they unto him an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem." The first problem I see is that there exists no historical evidence that Bardiya -- who was also known as Smerdis -- was ever referred to as Artaxerxes. In fact, the first Persian King of Kings who was named Artaxerxes occurred AFTER Darius the Great, and not BEFORE him.

As you can plainly see from our previous list of rulers, Bardiya reigned very briefly for only a few months, and was then followed by Darius I, who was also known as Darius the Great. Darius I was then followed by Xerxes I, who was then succeeded by his son, Artaxerxes I. I believe that the order in which these kings' names appear in Ezra is very important, and that we should pay close attention to it. As an example, at the end of the sixth chapter of the Book of Daniel, we find the following verse:

"So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian."

Daniel 6:28, KJV

But why is Darius listed BEFORE Cyrus the Great, when Cyrus is the one who began the Achaemenid -- or Medo-Persian -- Empire? The answer is rather simple. The Darius who we see in Daniel 6:28 above is NOT any of the rulers named Darius who we see in the previous king list. I am convinced that he is in fact the very same Darius I mentioned to you in part two who served as the viceroy of Babylon for that period of two years, BEFORE Cyrus actually arrived in Babylon and was declared king of Babylonia. As you will recall, a viceroy is a ruler who exercises authority on behalf of a sovereign. So in this case, this Darius was serving on behalf of Cyrus the Great until Cyrus arrived two years later. A viceroy is like a king, but he does not possess the full authority of a king. So this Darius is the very same Darius we see in these two verses who preceded Cyrus' arrival in Babylon:

"In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old."

Daniel 5:30-31, KJV

If we take into consideration the order in which different kings are listed in the Scriptures, we see that what I just stated a minute ago regarding the Ezra 4 verses not only matches up with the historical record, but also with what is written in Ezra as well. In case you are confused, I am referring to these verses:

"Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia. And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, wrote they unto him an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. And in the days of Artaxerxes wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their companions, unto Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the writing of the letter was written in the Syrian tongue, and interpreted in the Syrian tongue."

Ezra 4:4-7, KJV

So the order of the four Medo-Persian kings who we see mentioned in those verses is as follows:

Cyrus the Great

Darius I
Ahasuerus
Artaxerxes

Please note that in the Scriptures, the short name Xerxes is never used. It is always spelled out as Artaxerxes. So exactly who are the Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes we see in the previous list? Let me first point out to you that the name Ahasuerus was used by the Jews to refer to more than one Persian king. Based on my online research, it was used at least to identify Xerxes I, and his son, Artaxerxes I. So, based on my personal studies and research, and likewise in agreement with what seems to be the general consensus, I'm of the opinion that the Ahasuerus in the previous list is Xerxes I. It is also commonly believed -- although not by everyone -- that this is the same Ahasuerus who we find in the Book of Esther.

Now, my first consideration was that in the aforementioned verses, Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes might be referring to the very same king. In other words, Xerxes I. However, when I dug deeper into the matter, I discovered some evidence to suggest that the Artaxerxes named above is actually the son of Xerxes I. That is to say, Artaxerxes I, who is also known as Longimanus and Ahasuerus. Identifying him in the list as Artaxerxes I agrees with the historical record, and with the Biblical record as well.

As I shared with you in part four, certain Bible scholars and students believe that Smerdis is one of the Medo-Persian kings who is mentioned in the previous list. Again, I don't agree with this position. And I am not alone when it comes to this position. In fact, Bardiya -- or Smerdis -- is not always included in the official list of Medo-Persian kings due to both the brevity of his reign, and more importantly, because of the question regarding his actual legitimacy as an Achaemenid -- or Medo-Persian -- King of Kings.

Perhaps you're wondering how some of these Bible references and tools could get something so wrong. While I am not sure why they want to promote the idea that the Artaxerxes who is mentioned in Ezra is Smerdis -- the potential imposter and usurper of the throne -- I do understand how this can happen. Basically, one source gets something wrong. Then, other researchers, scholars and Bible students come along. They notice what the original researcher has proposed and written, and without conducting any research of their own,

they simply accept that researcher's conclusions as fact. Then other people come along, see the same information, and they too pass along the false information. And so it goes. Over time, an idea or doctrine becomes established as fact, when it is really no such thing.

But personally, when I read Ezra, and then looked at the list of Medo-Persian rulers, I could immediately see that something was not right with Smerdis being the Artaxerxes who is mentioned in Ezra. So I conducted my own research, looking at different online Bible research tools. Some of them spread the same false information I just described to you. But then I found "The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge", and it confirmed my conclusion that the Artaxerxes we need to look at next is NOT Smerdis by any means. It is in fact Artaxerxes I, who was the son of Xerxes I. The aforementioned source says the following:

----- Begin Quote -----

"The name of a Persian king mentioned in Nehemiah and Ezra, where, however, the word occurs in the form of Artachshashta, by which is doubtless meant Artaxerxes I. Longimanus, 465-425 B.C. In the Persian cuneiform inscriptions the name is written Artakhshathra, "righteous" or "sublime ruler." In Ezra iv. 7, Artaxerxes Longimanus is meant, not the Pseudo-Smerdis; so also Ezra vii. 1, 11 where, following Josephus Ant., XI. v. 1, Xerxes has been read. In the twentieth year of Artachshashta or Artaxerxes, that is, in the year 445-444 B.C. Nehemiah, the cup-bearer of the king, went as governor to Jerusalem."

----- End Quote -----

Please note that in the previous quote, "Artachshashta" is the transliteration of the Hebrew name which is used in the Old Testament, which is very close to how the name appears in the actual Persian cuneiform inscriptions. Of course, for us Westerners, it is Artaxerxes.

Continuing our discussion, let me explain why I am convinced that Ezra is referring to two separate kings in the previous verses. That is to say, to Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes, as they are shown in the short kings list. The first reason for this is due to the way in which the verses are written. It seems apparent to me that Ezra is speaking about four kings, and not just three kings. Again, he writes as following:

". . . all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia. And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, wrote they unto him an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. And in the days of Artaxerxes wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their companions, unto Artaxerxes king of Persia . . ."

Ezra 4:5-7, KJV

Broken down into four specific sections, the previous verses would look like the following:

1. all the days of Cyrus king of Persia
2. even until the reign of Darius king of Persia
3. And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign
4. And in the days of Artaxerxes

As you can see, in Ezra, these four Medo-Persian kings are listed in chronological order. The previous verses inform us that "troublous times" were from right after Cyrus made his decree and the Jews returned to Jerusalem, right up to Artaxerxes I, who is fourth in the above list. The only one who is missing from the list is Cambyses II, who was Cyrus' son and successor. But we really don't need him in the list because we already learned in part three by way of Josephus that the troublemakers sent a letter to him as well, and he did order the construction to be stopped. So the "troublous times" covered:

Cyrus
Cambyses
Darius I
Xerxes I
Artaxerxes I

In fact, as you will see momentarily, the trouble likewise continued for some time after that as well. What we know for certain is that due to the troublemakers, temple work stopped until the second year of Darius I. In other words, because Darius I's reign began in 522 BC, it tells us that temple construction didn't start up again until 520 BC. As we learned in part four, Josephus confirmed this in Book 11 Chapter 2 of "Antiquities of the Jews", and as we learned in parts three and four, Ezra and the Prophet Haggai also confirmed it by the following set of Bible verses:

"Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at

Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia."

Ezra 4:24, KJV

"And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king."

Haggai 1:14-15, KJV

As I was working with all of this historical and Biblical information, I noticed something rather interesting. Now to its actual significance, I will leave to you to determine. If you look again at the previous full rulers table in part four, you will see that King Xerxes I reigned from 486 BC to 465 BC. Cyrus the Great had given a decree for the Jews to return to Israel in 536 BC. In other words, as I mentioned earlier, while the Babylonians were defeated in 538 BC, my research indicated that Cyrus' viceroy -- Darius the Mede -- ruled over Babylon for two years before Cyrus arrived there and was declared king of Babylonia, at which time he issued his decree to free the Jews. That would have been in 536 BC.

In part three, we likewise learned that they laid the temple foundation in the second year of their return from Babylon. That is to say, in 534 BC. Why 534 BC? Well, as I just told you, because Cyrus did not sign the edict -- or be declared king of Babylonia -- until he arrived in Babylon in 536 BC, because for the two previous years, Darius the Mede served as his viceroy over Babylon. So two years from 536 BC would have been 534 BC.

Eventually, the Jews again began to construct the temple led by the inspiration of Haggai and Zechariah the Prophets. But yet again the enemies of the returned Jews tried to deter the work by sending a letter to Darius I who had now ascended to the throne of Babylon. As we saw in a few verses I shared with you in part three, Darius made a search for the decree first issued by Cyrus, as we see by the following group of Bible verses:

"Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the rolls, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon. And there was found at Achmetha, in the palace that

is in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein was a record thus written: In the first year of Cyrus the king the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits; With three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber: and let the expenses be given out of the king's house: And also let the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the temple which is at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and brought again unto the temple which is at Jerusalem, every one to his place, and place them in the house of God."

Ezra 6:1-5, KJV

Having found the original record from the time of Cyrus his predecessor, Darius then ordered the troublemakers to desist in their persecution, and to let the returned Jews continue rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple, as we see by this set of Bible verses, some of which I shared with you earlier:

"Now therefore, Tatnai, governor beyond the river, Shetharboznai, and your companions the Apharsachites, which are beyond the river, be ye far from thence: 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. Moreover I make a decree what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews for the building of this house of God: that of the king's goods, even of the tribute beyond the river, forthwith expenses be given unto these men, that they be not hindered. And that which they have need of, both young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the appointment of the priests which are at Jerusalem, let it be given them day by day without fail: That they may offer sacrifices of sweet savours unto the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king, and of his sons. Also I have made a decree, that whosoever shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down from his house, and being set up, let him be hanged thereon; and let his house be made a dunghill for this. And the God that hath caused his name to dwell there destroy all kings and people, that shall put to their hand to alter and to destroy this house of God which is at Jerusalem. I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with speed. Then Tatnai, governor on this side the river, Shetharboznai, and their companions, according to that which

Darius the king had sent, so they did speedily."

Ezra 6:6-13, KJV

So when exactly was the temple really completed? Well, in case you missed that particular point, I likewise already told you in part three, but maybe you just didn't catch it. Here are those same verses again:

"And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king."

Ezra 6:14-15, KJV

Being as Darius I began to reign in 522 BC, six years later would be 516 BC. So we have to assume that 516 BC is when the Second Temple was also completed. To reiterate, temple construction restarted in 520 BC and four years later, the temple was completed in 516 BC. This appears to be a very accurate historical date from everything I have looked at. So based on the assumption that the temple foundation was laid in 534 BC, or two years after they had returned from Babylon, this means that it must have taken the Jews about eighteen years to complete temple construction. This may possibly lead some people to question the following verse that is found in the Gospel of John:

"Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?"

John 2:20, KJV

In reality, there is no contradiction here, because, they are not referring to the Second Temple which was built by Zerubbabel and those returnees who accompanied him from Babylon. Rather, these Jews are referring to King Herod's renovated and expanded temple complex, which according to Josephus in Book 15 Chapter 11 of "Antiquities of the Jews", Herod began during the eighteenth year of his reign. It took him another eight years to build the surrounding porticoes and courtyards. Other online sources indicate that there was ongoing construction until 63 AD. Following are some excerpts from "Antiquities of the Jews"

----- Begin Quote -----

"And now Herod, in the eighteenth year of his reign, and after the acts already mentioned, undertook a very great work, that is, to build of himself the temple of God, and make it large in compass, and to raise it to a most magnificent altitude, as esteeming it to be the most glorious of all his actions, as it really was, to bring it to perfection, and this would be sufficient for an everlasting memorial of him; but as he knew the multitude were not ready nor willing to assist him in so vast a design, he thought to prepare them first by making a speech to them . . .

The temple itself was within this; and before that temple was the altar, upon which we offer our sacrifices and burnt-offerings to God. Into none of these three did king Herod enter, for he was forbidden, because he was not a priest. However, he took care of the cloisters, and the outer enclosures, and these he built in eight years.

But the temple itself was built by the priests in a year and six months: upon which all the people were full of joy; and presently they returned thanks, in the first place to God, and in the next place, for the alacrity the king had showed."

----- End Quote -----

Returning to our previous story regarding building the wall, then, as we likewise learned in part three, in Ezra chapter four, Xerxes I -- who Ezra calls Ahasuerus, and who was the son of Darius I -- after having conducted a record search at the insistence of the enemies of the Jews, discovered what a troublesome lot the Jews were. Thus, he ordered all work on rebuilding the city and the wall to stop immediately at the beginning of his reign according to Ezra. Please note what I just stated. Xerxes I did NOT stop any temple construction, because the temple had ALREADY been completed thirty years earlier during his father's reign. So Xerxes I only ordered the rebuilding of the city and the wall to stop. Here is the verse again to refresh your memory:

"Give ye now commandment to cause these men to cease, and that this city be not builded, until another commandment shall be given from me."

Ezra 4:21, KJV

The first year of Xerxes I's reign would have been from 486 BC to 485 BC, because his reign began in October of 486 BC according to historical records. My friends, all this time had passed, and while the temple itself had already been rebuilt, the reconstruction of the city and the wall had not been completed, as a result of all the trouble being caused by the Jews' enemies. There were in fact stops and starts several times. To reiterate, it was "troublous times". As I said a minute ago, I discovered something interesting which has me wondering if we should give any significance to it. It concerns a part of Gabriel's prophecy which specifically states the following:

"shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks"

Daniel 9:25, KJV

As I mentioned earlier, God had the Angel Gabriel divide the prophecy into three different time periods, and the first period was seven weeks. As we have already discussed, seven weeks equates to forty-nine years. Now from 534 BC when they laid the foundation of the temple, to 485 BC -- which would be included in the first year of Xerxes I's reign -- when he ordered construction in Jerusalem to be stopped, is exactly how many years? It is forty-nine years to be precise. So I have been wondering to myself "Is that merely a coincidence, or is that the forty-nine years of "troublous times" that the Angel Gabriel was talking about?

As I was recently informing a friend, I believe that God is ordered, organized, purposeful and precise in everything He does. I am convinced that this is particularly true when it comes to His Word and the prophecies which are found in His Word. So for me to simply dismiss this seeming "coincidence" is not easy. Why is it that the first part of the prophecy speaks of "seven weeks" -- or forty-nine years -- and the length of time between the two aforementioned dates matches it perfectly? Is it truly just a coincidence, or might it be possible that it has some particular significance? What to do you think?

Please remember that King Xerxes I had plainly stated in his 485 BC decree that the Jews should NOT resume construction of Jerusalem and the wall "until another commandment shall be given from me." Well, Xerxes I obviously never did do that. However, guess who did sign another decree letter? It was none other than his son who we just discussed. That is

to say, Artaxerxes I, who was likewise known as Longimanus and Ahasuerus. Upon the murder of his father in 465 BC, by the powerful commander of the royal bodyguard, Artaxerxes I rose to the throne to become the fifth legitimate king of the vast Medo-Persian Empire. His date of ascension can be confirmed by such historical documents as the Elephantine Papyri, and by Ptolemy's Canon as well, which I have in my possession.

We are informed in the Book of Ezra that it was twenty-eight years after his father had ordered construction to stop in Jerusalem, that during the seventh year of his reign in 557 BC, Artaxerxes I signed a new decree which gave Ezra -- who was a scribe and priest -- permission to lead a second group of Jews out of Babylon and back to Jerusalem, all with his royal blessing and encouragement. Furthermore, only thirteen years later, during Artaxerxes I's twentieth year as ruler of the Medo-Persian Empire, Nehemiah would follow suit and likewise return to Israel with Artaxerxes' blessing.

With other leaders -- including, of course, Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest -- these anointed men would inspire the Jews to repent of their idolatry, to abandon all their inter-racial marriages, and to return to the Lord their God. Consider the following group of Bible verses:

"Now after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah . . . This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him. And there went up some of the children of Israel, and of the priests, and the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, unto Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king. And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king."

Ezra 7:1, 6-8, KJV

Now, I am going to show you something which I consider very important regarding this event, which some of my Christian brethren may possibly be missing. In fact, even I missed it at first until I looked closer and harder. If you read the previous chapter -- that is to say, chapter six -- what you will discover is that it's all about the priest and Levites, feast days, temple sacrifices, and the joy the Jews found in completing the construction of the Second Temple. There is

not a single word in that chapter regarding rebuilding the city itself, or the perimeter walls which surrounded the city. Not a word, my friends.

Furthermore, as I mentioned to you before, Ezra was a priest and a scribe. He was by no means a builder. His primary goal in returning to Jerusalem was to "to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments." Ezra's primary interest was to perform priestly functions. If you carefully read the circumstances surrounding Ezra's bid to Artaxerxes I, and the actual contents of the king's decree, you are going to see that just like Cyrus' original decree in 536 BC, it focused entirely on the temple, on donating money to the temple, on providing animals for sacrifice, on giving vessels for the functions which had to be performed in the temple, etc. Again, there is NOT a single word in the king's degree regarding rebuilding the city, or rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem. If you doubt that this is so, then please read it for yourself below:

"For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments. Now this is the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest, the scribe, even a scribe of the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of his statutes to Israel. Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect peace, and at such a 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. Forasmuch as thou art sent of the king, and of his seven counsellors, to enquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of thy God which is in thine hand; And to carry the silver and gold, which the king and his counsellors have freely offered unto the God of Israel, whose habitation is in Jerusalem, And all the silver and gold that thou canst find in all the province of Babylon, with the freewill offering of the people, and of the priests, offering willingly for the house of their God which is in Jerusalem: That thou mayest buy speedily with this money bullocks, rams, lambs, with their meat offerings and their drink offerings, and offer them upon the altar of the house of your God which is in Jerusalem. And whatsoever shall seem good to thee, and to thy brethren, to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, that do after the will of your God. The vessels also that are given thee for the service of the house of thy God,

those deliver thou before the God of Jerusalem. And whatsoever more shall be needful for the house of thy God, which thou shalt have occasion to bestow, bestow it out of the king's treasure house. And I, even I Artaxerxes the king, do make a decree to all the treasurers which are beyond the river, that whatsoever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, shall require of you, it be done speedily, Unto an hundred talents of silver, and to an hundred measures of wheat, and to an hundred baths of wine, and to an hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribing how much. 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? Also we certify you, that touching any of the priests and Levites, singers, porters, Nethinims, or ministers of this house of God, it shall not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom, upon them. And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not. 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. Blessed be the LORD God of our fathers, which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem: And hath extended mercy unto me before the king, and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes. And I was strengthened as the hand of the LORD my God was upon me, and I gathered together out of Israel chief men to go up with me."

Nehemiah 7:10-28, KJV

Now if you are wondering why I am emphasizing this particular point, please just keep on reading in part six and I am sure that it will all soon become clear to you.

Please go to part six for the continuation of this series.

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SEVENTY WEEKS PROPHECY : WHAT IT MEANS - PART 6

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Artaxerxes I (Longimanus) Ezra And Temple Construction, No Mention Of Building The City Or Wall In First Three Decrees, Cyrus Darius I And Artaxerxes I Were More Open To Religious Freedom But Wise, Nehemiah's Primary Concern Was Rebuilding City And Wall, Artaxerxes I Gives Nehemiah Decree To Rebuild City And Wall, Sanballat And Enemies Conspire Against Jews, Jews Remain Vigilant And Armed As They Build Wall, Nehemiah Serves As Governor Of Judah, I Am Doing A Great Work So That I Cannot Come Down, Sanballat: False Accusation Of Rebellion, The Wall Was Completed In 445 BC, One Wall Or Three Walls?, The Importance Of "The Street Shall Be Built Again", Ezra And Laws Of God, Three Primary Leaders: Zerubbabel Ezra Nehemiah, Even In Troublous Times, Artaxerxes I 2nd Decree Is A Marker, My 49 Years Theory Failed The Test, Using 457 BC As Starting Date, Error To Wrest Scriptures, 445 BC Is A More Valid Date

Continuing our discussion from part five, according to secular historical records, and as we have likewise already seen in our full Medo-Persian kings list in part four, this particular Artaxerxes was Artaxerxes I, who was also known as Artaxerxes Longimanus. He was the son and successor of Xerxes I, who had in fact halted all construction work in Jerusalem. This would make Artaxerxes I the grandson of Darius I. He ruled over the Medo-Persian Empire from 465 BC to 424 BC. What is important about Longimanus is that it was during his forty-year reign that the second part of the Seventy Weeks Prophecy of Daniel -- that is to say, the "sixty-two weeks" part -- began to be fulfilled.

As we learned in part five, this began when he gave Ezra the scribe and priest permission to return to Jerusalem in order to engage in certain activities which were directly related to the temple, meaning temple sacrificial services, and his duties as a priest of Israel. As we learned before, this was in fact Artaxerxes I's primary intention, as well as Ezra's intention, as was made quite clear by the very contents of the letter of decree which the king had written

for Ezra. Just as Cyrus the Great's edict was primarily focused on rebuilding the temple, and just as Darius I had also concentrated on temple-related affairs, Artaxerxes I's first letter to Ezra did the same thing.

Unless I just missed it, there was nothing in any of those three edicts which specifically and clearly addressed the issue of rebuilding Jerusalem itself, and the surrounding walls. As I thought about that, it made perfect sense to me. After all, if you were an emperor or a king, would you want your subjects -- particularly those subjects who were forcefully brought into subjugation through war -- to build walls around their cities? Wouldn't you become suspicious? Wouldn't you think that maybe those subjects were plotting behind your back, and planning to rebel against you? Well, as you will see momentarily, that is precisely the tactic which the Jews' enemies tried to use against them.

But my point is this: Aside from the fact that as Persian leaders, Cyrus II, Darius I and Artaxerxes I were much more open to religious freedoms and allowing their subjects to worship as they pleased, they were also wise rulers. That being the case, I suspect that they each intentionally did not include anything in their decrees regarding rebuilding the city, and particularly regarding rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem. As we have seen, their decrees were in fact strictly limited to activities revolving around the temple construction project, and Jewish religious worship.

In contrast, when it comes to Nehemiah, it was a different story. He was not a scribe, priest or Levite. His concern and interests were related more to the broken down state of the city and the perimeter walls which protected it. This is made evident by some of the opening verses of his Book where we see him weeping after learning of the current state of his beloved city, Jerusalem:

"The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace, That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire. And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept,

and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,"

Nehemiah 1:2-4, KJV

Not only was the state of Jerusalem Nehemiah's main concern, but when King Artaxerxes I inquired of him why he was so sad, Nehemiah was not able to hide his burden for Jerusalem from the king. Thus, he cautiously made his request known to the king. Please note the particular words I have placed in all uppercase letters. Those words reveal Nehemiah's intentions and motivations for desiring to go to Jerusalem:

"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 beforetime sad in his presence. Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. 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 I came to the governors beyond the river, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me. When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel. So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days."

Nehemiah 2:1-11, KJV

Thus, with these motivations in his heart, and bearing the king's letters giving him the right of passage, Nehemiah set out for Jerusalem. Next, after secretly surveying the walls of Jerusalem by night, Nehemiah finally made his plans known to the elders of Jerusalem, as we see by the following group of Bible verses:

"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 2:17-18, KJV

As had occurred for years before, the enemies of the Jews became privy to their plans and immediately began to mock them, and to oppose them, and to stir up trouble. In the verses which follow, please notice again exactly who the troublemakers are. They are NOT fellow Jews. They are in fact the very same foreigners I mentioned to you earlier who were brought to Israel by the Assyrians following the Assyrian conquest, and they are led by one Sanballat:

"But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall."

Nehemiah 4:1-3, KJV

"But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it."

Nehemiah 4:7-8, KJV

As a result of this opposition from their rather determined

enemies, instead of surrendering to fear and intimidation, from that point and forward, Nehemiah informs his readers that the Jews began working in shifts with their weapons right next to them. They weren't going to take any chances with their hate-filled enemies watching them, and waiting for a moment to attack them. Furthermore, they didn't even take off their clothes except for washing them, as we can see by the following group of Bible verses:

"They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me. And I said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, The work is great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another. In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our God shall fight for us. So we laboured in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared. Likewise at the same time said I unto the people, Let every one with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, that in the night they may be a guard to us, and labour on the day. So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard which followed me, none of us put off our clothes, saving that every one put them off for washing."

Nehemiah 4:17-23, KJV

From his own record in his Book, we know that dear Nehemiah served as governor of Judah for at the very least a total of twelve years. Considering that Artaxerxes I reigned for some forty years in Babylon, it is possible that Nehemiah remained governor for at least another eight years above what is recorded in the verses which follow. However, this is only personal conjecture. What I also find interesting regarding the verses below is how boldly Nehemiah exposes the corruption of the governors who had preceded him. In these verses the word "chargeable" is derived from a Koine Greek word which among other things means to heavy, harden, sore or to make heavy. And if we have any doubts regarding what he means, he clarifies it in the words which follow. This reminds me of God's strong rebuke of those Israelite leaders who fleeced their people in Ezekiel thirty-four:

"Moreover from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even

unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that is, twelve years, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor. But the former governors that had been before me were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, beside forty shekels of silver; yea, even their servants bare rule over the people: but so did not I, because of the fear of God."

Nehemiah 5:14-15, KJV

On a side note, one favorite verse which has been mentioned by some Christians who have heard the Lord's call to service in their lives, and who simply won't allow themselves to be dissuaded by the lies or tricks of the enemies of the Gospel, is the following one which was spoken by Nehemiah when that troublesome fellow Sanballat, Geshem and others tried to slow them down as they rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem:

"Now it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates;) That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief. And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I AM DOING A GREAT WORK, SO THAT I CANNOT COME DOWN: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you? Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner."

Nehemiah 6:1-4, KJV

When that trick by Sanballat and company had failed after four attempts, that wicked man tried a different tactic. He sent one of his servants to Nehemiah with a letter in which he falsely accused the Jews of wanting to rebuild the walls because their goal was to eventually engage in a rebellion against King Artaxerxes I. Of course, Nehemiah denied the claim being made by their enemies, as we see by this group of Bible verses:

"Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand; Wherein was written, It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king, according to these words. And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, There is

a king in Judah: and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together. Then I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart."

Nehemiah 6:5-8, KJV

Despite the constant threats from Sanballat and his band of foreigners, and the mischievous tricks and deception which was practiced by those very same enemies, under Nehemiah's wise and watchful leadership and direction, the Jews finally finished repairing the wall after fifty-two days, as we see by the following group of Bible verses. This would have been in the year 445 BC. Elul is the twelfth month of the Jewish civil year, and sixth month of the religious year. In our Western calendar, this corresponds to parts of August and September:

"So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days."

Nehemiah 6:15, KJV

Concerning the wall which we find mentioned in the Seventy Weeks Prophecy, what I find interesting is the fact that while the phrase "the walls" is only used twice in the Book of Nehemiah -- as per the verses shown below -- the phrase "the wall" is found a total of twenty-eight times. Thus we see that the construction of the perimeter wall was a major emphasis in Nehemiah. In contrast, the phrase "the wall" is not used a single time in the entire Book of Ezra. However, the phrase "the walls" or "these walls" is found just a few times in Ezra in the following verses. Furthermore, it is always spoken by the enemies of the Jews who were trying to stir up trouble:

"And I went out by night by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire."

Nehemiah 2:13, KJV

"But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it."

Nehemiah 4:7-8, KJV

"Be it known unto the king, that the Jews which came up from thee to us are come unto Jerusalem, building the rebellious and the bad city, and have set up the walls thereof, and joined the foundations. Be it known now unto the king, that, if this city be builded, and the walls set up again, then will they not pay toll, tribute, and custom, and so thou shalt endamage the revenue of the kings. Now because we have maintenance from the king's palace, and it was not meet for us to see the king's dishonour, therefore have we sent and certified the king; That search may be made in the book of the records of thy fathers: so shalt thou find in the book of the records, and know that this city is a rebellious city, and hurtful unto kings and provinces, and that they have moved sedition within the same of old time: for which cause was this city destroyed. We certify the king that, if this city be builded again, and the walls thereof set up, by this means thou shalt have no portion on this side the river."

Ezra 4:12-16, KJV

"They sent a letter unto him, wherein was written thus; Unto Darius the king, all peace. Be it known unto the king, that we went into the province of Judea, to the house of the great God, which is builded with great stones, and timber is laid in the walls, and this work goeth fast on, and prospereth in their hands. Then asked we those elders, and said unto them thus, Who commanded you to build this house, and to make up these walls?"

Ezra 5:7-9, KJV

So again we see how Nehemiah's primary interest and task was in rebuilding the wall and the city. There is something else I would like to point out to you here. While the phrase "the walls" is used in both Books, I believe that it's being used to refer to the totality of all of the sides of the wall which surrounded the city. In all of the other twenty-eight verses, I am given the impression that they were working on only one wall and not multiple walls. In other words, I am wondering if at that time in Jerusalem's history, there was only one perimeter wall surrounding the city.

If you take the time to read my lengthy, twenty-five part series entitled "Vespasian, Titus and the Fall of Jerusalem", you will discover that by the year 70 AD when General Titus and his legions laid siege to Jerusalem, the city had in fact

been encompassed by three walls, and not simply one. That is one major reason why the Jerusalemites were able to endure the siege for about four months before the city finally fell to the Romans. The Romans had to build various siege ramps and use ramming engines to breach all three of the walls in order to gain entrance into the city, and it was not an easy task. In addition to the walls, Jerusalem was surrounded by steep cliffs and ravines which proved challenging to Titus.

Returning to the Seventy Weeks Prophecy, the wall is not all that was completed, and you may find it interesting when you see how very specific the Seventy Weeks Prophecy was. Let me share part of the prophecy with you one more time:

"from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem . . . the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times."

Daniel 9:25, KJV

Notice that the prophecy doesn't only say that Jerusalem would be built up again, and the perimeter wall would also be raised up again, but it also mentions the street. Why is that? Well, I have an idea regarding that which I will now pass by you for your consideration. I suspect that it is one specific street that the prophecy is referring to; because as I was just reading the Book of Nehemiah, some verses popped out at me, and I thought to myself, "Oh, so that's why the prophecy specifically mentioned the street, because something very important happened on that street!" What am I talking about? Consider the following verses:

"And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law."

How about that! You will recall from part five that I told you that Ezra's primary desire in returning to Jerusalem was to serve as priest and scribe, and to teach the Jews the Laws of God, and here we see him doing exactly that! He was

fulfilling part of the prophecy, just as Zerubbabel had also done, and just as Nehemiah had done as well! It amazes me to realize how God so carefully raised up and anointed specific men to fulfill specific parts of the Seventy Weeks Prophecy. In other words, Zerubbabel oversaw the rebuilding of the temple. Ezra was one of the men who was in charge of the spiritual affairs of the people. And Nehemiah oversaw the construction of the wall and the street -- and security -- which as we saw earlier, had been his intention from the very start.

Notice again that this part of the prophecy concludes with the words "even in troublous times." As I mentioned in part five, the trouble did not end with Cyrus, or with Cambyses, or with Darius I, or with Xerxes I, or with Artaxerxes I. It just kept reoccurring during the duration of that entire period, just as the prophecy said would occur.

In part five of this same series, I explained to you how I discovered what appears to be an interesting "coincidence" with regard to how the "seven weeks" section of the Angel Gabriel's prophecy to Daniel seems to perfectly align with the forty-nine-year period which began at 534 BC when the Jewish returnees laid the foundation of the new temple, and terminated at 485 BC when Xerxes I ordered all construction work to stop. We saw that it appears to correspond to the "troublous times" of which the prophecy speaks.

So looking at it from this perspective, it would seem that maybe the first prophetic "week" of Gabriel's Seven Weeks Prophecy began with an important event, that being laying the foundation for the new temple. Then it would seem to conclude with another important event, that being Xerxes I halting the reconstruction of the temple. As I mentioned a bit earlier, I'm convinced that Artaxerxes I's decree also serves as a marker to begin the next section of the Angel Gabriel's amazing Seventy Weeks Prophecy. In other words, the "sixty-two" weeks part of the prophecy. As we learned earlier in our series, this portion of the prophecy equals a total period of 434 years.

But, then things really begin to become complex, as I'll now explain to you. As I discovered to my own disappointment, it is at this point that I've encountered an unyielding problem or two, which I have been simply unable to resolve to my own personal satisfaction. Both problems concern the time frame of the prophecy itself, as well as the approximate year when

the full prophecy is supposed to conclude. Let me address the "seven weeks" problem first. From both a historical as well as a Scriptural perspective, my theory appears to have very strong merit. That is, if we are willing to accept that the Darius who is mentioned in Daniel 5 and 6 really did serve as viceroy of Babylon for two years before Cyrus the Great arrived there, upon which he was proclaimed king of Babylon. As I mentioned earlier, secular historians totally reject the existence of this king, in contradiction to the Bible.

Yet if we accept my theory regarding the "seven weeks" -- or forty-nine years -- occurring between 534 BC and 485 BC, it creates a problem all of its own. You see, by doing that, we are only left with 434 years to complete the remainder of the Seventy Weeks Prophecy, and that will NOT take us even close to the first decades of the First Century AD, or even to the assumed date of Jesus' birth in 4 BC. To make this easier for you to understand, let me explain the following to you.

It seems that one of the most popular methods which has been used to make the Seventy Weeks Prophecy work, is by embracing 457 BC -- when King Artaxerxes I gave his letter of decree to Ezra -- as the starting point for Gabriel's prophecy. So if we accept 457 BC, and deduct 434 years from it -- and not 483 years from it, because we already used up the first 49 years, or "seven weeks" if we accept my theory -- that only takes us to 23 BC. That is not even close to the assumed date of Jesus' birth, much less to the year of His appearance to Israel, and even less to the assumed date of His Crucifixion.

If instead we use 445 BC as the starting date for the second part of the prophecy -- because it was in that year that King Artaxerxes I gave Nehemiah his letter of decree -- and then subtract 434 years -- meaning the "sixty-two" weeks -- from it, that still only carries us to 11 BC, which is still not even Jesus' assumed date of birth. So that is why, despite how beautifully my personal theory appears to fit the "seven weeks" part of the prophecy, it is simply a no-go, as I have already stated. I am, of course, not happy about it, but I cannot knowingly contradict God's Word just to enforce my own belief or doctrine. That would be very wrong. Sadly, I see so many modern Christians endeavoring to do this very thing with their pet theories and misguided doctrines. However, as the Apostle Peter wrote, such people wrest -- twist, distort, or pervert -- the Scriptures to their own destruction:

"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation;

even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which THEY THAT ARE UNLEARNED AND UNSTABLE WREST, AS THEY DO ALSO THE OTHER SCRIPTURES, UNTO THEIR OWN DESTRUCTION."

2 Peter 3:15-16, KJV

Now we come to the next issue. As I already said, 457 BC is a popular option with quite a few Bible scholars and Bible students when it comes to trying to understand the Seventy Weeks Prophecy. However, in my view, based on everything I have shared with you, in which I have clearly shown you the major differences between Artaxerxes' first decree to Ezra, and his second decree to Nehemiah, and the major differences in the motivations between Ezra and Nehemiah, and the very different tasks which each of them performed once they had arrived in Jerusalem, I remain convinced that Artaxerxes I's second decree to Nehemiah in 445 BC much better fits the fulfillment of the Seventy Weeks Prophecy.

For me personally, there exists just too much historical and Biblical support to ignore the 445 BC date. To reiterate the things I explained earlier, Nehemiah was the builder. He was the one who oversaw the rebuilding of the street and wall, and NOT Ezra. Ezra was the priest and scribe. Those are two very different offices. But even more convincing is what we are told in the prophecy itself. Let me share that portion with you again so that it really sinks in:

"from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem . . . the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troubloustimes."

Daniel 9:25, KJV

Clearly, Nehemiah fulfilled that part of the prophecy much better than Ezra. Equally important is the fact that while the prophecy mentions the rebuilding of the street and wall, it does NOT specifically mention the reconstruction of the temple itself. Now, we can argue that it is hidden in the part of the prophecy which says "to build Jerusalem", but in my opinion, that is leaning towards Scripture-tweaking, which Peter said we're NOT supposed to do. Please know that I am NOT in any way trying to minimize the rebuilding of the temple. Of course not. But if we take a very strict, literal view of the prophecy, then again, 445 BC fits the bill much better than 457 BC.

Please go to part seven for the continuation of this series.

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SEVENTY WEEKS PROPHECY : WHAT IT MEANS - PART 7

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Unto The Messiah The Prince, Shall Messiah Be Cut Off But Not For Himself, Necessity Of Jesus' Sacrifice, Without Shedding Of Blood Is No Remission, Christ Died For Us And Washed Us In His Blood, The Messiah Would Appear And Die After 483 Years, Years-Long Personal Quest For Scriptural Truth And Awakening, Challenge Of Secular Dates Versus The Bible, Solar Year Versus Lunar Year, Biblical Year Equals 360 Days, Biblical Examples, 483 Biblical Years Equals About 476 Solar Years, The Lunisolar Hebrew Calendar, A Floating Passover, 483 Prophetic Year From 445 BC Takes Us To 31-32 AD, Controversy Regarding Jesus' Date Of Birth And Crucifixion, 30 AD To 33 AD Are Common Dates For Jesus' Crucifixion, Jesus Crucified AFTER 69 Weeks, Scriptural Markers For Stages Of Jesus' Life, To Finish The Transgression, Satan In Rebellion Against God, Satan Induces Adam And Eve To Rebel, Sin = Transgression Of The Law, Sin = Break God's Laws

Continuing our discussion from part six, if I have not yet convinced you that 445 BC tends to be a much better fit for "the going forth of the commandment", let me now try to hit a big grand slam with you. First of all, being as we have to abandon my personal theory regarding the "seven weeks", that means that instead of just contending with the 434 years, we must now contend with the full 483 years. That's to say, the "seven weeks", plus the next "sixty-two" weeks equates to the first sixty-nine weeks -- or 69×7 -- of the prophecy, which is a total of 483 years. It is at this point that we can now move on to the next section of the Seventy Weeks

Prophecy, and it is indeed the most important part of the prophecy, because it is what the entire prophecy is leading up to. Consider:

Phrase:

"unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks . . . and after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself:"

Explanation:

This part of the prophecy signifies that Jesus -- God's own Messiah for the sinful world -- would be "cut off". That is to say, Jesus would be destroyed, killed, eliminated or cut down so as to fulfill the covenant, according to the Hebrew word which is used in this verse. When would this occur? It would happen sixty-two sevens -- or 434 years -- after the previous events had occurred during the first "seven weeks". As we already know, those previous events were, of course, "the going forth of the commandment", which was followed by a period of forty-nine years -- or "seven weeks" -- during which the temple was rebuilt, the walls were rebuilt, the street was rebuilt, and the city and Jewish society as a whole were rebuilt and established, and temple sacrifices begun anew.

At the conclusion of those forty-nine years, the next 434 years would then begin to count down, until a total of 483 years had transpired. At the end of the 483-year period, the Messiah would appear, and then be cut off. But as the prophecy clearly states, His sacrifice would NOT be for Himself. It would in fact be for US. As I explain in so many of my other Bill's Bible Basics articles, His would be the Final Sacrifice for sin, and no other sacrifices would be acceptable to God for our sins after that. As we read in Hebrews and in other verses, Jesus died once, and only once, for the sins of all men.

Why was Jesus' blood sacrifice even necessary? Again, as I fully explain in other BBB articles, because without the shedding of Christ's blood, there could be no remission of our sins, and thus no forgiveness, no restoration of our relationship with the Father, and no Salvation and Eternal Life. Jesus had to meet the harsh requirements of the Laws of Moses, in order for His sacrifice to be acceptable. He had to be a pure, unblemished sacrifice, and His blood had

to be spilled. Being as I amply discuss this topic in many other articles, I will not be delving into it deeply here. However, allow me to share just a few key verses with you:

"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

Hebrews 9:22, KJV

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

1 John 1:7, KJV

"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

Ephesians 2:13, KJV

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

Matthew 26:26-28, KJV

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 3:16, KJV

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 5:8, KJV

"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he [Jesus] laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

1 John 3:16, KJV

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

John 10:11, KJV

"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Mark 10:45, KJV

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

1 Timothy 2:5-6, KJV

"Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men."

1 Corinthians 7:23, KJV

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

1 Corinthians 6:19-20, KJV

As we have now seen, the Seventy Weeks Prophecy said that at the end of the 483 years -- or 69 prophetic "weeks" -- Jesus the Messiah would appear, and then He would voluntarily be sacrificed for the sins of the world. He would be cut off. So then our next obvious question is this: Was Daniel's prophecy fulfilled on time exactly as the Angel Gabriel had spoken it to him? If we start counting from the year 445 BC when Persian king Artaxerxes I first gave the letter of decree to Nehemiah so that he could begin building the wall, the street and the rest of Jerusalem, did 483 years really pass before Jesus was crucified?

My friends, I will honestly tell you that I personally have been waiting for literally decades for a clear understanding of the deep prophecies I have been writing about in recent months. I am now in my early seventies. I began reading the Bible in earnest during my teen years more than fifty-five years ago as of the date of this current writing. I've asked and asked, and prayed and prayed many times for the Lord to reveal these hidden truths to me. I am happy to report that in recent months, He has begun doing that very thing. Thus, after waiting patiently for so long, I am now beginning to understand some things as I've never understood them before. My awakening actually began around 2011-2012, as I explain in other articles. However, the things I have been learning and publishing since around March of this year are recent revelations to me.

So to answer our question, yes, I am fully convinced that the fulfillment of the well-known Seventy Weeks Prophecy of Daniel -- although it was really Gabriel's -- arrived right on time. However, in order for you to understand this, you are going to have to be attentive, patient, and depending on

your particular doctrinal background, perhaps flexible as well. You need to be a new bottle in which new wine can be poured, and not someone who embraces a deeply traditional perspective. So are you ready? Let's go then.

The first thing you need to understand is that throughout this series, I have used secular, historical dates for the reigns of kings and other events. This is necessary due to the fact that these are the dates which are established by the secular world amongst researchers, historians, scholars, theologians, etc. They all use the solar calendar. However, something very important you need to understand is that in the Bible, secular dates are NOT used. In fact, as you will already know, Biblical authors do not use modern dates at all. Instead, they will use the time span from one event to another, or a point in a ruler's reign at which a certain event occurred, or perhaps say something such as "in the first year of so-and-so", or "in the third month of the year."

For us modern readers, this can make understanding certain events rather confusing or tricky. But that is not all. In the Scriptures, the solar calendar -- meaning 365.24 days per year is not used. Instead, a lunar calendar is used, which is based on lunar cycles. A lunar year consists of a total of 354.37 days. This total is based on a lunar month alternating between 29 or 30 days. However, if that is not already enough, careful inspection reveals that a Biblical year is neither 365.24 days nor 354.37 days. It is in fact 360 days per year. Why is this? Simply because the sum of a solar year and a lunar year are averaged out thusly:

$$365.24\text{-day solar year} + 354.37\text{-day lunar year} = 719.61 \text{ days}$$
$$719.61 \div 2 = 359.805 \text{ average days per year}$$

But to make it easier, it's rounded out to an even 360 days per Biblical year. Can we verify this figure by using the Bible alone as our reference? Yes, we most certainly can. As I have shown before, this 360 days per year becomes very evident in the time prophecies which are found in both the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation. In these two Books, we find the following phrases which all amount to the very same amount of time. Please note that "time" is equivalent to one year:

1. "forty-two months"

2. "1,260 days"

3. "time and times and the dividing of time" (3 1/2)

4. "time, times, and an half" (3 1/2)

Thus, if we divide 1,260 days by 3.5 years, it equates to exactly 360 days per Biblical year. So now you understand why we use 360 days per year when performing any Biblical calculation. You need to remember that we need to view all things from the Hebrew or Jewish perspective, and NOT from our modern perspective. Following are the various Bible verses where these different phrases are used:

"And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."

Daniel 7:25, KJV

"And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished."

Daniel 12:7, KJV

"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. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days."

Daniel 12:11-12, KJV

"But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth."

Revelation 11:2-3, KJV

"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."

Revelation 12:6, KJV

"And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations."
Revelation 13:5-7, KJV

With this understanding that a Biblical year equates to 360 days, and not to 365 days, we can now proceed to understand and verify the accuracy of Daniel's Seventy Weeks Prophecy. Being as we are using 445 BC as our starting point for when the 69 "weeks" -- or 483 years -- began, we can now begin to count forward in time 483 years. Why this particular date? Because as we learned earlier, that is when King Artaxerxes I gave Nehemiah his letter of decree, and permission to begin building in Jerusalem.

Starting at 445 BC and moving forward 483 solar years, takes us to the imaginary year 0. However, we need to move beyond the imaginary year zero another 38 years in order to reach the total of 483 solar years, because $445 + 38 = 483$. Doing so obviously takes us to the year 38 AD. As you can see, we have missed the mark by eight years, if we assume that Jesus was crucified in 30 AD. We will get to that particular point in just a moment. If the prophecy is accurate as I've stated, then exactly what went wrong? Why didn't we end up at 30 AD as we hoped to do? I can assure you that the prophecy is NOT the problem. Rather, it is our use of modern calendars which is skewing the results. If you are confused, no worries. Let me walk you through this.

As I previously explained to you, the date 445 BC is based on the solar calendar. Likewise, 30 AD is also based on the same solar calendar as well. However, please recall what I just explained to you. Bible prophecy does NOT use the solar calendar as modern society does. Rather, it really uses the prophetic 360 days per year model. Thus, the 483 years in the Seventy Weeks Prophecy is Biblical prophetic years, as the Israelites would have understood it. So to resolve this issue, what we need to do is to just convert the 483 years to solar years so that it will match the 445 BC solar year date, and the 30 AD solar year date. Here is how we do it:

$483 \times 360 \text{ days per Biblical year} = 173,880 \text{ days total.}$

$173,880 \text{ days} \div 365.25 \text{ days per solar year} = 476.07 \text{ years}.$

So for the sake of simplicity in our calculations, we will round out to approximately 476 solar years. So, just as we did earlier, if we start out at the solar date of 445 BC, and count forward 476 solar years from that date, we arrive at 31 AD as our new solar date. Well, that is certainly a lot better than 38 AD, isn't it?

Now depending on which Passover calendar is used, it could possibly come to 32 AD. The end result is likewise directly affected by the month in which each event occurred. Let me explain this to you a little more clearly. As we discussed earlier, a Biblical prophetic year is based on the average length of a solar year and a lunar year, which as we saw, is 359.805 days, which we round out to 360 days. But that is not all. The Hebrew calendar is actually lunisolar in nature. In other words, the Israelites marked the beginning of each new month by observing the phases of the Moon. Yet at the same time, they would add extra months so that the seasons would align with the solar year as well.

While the Passover feast always falls on the 15th of Nissan -- which is the first month of the year in the Hebrew lunar year -- because the Israelites would add months so that the seasons would align with the solar year, this also creates a problem when we are using the Western calendar, or what is more correctly known as the Gregorian calendar. The result is that the Passover feast does not always fall on the very same date on the Western calendar. It in fact becomes what we might refer to as a "floating feast" from year to year. So this Israelite practice of adding months to each year does affect historical dates to some degree.

But insofar as the Seventy Weeks Prophecy is concerned, it should be pointed out that no matter how you look at it, we still end up with a date of 31 to 32 AD when we move forward 483 prophetic years from 445 BC when King Artaxerxes I gave his letter of decree to Nehemiah so that he could return to Jerusalem and begin the task of rebuilding the wall, the street and Jerusalem on the whole. This task was totally separate from the decree to rebuild the temple, which was Zerubbabel and Ezra's job.

Now, I warned you earlier that if you happen to embrace a more traditional perspective, you might find this somewhat

challenging. Why? Because most traditionalists are adamant regarding maintaining 30 AD as the one and only acceptable date for the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. However, allow me to inform you that the truth of the matter is that there is no extant -- that is to say, existing or surviving -- Roman, Greek, Jewish or Aramaic manuscripts, or any other reliable documentation, to clearly support 30 AD as the precise date of Christ's Crucifixion. Furthermore, neither is there any precise Biblical information to establish a clear date for the Lord's Crucifixion. Along the same lines, neither do we find clear information in the Scriptures to establish Jesus' date of birth beyond a shadow of a doubt.

If you take the time to conduct your own online research, you will in fact discover that there has been an ongoing debate regarding both of these dates -- Birth and Crucifixion -- for literally centuries. If you should choose to delve into that information, I do urge caution, because there is so much out there, that you can easily become confused, and not know what to believe. Everybody will pull out their big guns, and try to convince you to accept their point of view, even if it is wrong. So you really need to have a sharp eye, and ask the Lord for both Wisdom and Spiritual Discernment if you choose to go that route.

Now regarding Jesus' date of birth, it seems that 4 BC is a commonly accepted date. But concerning Jesus' Crucifixion, you will quickly see that depending on which source you are reading, the date may fluctuate between 30 AD to 33 AD. The date I arrived at for the fulfillment of that particular part of the Seventy Weeks Prophecy sits comfortably right in the middle of those two dates. Furthermore, please note that the prophecy does NOT state that Jesus was cut off right at the conclusion of the "seven weeks" and "sixty-two weeks" period. What it does say is the following:

"and AFTER threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off"

So, if Jesus was crucified any time AFTER the 483 years had been completed, the prophecy would STILL be accurate in my opinion. The only way in which it would NOT be accurate, is if it demanded a definitive end date. However, it does not. Instead, it uses the word "after", which clearly suggests that any date between 30 AD and 33 AD would still align with the prophecy, not contradict it and thus be acceptable. From the Scriptures, the only clear chronological markers which

we can establish for Jesus' age are the following:

1. Herod's slaughter of the children occurred around the time that Jesus was two years old, shortly after the Wise Men had visited Joseph and Mary. By that time, Joseph and Mary were living in a house:

"And when they were come INTO THE HOUSE, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh . . . Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, FROM TWO YEARS OLD AND UNDER, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men."

Matthew 2:11, 16, KJV

2. Jesus got separated from His parents and went into the temple in Jerusalem to teach at twelve years old:

"Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast."

Luke 2:41-42, KJV

3. Jesus began His public ministry following His baptism by John when He was around thirty years old:

"And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli,"

Luke 3:23, KJV

4. Based on different Jewish feast days, and the reigns of different leaders who are mentioned in the Gospels, we are given the impression that it was some three to three and half years later when Jesus Christ was crucified on a Roman cross.

At this point in our discussion, we will return to the list of six items which I first shared with you in part one of this series. Please consider the following things which the Angel Gabriel stated would be accomplished by the time the Seventy Weeks Prophecy had come to its final conclusion:

1. to finish the transgression.

2. to make an end of sins.
3. to make reconciliation for iniquity.
4. to bring in everlasting righteousness.
5. to seal up the vision and prophecy.
6. to anoint the most Holy.

The first thing that stands out is the fact that every one of these six things relates directly to Jesus Christ, His earthly mission, and His sacrifice as the Passover lamb of God who shed His blood for the sins of the world. So let's take each item one at a time and discuss them.

1. TO FINISH THE TRANSGRESSION.

In looking at these six items, I realized that some of them can be understood in more than one way, while yet remaining true in both ways. This in fact applies to this first phrase. In looking at the original Hebrew, we see that the Hebrew word which is translated here as "finish" -- that is to say kala' -- can also mean to restrict, restrain, withhold, shut up, keep back, refrain or forbid. Likewise, the Hebrew word which is translated here as "transgression" -- that is to say pesha' -- can also mean rebellion. So this part of the verse is saying that Christ's sacrifice would in some way finish, restrict, restrain, withhold, shut up, keep back, refrain or forbid the transgression or rebellion.

As I contemplated the extended meaning of this short phrase, a number of different things entered my mind. First of all, as I explain in articles such as "Satan: His Origin, Purpose and Future", since a very long time ago, Satan -- a.k.a. the Devil -- has been in rebellion against God. I don't want to get into a lot of detail here, because this topic is fully discussed in the aforementioned article, as well as in a few other articles. But because of his own pride, Satan wanted to usurp the Throne of God, and was thus cast down to the earth, along with other rebellious Angels. In fact, you may recall that in the Gospels, we find the following interesting verse:

"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by

force."
Matthew 11:12, KJV

However, upon being cast down to the earth, the Devil did not simply surrender. He in fact continued his rebellion against God, and caused it to spread, when he lied to, deceived, and corrupted the first human pair. That is to say, Adam and Eve. As all Christians understand, Adam and Eve rebelled against God when they partook of the forbidden fruit. It is at this point that we come to the well-known concept of sin. Exactly what is meant by sin? Sin is a trespass, or a transgression. But what does this mean? As I've explained on many previous occasions, the Apostle John offers us a clear understanding of the word with the following Bible verse:

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
1 John 3:4, KJV

According to Thayer's Greek English Lexicon, in the previous verse the word "transgression" finds its origin in the Koine Greek word "anomia". This Greek word is variably translated as iniquity, unrighteousness, and transgression of the law. More specifically, the lexicon notes as follows:

----- Begin Quote -----

- 1) the condition of without law
 - 1a) because ignorant of it
 - 1b) because of violating it
- 2) contempt and violation of law, iniquity, wickedness

----- End Quote -----

In that very same verse, the word "sin" is derived from the Koine Greek word "hamartia", which is directly related to the Koine Greek word "hamartanó". So exactly what do these Greek words mean? Consider the following definitions which are found in the same lexicon:

----- Begin Quote -----

- 1) equivalent to hamartan

1a) to be without a share in

1b) to miss the mark

1c) to err, be mistaken

1d) to miss or wander from the path of uprightness and honour, to do or go wrong

1e) to wander from the law of God, violate God's law, sin

2) that which is done wrong, sin, an offence, a violation of the divine law in thought or in act

3) collectively, the complex or aggregate of sins committed either by a single person or by many

----- End Quote -----

If we consider all of the previous information and summarize it, what we are being told is that sin means to transgress, or break, violate, err from, wander away from, or basically to live outside of God's Laws. It is to be mistaken and to miss the mark of remaining inside of God's Laws. It is to be in a state of rebellion against God's Laws. My friends, that is exactly what Satan did and continued to do. That is also what Adam and Eve did when they went against God's Word and ate of the forbidden fruit. God warned them that in the day that they ate of the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would surely die, as we see by the following two verses:

"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."
Genesis 2:16-17, KJV

Please go to part eight for the continuation of this series.

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SEVENTY WEEKS PROPHECY : WHAT IT MEANS - PART 8

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Adam And Eve's Harmonious Relationship With God Was Broken, We Inherited The Penalty Of Sin Which Is Death, Jews' Long History Of Rebellion, Spirit Of Rebellion Up To The Book Of Revelation, Rebellion Of Zealots And Sicarii In The Temple, Rebellion From Heaven To Earth, Sin And Death Came Upon All Men, God Offers Redemption Through Christ, We Have Passed From Death Unto Life, Seventy Weeks Prophecy Leads Up To "It Is Finished", To Make And End Of Sins, Jesus Has The Keys Of Death And Hell, Death And Sin No Longer Have Dominion Over Us, Washed In The Blood Of The Lamb, God Remembers Our Sins No More, To Make Reconciliation For Iniquity, Reconciled To God Through Christ, To Bring In Everlasting Righteousness, Our Righteousness Stinks, Clothed In Christ's Righteousness, To Seal Up The Vision And Prophecy, All Things Were Fulfilled

Continuing our discussion from part seven, while Adam and Eve lived very long lives, in the end, as we all do, they eventually died. More importantly, on the day that they ate of the forbidden fruit, their once harmonious relationship with the Lord was broken. And so, as punishment for their rebellion, they were both cast out of the Garden of Eden, and they were forced to live very difficult lives as they struggled to survive. Sadly, again, as all Christians know, the problem and the rebellion did not end in Eden. In fact, as Jesus, the Apostle John and the Apostle Paul all clearly explain, their sinful nature eventually both spread to and corrupted all of humanity. As a result, we have inherited the very same penalty for sin, which is death.

If we closely examine the Old Testament, we see that the very same spirit of rebellion is found throughout its pages. As I point out in such articles as the series "The Fruits of Disobedience", time and time again, the Israelites backslid from the Lord and fell into a state of deep apostasy. As a result, God was forced to punish them over and over again in order to get them back on track, at least for a time, until they rebelled again. In the Gospels and the Epistles, we see

the same thing occurring with the unbelieving Jews. Not only did they rebel and remain in stubborn disbelief, even when the Messiah was in their very midst, but they were so wicked that they eventually plotted His murder, and used the Romans as their executioners.

Looking at the Book of Revelation, the very same spirit of rebellion persists as we see the Beast, the False Prophet and their followers blaspheming God, and eventually, even making war against the camp of the Saints. So, when we see the prophecy stating "to finish the transgression", or to put an end to, restrict, restrain or refrain the sin and the rebellion, we should now understand exactly what this phrase means, and why it became necessary to do so.

In fact, I will take this thought one step further. If you read my series "Vespasian, Titus and the Fall of Jerusalem", one thing you will learn is that once the Zealots, robbers, Sicarii and other thugs took over the temple compound, they totally polluted and defiled it with extreme bloodshed and violence. Furthermore, they removed the real priests, and they installed their own. Likewise, they mocked the Prophets of the Lord, and they scoffed at the Laws of God. They were in a total state of ungodly rebellion, and they didn't even care. Is it any wonder that God had the Romans burn down the place in order to purify it?

So to reiterate, what started out as a rebellion in Heaven, then moved to the Earth, and beginning with Adam and Eve, it eventually spread to all of humanity, so that sin and death came upon all men. These plain truths are made evident by verses such as the following:

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one . . . For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"
Romans 3:10, 23, KJV

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
1 John 1:8-10, KJV

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
Romans 6:23, KJV

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Romans 5:12-21, KJV

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"

Romans 5:8, KJV

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

John 5:24, KJV

"Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)"

Ephesians 2:5, KJV

"And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."

Romans 8:10, KJV

Yet as the previous verses also reveal, the all-knowing God

had already put a wonderful plan into motion, which across the centuries and the millennia, finally came to fruition when Jesus gave His life as an atonement and ransom price for us all. This He willingly did so that we today might be redeemed through His blood, and thus have our relationship with the Father restored. But for that to happen, we need to first believe in and confess what He did for us, so that we might be symbolically washed in His blood and made righteous before God the Father. If we do this, then as the previous verses plainly declare, we will not only no longer be under the condemnation of the Law, but we'll pass from death unto life, exactly as Jesus stated in John 5:24 above.

That is exactly what the Seventy Weeks Prophecy is all about. Everything was leading up to that moment when Jesus finally said "It is finished". He met the requirements of the Law. He closed up the breach between God and man. He completed His mission. He put an end to the transgression, exactly as the prophecy states, and He opened Salvation's door for us all.

2. TO MAKE AND END OF SINS.

This part of the prophecy was likewise fulfilled when Jesus died on the Cross. In this particular phrase, the word "end" is derived from the Hebrew word "tamam" which means to end, complete or finish. Furthermore, the word "sins" is derived from the Hebrew word "chatta'ah" which Thayer's Greek English Lexicon defines as follows:

----- Begin Quote -----

1) sin, sinful

2) sin, sin offering

2a) sin

2b) condition of sin, guilt of sin

2c) punishment for sin

2d) sin-offering

2e) purification from sins of ceremonial uncleanness

----- End Quote -----

Now, some people might possibly argue, "But Bill! Just look at the world. Look at the mess it is in. There is still sin and rebellion everywhere." Yes, my friends, this is indeed very true. But perhaps that isn't exactly what the phrase means. I see two ways in which we can understand it. First, perhaps we can interpret it to mean that Christ's death on the Cross put an end to the PENALTY of sin. Which is what? As we saw earlier in Romans 6:23, Death. If we believe in Jesus, and accept His loving Sacrifice as atonement for our sins, and as the ransom price which He was willing to pay, then we are liberated from death, and will live forever in His eternal Kingdom. As Jesus said, we have passed from death unto life.

In fact, as I have explained before, the Bible informs us that at one time, the Devil had the power of death. However, with His death on the Cross, and subsequent resurrection from the dead, it appears that Jesus symbolically took back the keys of both death and Hell itself. Death no longer has dominion over Him. Furthermore, we are told by the Apostle Paul that when we embrace Christ, sin no longer has dominion over us. If sin no longer has dominion over us, then neither does death -- because the wages of sin is death -- and as we learned earlier, we have thus passed from death unto life. These amazing truths become evident in the following group of Bible verses:

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he [Jesus] also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;"
Hebrews 2:14, KJV

"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."
Revelation 1:18, KJV

"Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God . . . For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."
Romans 6:9-10, 14, KJV

Now, the second way in which we can possibly understand the phrase "to make an end of sins" is that once we have been symbolically washed in the Blood of the Lamb -- meaning, of

course, Jesus -- then our slate is washed totally clean, and God will remember our sins no more. That is the end of them. They become "invisible" to God, as long as we are willing to confess them. Consider the following group of Bible verses which verify this point:

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Isaiah 1:18, KJV

"Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all."

John 13:10, KJV

"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."

John 15:3, KJV

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin . . . If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

1 John 1:7, 9, KJV

"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, KJV

"For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

Hebrews 8:12, KJV

"And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

Hebrews 10:17, KJV

3. TO MAKE RECONCILIATION FOR INIQUITY.

In this phrase, the word "reconciliation" is derived from the Hebrew word "kaphar". According to the Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew Aramaic English Lexicon, this word

is defined in the following manner:

----- Begin Quote -----

1) to cover, purge, make an atonement, make reconciliation,
cover over with pitch

1a) (Qal) to coat or cover with pitch

1b) (Piel)

1b1) to cover over, pacify, propitiate

1b2) to cover over, atone for sin, make atonement for

1b3) to cover over, atone for sin and persons by legal
rites

1c) (Pual)

1c1) to be covered over

1c2) to make atonement for

1d) (Hithpael) to be covered

----- End Quote -----

In that same phrase, the word "iniquity" is derived from the Hebrew word "aw-vone'", which again, the Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew Aramaic English Lexicon defines in the following manner:

----- Begin Quote -----

1) perversity, depravity, iniquity, guilt or punishment of
iniquity

1a) iniquity

1b) guilt of iniquity, guilt (as great), guilt (of
condition)

1c) consequence of or punishment for iniquity

----- End Quote -----

As we saw earlier, this is exactly what Jesus did for us. He atoned for our sins by shedding His own blood, because as we also learned earlier, without shedding of blood, there is no remission of our sins. Again, Jesus Christ became the final Passover lamb. He reconciled us to the Father. He became the propitiation for our sins. In other words, He appeased the Father's wrath, so that we are now held guiltless, and are no longer under harsh condemnation, once we come to Christ. Just as Adam and Eve lost their peaceful relationship with the Lord, we have regained it through Christ's sufferings. Consider the following group of Bible verses which again verify this important point:

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."
Romans 5:1, 10, KJV

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."
2 Corinthians 5:18-19, KJV

"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."
Ephesians 2:13-18, KJV

"For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight:"

Colossians 1:19-22, KJV

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

1 John 2:1-2, KJV

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

1 John 4:10, KJV

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;"

Romans 3:25, KJV

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 5:6-8, KJV

4. TO BRING IN EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Once again, we see the fulfillment of this phrase in Jesus Christ. Some people will no doubt again wonder how I can possibly say this. In fact, I have had certain Christians say to me "But Bill, how can you possibly say that this has already been fulfilled. Look around you! Look at the world! Where is this everlasting righteousness of which you speak? To such people, I say this: You are looking at things the wrong way. You are understanding them with your carnal mind. There are so many Futurist-leaning Christians who have this very physical conception of what everything means. Yet they seem to forget that Jesus also said the following:

"And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."

Luke 17:20-21, KJV

I am personally convinced that this phrase is also referring

to an internal righteousness. It is in fact the righteousness that we each receive when we place our faith in Jesus Christ. As the Bible informs us, our righteousness is as filthy rags. It stinks. It cannot possibly ever save us. I've covered this same subject a number of times before. As the Apostle Paul informs us, his own Jewish brethren who rejected Christ went about trying to establish their own righteousness before God by supposedly keeping the mandates of the Mosaic Law. And the reason why they did this, is because they rejected the true righteousness which comes through faith in Christ alone. Let me share a few verses with you before continuing:

"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

Isaiah 64:6, KJV

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

Romans 10:1-4, KJV

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"

Titus 3:5, KJV

"And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Luke 18:9-14, KJV

As the Apostle Paul writes in the previous verses, the simple fact of the matter is that the righteousness of God is only obtained through faith in Jesus Christ. Christ is our one and only righteousness, and when we're symbolically washed in His blood, and accept His blood atonement as propitiation for our sins, the Bible informs us that we are symbolically clothed with a garment of salvation, and we're covered with a robe of righteousness. Furthermore, even Jesus spoke about this in the Gospels. This Scriptural truth becomes plainly evident by the following group of verses. Notice how Revelation states "for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints":

"I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem."
Job 29:14, KJV

"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."
Isaiah 61:10, KJV

"Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen."
Matthew 22:8-14, KJV

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels . . . I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."

Revelation 3:5, 18, KJV

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

Revelation 6:9-11, KJV

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands . . . And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 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 7:9, 13-14, KJV

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."

Revelation 19:7-9, KJV

5. TO SEAL UP THE VISION AND PROPHECY.

This phrase is a little more difficult to understand, but not entirely. In this particular phrase, the words "seal up" are derived from the Hebrew word "chatham" which means to seal, seal up, affix a seal, lock up, or to be stopped. We are told that this would happen upon the completion of the Seventy Weeks, or the 490-year period. My sense -- and I admit that I could be wrong -- is that once all of these various things had occurred, the prophecy was to be sealed up, locked up, and come to its end. It was to be put away,

because it had been completed. It was done with. As Jesus himself said, "It is finished." Furthermore, allow me to remind you of exactly what Jesus said to two disciples as they were walking on the road to Emmaus, and then what He later said to the Apostles as well who were in hiding:

"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself . . . And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things."

Luke 24:26-27, 44-48, KJV

Please go to part nine for the continuation of this series.

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SEVENTY WEEKS PROPHECY : WHAT IT MEANS - PART 9

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Shut Up The Words And Seal The Book, Seal Not The Sayings Of The Prophecy Of This Book, For The Time Is At Hand, To Anoint The Most Holy, Prophets Anointed The Old Testament Kings, Oil Was Symbolic Of God's Spirit And Anointing, Most Holy Means Jesus Christ, Possibility #1: Jesus' Baptism By John, Jesus Had The Spirit Without Measure, Jesus Was Never Referred To As A King Until The Final Week, A Name Above All Names, Possibility #2: Christ's Coronation As King Of Kings,

God The Father Is Greater Than Jesus, Jesus Submits To The Father, On The Right Hand Of God, Are Father And Son Really Co-Regents?, The People Of The Prince That Shall Come Means Romans, Challenges Of Running Bill's Bible Basics Ministry, Puppet King Herod Agrippa II, The Prince Is General Titus, "Messiah The Prince" And "The Prince" Are Not Same Person

Continuing our discussion from part eight, that "to seal up the vision and prophecy" may mean that the vision and the prophecy were to be sealed up, locked up and put away upon completion is suggested by the fact that after receiving all of his dreams, visions and Angelic Messages, Daniel is told the following in the final chapter of his Book:

"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."

Daniel 12:4, KJV

In the previous verse, the words "shut up" and "seal" are derived from the very same Hebrew word "chatham" as we see in the aforementioned phrase. So what is Daniel being told to do? He is being instructed to seal, shut up and close up his prophetic Book, because it is not yet time for its full completion or fulfillment. So when would it be time? As the verse states, at the time of the end. But when was that? At the end of the Seventy Weeks, or 490-year period, which, as we know, concluded during the First Century AD. Personally, I refer to this long period of time as the Prophetic Age of Daniel. In fact, I have suspected for many years that Jesus may have dropped a hint to Peter when He said the following to him:

"Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."

Matthew 18:21-22, KJV

I believe that Jesus may have been speaking to Peter in a somewhat cryptic fashion. In other words, I think Jesus was telling Peter that he should forgive his brother to the end of the age, which in fact concluded only a few years after Peter had died. Is it merely a coincidence that the Lord said "seventy times seven" -- which is 490 -- which is the

same length of time as the prophecy we are discussing? On the other hand, when John received his visions and messages in the Book of Revelation, consider what he was told:

"And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand."

Revelation 22:10, KJV

Now isn't that interesting! John was told to NOT seal his Book. Why not? Because the events which are described in his Book were about to happen, as I amply explain in some of my other articles which you will find on this same Bill's Bible Basics website, and which are listed with clickable links at the end of this same series.

6. TO ANOINT THE MOST HOLY.

And now we come to the final sixth phrase in our list. Again, I can see two different ways in which we can understand this phrase. In this phrase, the word "anoint" is derived from the Hebrew word "mashach" which in fact simply means to anoint or to consecrate. As many of you will know, during Old Testament times, one of the responsibilities of the Lord's Prophets was to anoint new kings with olive oil. As I fully explain in the article entitled "The Significance of Oil in the Holy Scriptures", this oil represented God's spiritual anointing on a particular leader. A case in point is how Prophet Samuel was sent by God to anoint both King Saul, and then David as well. Consider the following group of verses:

"And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God . . . Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his [Saul's] head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?"

1 Samuel 9:27-10:1, KJV

"And he sent, and brought him [David] in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him [David] in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah."

1 Samuel 16:12-13, KJV

Concerning the phrase "most holy", it is derived from the Hebrew word "qodesh", which refers to something or someone which or who is set apart and consecrated for some sacred and hallowed service to God. In fact, in the original verse in Hebrew, the word "qodesh" is repeated twice. This means that it is not just holy, it is REALLY holy. Now, it seems to me that the phrase "most holy" can only be referring to Jesus Christ Himself.

So one way in which we can possibly interpret this phrase is that it is referring to when John the Baptist baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, during which time the Holy Spirit of God descended upon Jesus like a dove. This event in fact marked the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, and it was heralded by God the Father Himself, as we see by the following set of Bible verses:

"And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Mark 1:9-11, KJV

One thing we know for certain is that Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit without limit. He had the full power of His Father dwelling in His mortal body, which is why He was able to perform so many powerful miracles, including raising some people from the dead. Consider the following set of verses:

"For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him."

John 3:34, KJV

"For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;"

Colossians 1:19, KJV

"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Colossians 2:9, KJV

What is also interesting about this is the fact that right after His water baptism, the Holy Spirit descending, and the Father speaking from Heaven, the Lord did in fact separate Himself from the multitude of people by immediately going

into the wilderness area of the Jordan River valley, where He fasted for forty days and was tempted by the Devil. Now while this seems like a valid interpretation of the phrase "to anoint the most holy", I am not absolutely certain that it is the right interpretation, and I will tell you why I feel this way.

First of all, my personal sense is that the phrase is really describing something much bigger and more important. This is not to diminish the importance of Jesus' water baptism by any means. After all, not only did the Holy Spirit show up, but His very own Father made an appearance as well. However, if we consider both the magnitude and scope of the Seventy Weeks Prophecy, I am inclined to believe that "to anoint the most holy" is speaking of something much greater. One observation I have made is that the phrase is the final one in the list of six goals. It suggests to me that it happens after the first five have been accomplished.

Allow me to point out here that aside from the wise men -- or magos -- inquiring where the King of the Jews could be found, in the four Gospels, Jesus was never referred to as a king by anyone. That is, until the final week of His earthly ministry when He entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey. It was shortly after that, that Pontius Pilate asked Jesus if He was a king, and referred to Him as a king. Furthermore, the plaque that was placed above His head as He hung dying on a Roman cross stated that He was a king. Of course, the chief priests were greatly offended that Jesus was called the King of the Jews. In fact, it stated so in three different languages: Hebrew, Greek and Latin.

In addition, throughout the four Gospels, the Lord never once referred to Himself as a king. He referred to Himself as the Son, and to God as His Father. In one of His Parables, Jesus did refer to Himself as the son of the king, and the heir to the throne. In contrast, following His death and resurrection from the dead, the Apostle Paul did in fact refer to Jesus as "Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords". Likewise, in the Book of Revelation, two times Jesus is referred to as "King of kings, and Lord of lords", as we see by this group of Bible verses:

"I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord

Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."

1 Timothy 6:13-16, KJV

"These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."

Revelation 17:14, KJV

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Revelation 19:11-16, KJV

Lastly, we also have the following well-known verses which have been quoted by many Christians, where the name of Jesus is exalted above every name, because He was willing to make the Ultimate Sacrifice, when He voluntarily gave His life for the sins of the world:

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Philippians 2:5-11, KJV

Putting all of this together, my sense is the following. I lean towards the belief that it was at some point after the Lord had proven His obedience to the Father, by willingly giving His life for the sins of the world, and after He had risen from the dead, and returned to His Father, that He was anointed, consecrated and crowned as King of kings and Lord of Lords. While He referred to Himself as the heir to the throne in His Parable, now He was truly a king. But exactly what does that mean?

As we all know, the heir to the throne is one who becomes the new king once the previous king has died. But God the Father is eternal in the Heavens, and even Jesus said that the Father is greater than Himself. So how then can Jesus be King of kings? The way that I have personally resolved this seeming dilemma is in the following manner. We should already know that God the Father is greater than Jesus, and that He -- meaning God the Father -- is greater than all. Jesus Himself made this very evident, as did the Apostles. Consider the following group of Bible verses:

"Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for MY FATHER IS GREATER THAN I."

John 14:28, KJV

"My Father, which gave them me, is GREATER THAN ALL; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

John 10:29, KJV

"One God and Father of all, WHO IS ABOVE ALL, and through all, and in you all."

Ephesians 4:6, KJV

"And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless NOT MY WILL, BUT THINE, BE DONE."

Luke 22:41-42, KJV

"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, YET LEARNED HE

OBEDIENCE by the things which he suffered;"
Hebrews 5:7-8, KJV

"I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I SEEK NOT MINE OWN WILL, BUT THE WILL OF THE FATHER WHICH HATH SENT ME."
John 5:30, KJV

"Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; AND TO MY GOD, and your God."
John 20:17, KJV

"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; AND THE HEAD OF CHRIST IS GOD."
1 Corinthians 11:3, KJV

In the Apostle Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, we also discover that after all of the Father's enemies have been subdued, Jesus delivers the Kingdom to His Father, and then Jesus Himself likewise submits to His Father as well. In fact, in the Book of Revelation, we witness the Lamb of God approaching the throne of the Father. Consider this set of Bible verses:

"Then cometh the end, when he [Jesus] shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he [Jesus] shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he [Jesus] must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he [God the Father] is excepted, which did put all things under him [under Jesus]. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, [unto Jesus] then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him [unto God the Father] that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."
1 Corinthians 15:24-28, KJV

"And I saw in the right hand of him [God the Father] that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the

book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints."

Revelation 5:1-8, KJV

So with these two groups of verses, we clearly see that God the Father sits upon the central throne in Heaven. We also see that Jesus submits Himself to His Father. Furthermore, as the symbolic Lamb that was slain, Jesus also approaches His Father who is sitting on the central throne in order to take the sealed book out of His Father's right hand. But that is not all. We also know from a variety of Scriptures that Jesus likewise has His OWN throne, and that He sits on the right hand of the Father. This is made evident by the following group of verses:

"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

Romans 8:34, KJV

"Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,"

Ephesians 1:20, KJV

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

Colossians 3:1, KJV

"Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high . . . But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand,

until I make thine enemies thy footstool?"

Hebrews 1:3, 13, KJV

"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;"

Hebrews 8:1, KJV

"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;"

Hebrews 10:12, KJV

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Hebrews 12:2, KJV

"Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."

1 Peter 3:22, KJV

So upon contemplating all of this Scriptural evidence, what kind of picture is emerging? What does the prophetic phrase "to anoint the most holy" actually mean? Well, as I pointed out earlier, I lean towards the belief that it is referring to Jesus' post-Resurrection coronation and consecration as King of kings and Lords of lords. Perhaps it means over the kings and lords of the earth. Or maybe it means over all of the kings and lords in Heaven as well. That would seem to be indicated by Philippians 2:5-11, which we read earlier.

HOWEVER, in my opinion, it still does NOT place Jesus above His Father. While Jesus is a part of the Godhead, I am still convinced by the Scriptures that He remains just below His Father, insofar as the Celestial Hierarchy is concerned. So He must still submit to His Father. Maybe we can look at it as a type of co-regency for lack of a better word. These are my current thoughts. You may agree or disagree as you feel led. Let me just conclude this section by saying that we will all find out the truth eventually when we appear before Him someday.

At this point in our discussion, we have now covered all six items in what I suppose we can refer to as the Seventy Weeks Prophecy goals list. Most, if not all, of these things were

accomplished during the first sixty-nine-week-period. That is to say, during the first 483 years of Daniel's Prophetic Age, which concluded during the First Century AD. Of course, I have not covered every single angle, or even shared with you every single related verse. However, I believe I have given you a lot to ponder for now. So then, now it is time to discuss the final 70th week -- or Last Seven Years -- of the Seventy Weeks Prophecy.

Phrase:

"and the people of the prince that shall come"

Explanation:

If you are familiar with the history of First Century Israel, then you may already realize that the phrase "the people" is referring to the Roman legions, as well as their allies who accompanied them in their military campaign against Israel, and more specifically against Jerusalem, because that was the main prize in the war. But if you're not familiar with said events, I strongly encourage you to read the 25-part series called "Vespasian, Titus and the Fall of Jerusalem". That series is jam-packed with historical information which many of you have probably never even heard before. I promise you that if you have the fortitude and patience to read the full series, you will learn a lot, and you will understand the events of 70 AD like never before.

At any rate, I began the series back in 2011. However, being as Bill's Bible Basics is a one-man ministry, and being as BBB is likewise a multi-faceted ministry, quite often I tend to get bogged down in one particular area, so that I'll end up neglecting other areas of the ministry. As a result, the aforementioned series sat on my hard drive in an incomplete state for fourteen long years until several months ago when I finally made a serious effort to complete it. After about four months of new work, I finished the series last month. That is to say, in June of 2025.

But as I was saying, when the Roman armies swooped down from the northern coast at Ptolemais with their local allies, it included military forces which had been sent by treacherous Jewish puppet King Agrippa II, who had been groomed in Rome itself during the reign of Emperor Claudius. Agrippa II was in fact the seventh and final king of the Herodian line. It is also believed that he was the Herod Agrippa before whom

the Apostle Paul appeared and testified in the twenty-sixth of the Book of Acts, as we see by the following verses:

"And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to salute Festus . . . Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. To morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him. And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth. And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him. Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write. For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself . . . Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds. And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar."

Acts 25:13, 22-26:1, 28-32, KJV

Among his duties as the Romans' Jewish puppet king, we also know that Herod Agrippa II was responsible for appointing the high priest in the temple in Jerusalem. Furthermore, he spent great sums of money in order to beautify the temple during his reign. However, it was the manner in which this Herod capriciously appointed and dismissed the high priests according to his own political ambitions, which made him fall out of favor with the Jews. Following the destruction of Jerusalem, we are told that like a rat fleeing a sinking ship, Agrippa II returned to Rome where he lived out the rest of his days, along with Bernice -- or Berenice -- who

was his sister and the eldest daughter of Herod Agrippa I.

Concerning "the prince", as I explain in the aforementioned series, I am convinced -- and there is little doubt -- that this is a clear reference to General Titus, who was given the task of completing the war campaign which had first been initiated by his father, Vespasian -- also a future emperor -- as had been ordered by Emperor Nero prior to Nero taking his own life. Please make sure that you understand that this prince, and Messiah the Prince, are NOT speaking about the same person. As we have seen, Messiah the Prince is Jesus, whereas this prince -- in lowercase letters -- is Titus.

While General Vespasian and his son Titus had began the war effort together, and subdued much of Israel together, once the Roman Senate had chosen Vespasian as Rome's new emperor following the murder of Vitellius during the "Year of the Four Emperors", Vespasian was forced to return to Rome. In Book 5 Chapter 1 of his surviving work "Histories", Second Century Roman historian Publius Tacitus not only informs us that Titus was left with the task of subduing Jerusalem, but Tacitus also refers to Titus as a prince, just as we see in the Seventy Weeks Prophecy. Consider the following excerpt:

----- Begin Quote -----

Early in this year Titus Caesar, who had been selected by his father to complete the subjugation of Judaea, and who had gained distinction as a soldier while both were still subjects, began to rise in power and reputation, as armies and provinces emulated each other in their attachment to him . . . He found in Judaea three legions, the 5th, the 10th, and the 15th, all old troops of Vespasian's. To these he added the 12th from Syria, and some men belonging to the 18th and 3rd, whom he had withdrawn from Alexandria. This force was accompanied by twenty cohorts of allied troops and eight squadrons of cavalry, by the two kings Agrippa and Sohemus, by the auxiliary forces of king Antiochus, by a strong contingent of Arabs, who hated the Jews with the usual hatred of neighbours, and, lastly, by many persons brought from the capital and from Italy by private hopes of securing the yet unengaged affections of the Prince. With this force Titus entered the enemy's territory, preserving strict order on his march, reconnoitering every spot, and always ready to give battle. At last he encamped near Jerusalem.

----- End Quote -----

Please go to part ten for the continuation of this series.

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SEVENTY WEEKS PROPHECY : WHAT IT MEANS - PART 10

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Shall Destroy The City And The Sanctuary, Titus Achieved His Objectives, Jesus' Warnings Regarding The Temple Destruction, The End Thereof Shall Be With A Flood, A Flood Of Roman Army Swept Away The Jews, Massive Stone Blocks Of City Walls And The Temple, End Of Temple City And Jews, Jews Were Enslaved During Three Diasporas, First Jewish-Roman War Jewish Death Toll And Enslavement, Great Tribulation Such As Was Not Since Beginning Of The World, Unto The End Of The War Desolations Are Determined, 66 AD-73 AD Seven-Year First Jewish-Roman War, Fall Of Masada, Fulfillment Of The 70th Week, The Controversy Surrounding Daniel 9:27, Futurist View Versus Preterist View, My Former Futurist Years, Social Networks Donald Trump Abraham Accords Gaza And Temple Preparations, Breaking Down "He Shall Confirm The Covenant With Many For One Week", "He" Is Titus, Futurist False Interpretation Of "The Covenant", Seventy Weeks Don't Pertain To Today, God's Harsh Judgment On Jews, God Uses Human To Perform His Will, Looking For A Mysterious Covenant, Psalm 83 War: Another Futurist False Doctrine, The Covenant Is A Military Alliance Titus Made With Many Others, Tacitus And Josephus Both Describe Huge Alliance Vespasian And Titus Made, 60,000+ Soldiers Strong Army, Breakdown Of Military Alliance

Continuing our discussion from part nine, let us now look at the next phrase in the Seventy Weeks Prophecy. We have already identified General Titus and the Romans, who along with their allies -- including King Herod Agrippa II and a

host of others -- have slowly marched down from northern Israel over the past few years. Some cities and villages have voluntarily submitted themselves to Roman might, but due to their arrogance, others have been utterly burned to the ground and destroyed and their entire populations have been slaughtered when they foolishly refused to yield to Rome's overpowering military machine.

Let me mention here again that the war details I'm providing in this series are very much abbreviated. If you want to know who the protagonists and the antagonists were, what motivated each side, where the major battles were fought, what happened within the walls of Jerusalem, and the extreme suffering that the Jerusalemites endured during those four terrible months that the Roman siege lasted, then consider reading "Vespasian, Titus and the Fall of Jerusalem".

Phrase:

"shall destroy the city and the sanctuary"

Explanation:

It is a historical fact that Roman General Titus achieved his objective of subduing Jerusalem. According to secular sources such as Roman historian Publius Cornelius Tacitus, and Jewish general and historian Flavius Josephus, and as many Jews and Christians know, this Roman military victory culminated in the complete destruction of the city of Jerusalem, and the Second Temple -- also known as Herod's temple -- precisely as Jesus Himself had warned and prophesied about four decades earlier. Consider the following group of Bible verses as evidence:

"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. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Matthew 23:37-24:2, KJV

"And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here! And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Mark 13:1-2, KJV

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Luke 13:34-35, KJV

"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

Luke 19:41-44, KJV

"And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Luke 21:5-6, KJV

Phrase:

"the end thereof shall be with a flood"

Explanation:

The Hebrew word that is translated as "flood" in the above phrase is "sheteph". This word literally means a flood or an overflowing of waters. However, in this case, it appears that it's intended to be understood in a metaphorical sense. In other words, it's really referring to the flood of Titus' army which wreaked havoc on the city of Jerusalem, and which destroyed the temple compound down to its very foundation

blocks. Trust me when I say that the blocks which were used in the three perimeter walls, and in the construction of the temple itself, were massive! In fact, they were so strong, large and thick, that it took the Romans not just days, but literally weeks and months to breach all three walls with their ramming engines, before they could actually enter the city.

To put this feat into perspective for you, according to the Wikipedia website, with regard to the blocks in the Western Wall, it states that most of the blocks weighed between two and eight U.S. tons each. However, other blocks weighed even more, with one rather extraordinary block north of Wilson's Arch measuring 44.5 feet long, 11.0 feet high, 5.9 to 8.2 feet deep, and weighing between 280 and 330 U.S. tons!

Now if you find those figures mind-boggling, consider that with regard to the stone blocks which were used to build the temple itself, some measured 40 feet long, 11 feet wide, and 16.5 feet high. They could weigh several hundred tons, and some of them reached as much as 570 to 630 tons in weight! The largest block that was ever quarried is 64 feet long, 20 feet wide, and 18 feet high. Its weight is estimated to be approximately 1,650 U.S. tons! My friends, now imagine the ancient Romans disassembling the temple and the surrounding walls which were constructed of limestone blocks so huge. Yet they were able to accomplish it in precise fulfillment of the Lord's words. That just blows my mind!

Returning to the metaphorical use of the word "flood" for a moment, we can say that in a sense, the temple and the city were swept away by the flood of Roman forces. We can verify that this metaphorical interpretation is the correct one by comparing this verse with another verse that is found only a few chapters later. In Daniel chapter eleven we read the following verse:

"And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflowed from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant."

Daniel 11:22, KJV

In the previous verse, the word "arms" is derived from the Hebrew word "zerowa"-- or zer-o'-ah -- which not only means a physical arm, but which is also used to symbolize an arm of strength. That is to say, political or military might. I also think that it is significant that we are told that the

end -- emphasis on the word "end" -- will be with a flood. In my mind, the question is this: The end of what? Well, we know that it was obviously the end of Jerusalem, as well as the end of the temple compound, and by extension, the end of the hypocritical, pharisaical religion that it represented.

However, it was also the end of the Jewish people as well. Precisely as Jesus had warned His followers some forty years earlier, and exactly as had occurred centuries earlier when the Assyrian and the Babylonian invasions occurred, the Jews were enslaved and carried away by the Roman flood into other Roman provinces. Consider the following verses, taking note of the words I have placed in uppercase letters:

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, THAT ALL THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN MAY BE FULFILLED. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be LED AWAY CAPTIVE INTO ALL NATIONS: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

Luke 21:20-24, KJV

While I describe all of these things in considerable detail in "Vespasian, Titus and the Fall of Jerusalem", let me just tell you that according to reports that leaked out of Jerusalem at the time of the four-month Roman siege, and according to what Roman historian Tacitus and Jewish historian Josephus wrote in their respective works, 600,000 to 1,100,000 Jews died during the siege. A huge number of Jerusalemites died from rampant famine and disease. Other Jews died while fighting in the war. Still others -- in the many thousands -- died from all of the inter-factional fighting which occurred between the three main groups which had taken control of different parts of the city. Many Jews were crucified by the Romans. And lastly, some Jews committed suicide due to their own desperation.

In addition to the aforementioned casualties of war, Josephus reports that 97,000 Jews were enslaved and sold in other Roman provinces. A great many of them were forced to engage in Roman sporting events where they unwillingly participated in violent and bloody gladiatorial fights, and where they were killed by

wild beasts, just as would also occur to the Christians as well. Following is an excerpt from Book 6 Chapter 9 of "The Wars of the Jews":

----- Begin Quote -----

Now the number of those that were carried captive during this whole war was collected to be ninety-seven thousand; as was the number of those who perished during the whole siege eleven hundred thousand, the greater part of whom were indeed of the same nation, [with the citizens of Jerusalem,] but not belonging to the city itself: for they were come up from all the country to the feast of unleavened bread, and were on a sudden shut up by an army, which at the very first, occasioned so great a straitness among them, that there came a pestilential destruction upon them, and soon afterwards such a famine, as destroyed them more suddenly.

Now this vast multitude is indeed collected out of remote places, but the entire nation was now shut up by fate, as in prison, and the Roman army encompassed the city when it was crowded with inhabitants. Accordingly the multitude of those that therein perished, exceeded all the destructions that either men or God ever brought upon the world; for, to speak only of what was publicly known, the Romans slew some of them, some they carried captives, and others they made a search for under ground, and when they found where they were, they broke up the ground and slew all they met with."

----- End Quote -----

My dear friends, please notice in particular how Josephus very specifically states that "the multitude of those that therein perished, exceeded all the destructions that either men or God ever brought upon the world." Josephus' words sound very similar to what Jesus Himself prophesied in the Gospel of Matthew four decades earlier regarding the great tribulation which would eventually come upon the Jews. Let me share those verses with you:

"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elects sake those days shall be shortened."

Matthew 24:21-22, KJV

Phrase:

"unto the end of the war desolations are determined"

Explanation:

Considering everything that we have now discussed here, it should be evident to you that this terrible war which took the lives of so many Jews, can only be what historians refer to as the First Jewish-Roman War. It is likewise known as The Great Revolt. This seven-year war began in Judea in 66 AD, and ended in 73 AD. However, the war's peak occurred in 70 AD when the temple and Jerusalem itself were destroyed by Titus' forces. While this major historical event broke the spirit of the Jews, some pockets of Jewish resistance still persisted, such as the Zealots who had fled to the desert fortress of Masada and holed up there. Thus, as the phrase states, war desolations did continue until all of Israel had either been subjugated or destroyed.

Masada was in fact one of the last holdouts to fall to Rome. I discuss that battle in the article entitled "The Fall of Masada". What happened there was nothing short of tragic. As I read Josephus' account of that battle, I was taken back by the extreme to which the insurrectionists were willing to go, rather than allow themselves to become slaves of Rome. If you are interested in learning exactly what caused the war, and who the instigators were, then I again suggest that you consider reading the aforementioned series, "Vespasian, Titus and the Fall of Jerusalem".

Due to this preponderance of both Scriptural and historical evidence, I'm personally convinced that this war was in fact the precise fulfillment of the final 70th week of Daniel's Seventy Weeks Prophecy. In other words, Jesus was crucified at the end of the 69th week in direct fulfillment of earlier parts of this same prophecy. Then about forty years later, the final 70th week likewise came to fruition. This leaves us with just one more verse to examine in the Seventy Weeks Prophecy, and that is the following one:

"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, KJV

As some of my readers will probably already know, Daniel 9:27, more than the other three verses which comprise this prophecy, has been a strong source of disagreement amongst scholars, theologians and regular Bible students alike. In particular, if you ask a Futurist what this verse means, you will be given one explanation. If you ask a Preterist the same question, it will elicit a very different response. As I explain in articles such as "Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?", for some forty years of my life, I was a dedicated Futurist who fervently believed in and taught Futurism. At that time in my life, you would not have been able to convince me to believe anything else. Certainly not Preterism.

However, God has a way of eventually getting through to us, if we are willing, and that is exactly what happened to me. Thus, I lean A LOT more towards the Preterist understanding of Bible prophecy, than I do towards the Futurist point of view. According to the doctrines of Futurism, Daniel 9:27 has not yet been fulfilled. While the first 69 weeks -- or 483 years -- of the Seventy Weeks Prophecy were fulfilled almost 2,000 year ago, just as I did for a long time, the Futurists insist on divorcing the final 70th week -- that is to say, the "Last Seven Years" -- from the rest of the prophecy, and moving it up to our current time.

In fact, if you happen to be a regular participant on any of the social networks -- Facebook in particular -- then you may know that right now there is quite a bit of chatter regarding U.S. President Donald Trump, the Abraham Accords, the devastating war in Gaza, final preparations to build a third Jewish temple, etc. Some Christians insist that we're already in the Great Tribulation, while others say that it will begin soon. There is a lot of excitement, as well as great anticipation amongst these Christians, because they are convinced that these events will soon lead to Christ's return, and the rapture of the Saints.

But, my friends, is there really any truth to these rumors, or is it possible that regardless of how sincere they may be in their beliefs, these Christians have unknowingly been given over to doctrinal error? Is the covenant which we see in Daniel 9:27 really the Abraham Accords, or is it really something else? Rather than distort the meaning of certain

Bible verses so that they conform to our particular belief system and understanding, we need to accept them for what they say, and read them in context.

Having said that, in order to arrive at the truth regarding Daniel 9:27, the first thing that we need to do is to more closely examine the phrase "he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week." Our first task is to identify the "he" in this phrase. Working backwards in the text, we see that it must be referring to "the prince that shall come". Who was he? We already know that it was General Titus. To be clear, the phrase can't be referring to "Messiah". Why not? Because He has already been cut off -- or killed -- sometime after the conclusion of the 69th week of the prophecy. But we are now in the 70th week after the prince -- meaning Titus -- has come.

So assuming that I am correct in identifying General Titus as "the prince that shall come", what is this covenant that he confirms with many for one week? When I was a Futurist many years ago, similar to many other Futurists, I thought that it was some kind of political agreement which would allow the Jews to build a third temple in East Jerusalem, and then resume their animal sacrifices. As I've explained before, everything that the Futurists still believe today, I too believed back then. That is why I know how they all think. I know for a fact that this is exactly why so many Christians in America are excited regarding Donald Trump and the Abraham Accords.

But you see, in my view, that entire scenario is very wrong, because the Seventy Weeks Prophecy has absolutely nothing to do with our modern times. As I mentioned earlier, we cannot just take the final 70th week, divorce it from the rest of the prophecy, and move it up to our modern day. Doing so is taking Daniel 9:27 out of its proper context. Well, I will be honest with you. If you've already read "Vespasian, Titus and the Fall of Jerusalem", then you will know that I spent a lot of time -- months in fact -- reading the historical works of Flavius Josephus, Publius Tacitus, Suetonius and a few others.

My dear friends, I really dug into it, and trudged through it, because I wanted to fully understand what happened, why it happened, and how it happened. I mean, we already know God's reason for allowing it to happen. It was His judgment against the stiff-necked unbelieving Jews who murdered His

Son. But as I have mentioned on previous occasions, God will often work through human agents to perform His Will. We see this countless times in the Scriptures where God used the enemies of the Israelites to chastise them. For example, the Philistines, Midianites, Assyrians, Babylonians and the Romans, to name a few.

So as I was reading through all of that historical material, I kept an eye out for anything which might be linked in any way to fulfilled Bible prophecy. Of course, one thing I was looking for was any mention of this mysterious covenant we see in Daniel 9:27. To my disappointment, I did not find anything which seemed to be tied to it. However, as I was sitting here in my desk chair, working on this series, and pondering Titus as the prince, thinking about the covenant, and wondering how to make sense of everything, I decided to look up the word "covenant" in the Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew Aramaic English Lexicon. Now, I had done it before, years ago no doubt, but I decided to take a renewed look at the original Hebrew word.

My friends, what can I say? My mind is blown! Why? Because I now know what the covenant was which the prince -- Titus -- confirmed with many for one week! In Daniel 9:27, the Hebrew word that is used is "beriyth". In the KJV Bible, this word is most often translated as "covenant". However, it is also translated as league, confederacy and confederate. But that is not all. In the provided definition, the lexicon states that "beriyth" likewise refers to an alliance, agreement or pledge. And then it all just clicked together, and it hit me like a ton of bricks!

Out of curiosity, I decided to check out a seven-part series I authored back in 2012 entitled "Psalm 83 War False Doctrine Exposed!". In the series, I expose yet another false doctrine which has been promoted by the Futurists for quite a number of years now. This erroneous doctrine claims that Psalm 83 is not about a past historical event. Rather, it is a prophecy -- at least so the Futurists claim -- concerning a future war which will be fought between the modern state of Israel, and its Muslim and Arab enemies. So I wrote a seven part series to explain why it just wasn't so. But the point is this. In Psalm 83, the very same Hebrew word -- "beriyth" -- is used, as we see by the following verses:

"They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. They have said, Come,

and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent: THEY ARE CONFEDERATE AGAINST THEE: The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes; Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre; Assur also is joined with them: they have holpen the children of Lot. Selah."

Psalms 83:3-8, KJV

Returning to Daniel 9:27, let me ask you a question. Who are we talking about here? It is obviously "the prince". Who is the prince? It is Titus. Who is Titus? He is the son of the new Roman emperor, and also a general in the Roman army who is leading a major assault against Israel, and in particular against Jerusalem. In short, what this covenant he confirms is talking about is a military alliance, plain and simple, just like the military alliance we see in Psalm 83. It has absolutely nothing to do with the 21st century. Neither does it have anything to do with President Donald Trump signing the Abraham Accords so that the Orthodox Jews can rebuild their temple someday soon. That is simply false doctrine in my view.

What is mind-boggling about this new personal revelation is the fact that I ALREADY knew the answer regarding the issue concerning the covenant. I simply did not recognize it as the answer, because I was looking at the information in the wrong way. You see, in my series "Vespasian, Titus and the Fall of Jerusalem" -- yes, there I go again with some more promotion -- I read about and wrote about the alliance as Roman historian Publius Tacitus describes it in "Histories" Book 5 Chapter 1. In particular, in part eight of my series, I wrote thusly. I have added a few words in brackets for clarification for the sake of those of you who haven't yet read my series:

----- Begin Vespasian Quote -----

In other words, now that the civil war was over [meaning the "Year of the Four Emperors" war in Italy], and a new emperor had been selected [meaning Vespasian], it was time to once again turn their attention back to the ongoing war in Israel. Then he writes that it was "more expedient" for Vespasian to return to Rome, while Titus "should remain with the army." As he continues his description of the war, in Book 5 Chapter 1, Tacitus explains how General Titus

gathered his forces and finally arrived at Jerusalem:

----- Begin Quote -----

Early in this year Titus Caesar, who had been selected by his father to complete the subjugation of Judaea, and who had gained distinction as a soldier while both were still subjects, began to rise in power and reputation, as armies and provinces emulated each other in their attachment to him . . . He found in Judaea three legions, the 5th, the 10th, and the 15th, all old troops of Vespasian's. To these he added the 12th from Syria, and some men belonging to the 18th and 3rd, whom he had withdrawn from Alexandria. This force was accompanied by twenty cohorts of allied troops and eight squadrons of cavalry, by the two kings Agrippa and Sohemus, by the auxiliary forces of king Antiochus, by a strong contingent of Arabs, who hated the Jews with the usual hatred of neighbours, and, lastly, by many persons brought from the capital and from Italy by private hopes of securing the yet unengaged affections of the Prince. With this force Titus entered the enemy's territory, preserving strict order on his march, reconnoitering every spot, and always ready to give battle. At last he encamped near Jerusalem.

----- End Quote -----

----- End Vespasian Quote -----

As if that is not already enough, I just now realized that in part nine of this same series, I shared the very same excerpt from Tacitus' "Histories" with you, in order to show you how he referred to Titus as "the Prince". But, my friends, just look at the huge size of the army that Titus organized before he began to move down into northern Israel by way of Ptolemais on the western coast of Israel. Actually, it was Vespasian who started the march from there, and then Titus took over after his father returned to Rome. At any rate, at the very least, Titus had six Roman legions under his command. For those of my readers who may not be aware, a legion consisted of 5,000 to 6,000 soldiers who were all Roman citizens. In turn, a legion was divided into ten cohorts. Each cohort consisted of six centuries, and each century consisted of eighty men. These were divided into an even smaller unit called a contubernia, which consisted of eight soldiers.

So right off the start, Titus had as many as 36,000 soldiers,

all of Roman citizenry. In addition, he had twenty cohorts of allied troops -- meaning as many as 12,000 more men -- eight squadrons of cavalry provided by King Herod Agrippa II and by the Syrian king Sohaemus of the Emesan kingdom -- which adds as many as 960 horsemen to the alliance -- plus auxiliary forces provided by Antiochus IV of Commagene, a contingent of Arabs, and mercenaries brought from Rome and other parts of Italy. In Book 2 Chapter 18 of his "The Wars of the Jews", Flavius Josephus also describes the huge army which had begun to gather at Ptolemais in order to fight under Vespasian and his son, Titus, as they began the long war against the Jews. Consider the following excerpt:

----- Begin Quote -----

"And this was the miserable calamity which at this time befell the Jews at Alexandria. Hereupon Cestius thought fit no longer to lie still, while the Jews were everywhere up in arms, so he took out of Antioch the twelfth legion entire, and out of each of the rest he selected two thousand, with six cohorts of footmen, and four troops of horsemen, besides those auxiliaries which were sent by the kings; of which Antiochus sent two thousand horsemen, and three thousand footmen, with as many archers; and Agrippa sent the same number of footmen, and one thousand horsemen; Sohemus also followed with four thousand, a third part whereof were horsemen, but most part were archers, and thus did he march to Ptolemais. There were also great numbers of auxiliaries gathered together from the [free] cities, who indeed had not the same skill in martial affairs but made up in their alacrity, and in their hatred to the Jews what they wanted in skill. There came also along with Cestius, Agrippa himself, both as a guide in his march of the country, and a director what was fit to be done;"

----- End Quote -----

Please go to part eleven for the continuation of this series.

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60,000+ Man Army To Invade Israel, And He Shall Confirm The Covenant With Many For One Week, "Many" = 60,000+ Military Alliance, Yitzhak Rabin And 1993 Oslo Accords Is A Futurist False Doctrine, Seven Years Later And No Show For Jesus In Year 2,000, Trying To Liberate Futurists, Confirm Means To Make Strong Or Strengthen Or To Be Strong Valiant Or Mighty, And He Shall Be Strong (Mighty) With An Alliance Of Many For Seven Years, And In The Midst Of The Week He Shall Cause The Sacrifice And The Oblation To Cease, Shall Destroy The City And The Sanctuary, Titus And Romans Destroy Temple And City In Middle Of Seven-Year War, It Is A Fearful Thing To Fall Into The Hands Of The Living God, For Our God Is A Consuming Fire, Jesus Gave Followers The Abomination Of Desolation As Something Foul Detestable Worthy To Be Abhorred And Related To Idols, Desolate: To Ruin Lay Waste And Leave Uninhabited

Continuing our discussion from part ten, as we have now seen, even before the Romans had begun their swoop down through the land of Israel, with the conquest of Judea and Jerusalem as their ultimate goal, they had organized a very huge army that was comprised of many thousands of foot soldiers, horsemen, spearmen, archers, men who manned the catapults, men who also worked the ramming engines, and many more. Exactly what was the full size of this great army? In Book 3 Chapter 4 of "The Wars of the Jews", Flavius Josephus states that they numbered 60,000 men, besides the many servants who attended to them. Consider the following excerpt from Josephus' work:

----- Begin Quote -----

"But as to Titus, he sailed over from Achaia to Alexandria, and that sooner than the winter season did usually permit; so he took with him those forces he was sent for, and marching with great expedition, he came suddenly to Ptolemais, and there finding his father, together with the two legions, the fifth and the tenth, which were the most eminent legions of all, he joined them to that fifteenth legion which was with his father: eighteen cohorts followed these legions; there

came also five cohorts from Caesarea, with one troop of horsemen, and five other troops of horsemen from Syria. Now these ten cohorts had severally a thousand footmen, but the other thirteen cohorts had no more than six hundred footmen apiece, and an hundred and twenty horsemen. There were also a considerable number of auxiliaries got together, that came from the Kings Antiochus and Agrippa, and Sohemus, each of them contributing one thousand footmen that were archers, and a thousand horsemen. Malchus, also, the King of Arabia, sent a thousand horsemen, besides five thousand footmen, the greatest part of which were archers; so that the whole army, including the auxiliaries sent by the kings, as well horsemen as footmen, WHEN ALL WERE UNITED TOGETHER, AMOUNTED TO SIXTY THOUSAND, besides the servants, who, as they followed in vast numbers, so because they had been trained up in war with the rest, ought not to be distinguished from the fighting men; for as they were in the masters' service in times of peace, so did they undergo the like dangers with them in times of war, insomuch that they were inferior to none, either in skill or in strength, only they were subject to their masters."

----- End Quote -----

With this terrible military force, they subdued one Israelite city after another. As I mentioned before, those who refused to submit were simply slaughtered, and their cities burned to the ground. Now, why are these statistics so important to our discussion? Because they are in fact directly related to the Seventy Weeks Prophecy. "How so?" you may ask. Well, Let's take a closer look at the first part of Daniel 9:27 which states the following:

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

We have already identified who the "he" is. Being as Titus is the one who actually continued to march to Jerusalem -- and not his father -- and being as he is described as a prince -- which he most certainly was -- there should be no doubt that the prophecy is speaking about Titus. We have also identified what the covenant was. It was a military alliance which had come together in Ptolemais in order to make war against the Jews. So what comes next in the prophecy? Obviously, "with many". Now would you personally consider a 60,000-man army of highly trained and disciplined soldiers as being many? I most certainly would! Would you want them marching against your town or city? Well, that's what the ancient Jews faced.

Now, before continuing with my explanation of the prophecy, I want to share with you another example of how the Futurists purposely twist and distort the meaning of the Scriptures so that God's Word will conform to what they believe, instead of what it is actually saying. Some of my younger readers will be too young to know about this, but similar to what we see now occurring with President Donald Trump and the Abraham Accords, there was similar excitement over three decades ago due to the Oslo Accords. The goal of the Oslo Accords was to establish a framework for peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians. A secondary goal was to lead to a peace treaty between the Israelis and the Jordanians.

Please note that the Oslo Accords are likewise known as the "Declaration of Principles". Signed in 1993, the Declaration of Principles outlined a two-stage process for resolving the various final-status issues between the Israelis and the Palestinians. This included the status of Jerusalem itself, the right of return for all Palestinian refugees, the future of Jewish settlements in the West Bank, and of course, the final borders between the two entities. The Principles also established a five-year, probationary period of Palestinian self-rule.

So, what do the Principles have to do with this discussion? My friends, you better sit down for this one. You see, at that time in 1993, Yitzhak Rabin was the Prime Minister of Israel; so of course he played an important role in the Oslo Accords. On the Palestinian side was Yasser Arafat, and to a lesser degree, Mahmoud Abbas, who later became president of the Palestinian National Authority. Now here comes the catch. In the phrase "confirm the covenant with many", it just so happens that the word "many" is derived from the Hebrew word "rab". Oh my! Can you already see where this is headed? Yes, my friends; in the Christian world at least, the misguided rumor began to spread that the prince of Daniel 9:27 would soon sign a seven-year covenant with -- not with "many" -- but with Yitzhak Rabin.

Have you picked yourself off of the floor yet? But that is not the end of this foolishness. You see, while all of this was occurring, there was also a lot of chatter concerning how the year 2,000 would mark about 6,000 years of world history according to the Scriptures and various theologians. So between the Oslo Accords and the turn of the millennium occurring seven years later in 2,000, this was fuel for the

rumor mill. Before long, misguided Christians -- including certain big-name preachers -- were claiming that the Oslo Accords were the seven-year covenant which the prince in the Book of Daniel would sign with Yitzhak Rabin, or "many". Furthermore, seven years later in 2,000, Jesus would return.

So, obviously, expectations and eager anticipation were high in the Christian world as the year 2,000 approached. I wrote about these things in my 2012 series called "Sorry ... Jesus Is Not Coming At Any Moment!". Well, obviously, Jesus didn't return in the year 2,000, but we did have some problems with the Y2K issue. So, my friends, it is because of foolishness such as this that I become rather irked when I see so much unscriptural nonsense being posted on the social networks. And now it is wash, rinse and repeat with Donald Trump and the Abraham Accords. When will they ever learn?

Please understand that I am in my seventies now, and I have been seeing and hearing this kind of misguided nonsense for over fifty-five years now. As I already mentioned, for many years, I was deceived by it too, because I did not have a strong foundation in God's Word as a young Christian teen. As a result, I did suck up a lot of what I heard and read, just like a vacuum cleaner. Sadly, some of the doctrines I heard were wrong! Now, many years later, I am doing my very best to try to help other Futurists to come out from under the deception. But let me tell you. It is not easy. Just as I was for so many years, they are very set in their ways, and very deceived.

My friends, there is so much more in the phrase "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week" which even I had never seen before. At least not until now. Thus far, we have understood who the prince was, what the covenant was, and who the many were. That is to say, the 60,000+ fighting men plus their loyal servants who joined forces under Vespasian and Titus at Ptolemais. Now I am going to expose another modern deception which has so many Christians deceived. Again, this is just blowing my mind, because I'm discovering these things right now -- today! -- as I write this eleventh part of this current series.

As I just clearly demonstrated to you, for decades now, so many misguided Christians have been looking and waiting for a seven-year covenant or agreement which will supposedly be signed by the Antichrist -- or Beast -- the results of which will be that the Orthodox Jews will finally be able to build

their long-awaited new temple. This belief has been drilled into the minds of thousands, if not millions, of Christians, who are convinced that when they see these events, it marks the soon return of Jesus Christ, the Great Tribulation, and the Rapture, in whatever order each Christian happens to believe.

So, as I continued to more deeply investigate the first part of Daniel 9:27, I decided to look up the original Hebrew for the word "confirm" in the Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew Aramaic English Lexicon. Oh my Lord! I almost jumped out of my desk chair! The original Hebrew word used in the verse is "gabar". Before looking up the word, I assumed that it would say something like confirm, agree to, sign, or some similar definition. Oh boy! Was I wrong! You'll never guess what the primary meaning is for this word. It actually means to prevail, to strengthen, be great, be strong, be mighty, to make strong, to be valiant. Then, further down it adds to confirm (a covenant), give strength. Yet oddly enough, this is the ONLY time in the entire Old Testament where the word "gabar" is translated as "confirm", signifying that confirm is NOT its primary meaning. The primary meaning is to make strong or to strengthen, or to be strong, valiant or mighty.

So what does all of this mean for us insofar as Daniel 9:27 is concerned? Before I tell you, let's just finish off that phrase by emphasizing one more time that the word "week" in the verse, and in the phrase, does NOT refer to a seven-day week. It is talking about a seven-year period; and in the case of this specific prophecy, it is talking about the seven-year First Jewish-Roman War. Now, some of you may agree with me, and some of you may not, but here is how I now understand that entire phrase:

And he shall strengthen (make strong) the alliance with many for seven years.

On further reflection, another possible and similar way in which we can understand the full phrase is perhaps like the following. Maybe this is an even more accurate translation:

And he shall be strong (mighty) with an alliance of many for seven years.

My dear friends, that is what you get when you put all of those definitions together for each of those Hebrew words, and then compare them to what really happened historically

during that terrible seven-year war in Israel not quite two thousand years ago. As far as I can tell, it has absolutely nothing to do with signing or confirming some kind of modern document or agreement so that the Jewish people can rebuild their temple in Jerusalem. It is just NOT in that phrase at all! That modern translation is simply the product of some very misguided Futurist thinking in my view, perhaps with some Zionism thrown into it as well. And to think that I used to believe it as well, and for many years!

For those of you who are still reading this, and who have not been blow away by my previous rather bold assertion, let us move on now to the next phrase which is found in Daniel 9:27, which is the following:

"and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease"

While I already thoroughly discuss this phrase, as well as the rest of the verse, in my challenging four-part series entitled "Abomination of Desolation: Explained!", as well as in the three-part series "The Last Seven Years Chart", let me provide a review here. However, I do encourage you to consider reading those series as well, because they are directly linked to this series, as well as to "Vespasian, Titus and the Fall of Jerusalem". And there I go again with another promotion.

We have already clearly established that the word "week" in this prophecy actually signifies a seven-year period. It is NOT a literal seven-day week. Therefore, being as we must understand and view this prophecy from a Jewish perspective, it is logical to conclude that the phrase "in the midst of the week" signifies somewhere in the middle of the seven-year war. What are we told was prophesied to happen at that time? The sacrifice and the oblation would cease. I am sure that most of my readers are aware of the fact that there was a large altar situated in the courtyard of the temple compound where animal sacrifices were made to the Lord. Oblations is simply another word for offerings. In other words, temple gifts and presents.

So why are we being told that they would cease? Please note that we are not just told that they would cease, we are in fact told that he -- meaning General Titus -- would CAUSE them to cease, But how would this happen? Actually, I gave you the answer to this question in part ten of this series

where we discussed the phrase "shall destroy the city and the sanctuary".

The simple reason regarding why both the sacrifice and the oblations ceased, is because right in the middle of that seven-year period, after a four-months-long siege against Jerusalem, General Titus and his army finally breached all three of the perimeter walls which surrounded Jerusalem. Now even though Titus himself did not desire it according to what Josephus wrote, nevertheless, the temple building was burned down by Titus' zealous soldiers, the courtyards were burned, and eventually, what remained of Jerusalem by that point was also burned down and destroyed.

As we learned in part ten, in perfect fulfillment of what Jesus had warned about four decades earlier, every single block of stone -- except for one of the walls and three of the towers, which Titus left as a monument of the great Roman victory, and as a stern reminder to others who might think about rebelling against Rome -- were thrown down. In fact, even today, two thousand years later, some of those huge limestone blocks stand as a silent witness to God's terrible wrath against the unbelieving Jews of the First Century. As we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and also in the Book of Psalms:

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God . . . For our God is a consuming fire."

Hebrews 10:31, 12:29, KJV

"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

Psalms 9:17, KJV

Being as the second half of Daniel 9:27 is all related, I am simply going to share it as just one block of text. This part of the Angel Gabriel's amazing Seventy Weeks Prophecy states as following:

"and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

As many of my Christian readers will know, and as I discuss in a number of other BBB articles such as "Abomination of Desolation: Explained!", in the three Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus warned about these very same

things, as we can easily determine by the following Bible verses:

"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, KJV

"But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains:"
Mark 13:14, KJV

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh."
Luke 21:20, KJV

"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."
Matthew 23:38-39, KJV

"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."
Luke 13:35, KJV

So our next task is to decipher exactly what the Abomination of Desolation was. One fact which should already be clear to you is that whatever it was, the Abomination of Desolation was directly related to the Roman armies which surrounded, besieged and ultimately destroyed Jerusalem and burned down the Jews' beloved temple compound. Clearly, it was something which the Romans possessed and which could in some way stand in the Holy Place. That is to say, on the Temple Mount, and perhaps even in the very temple itself, despite the strong objections of the Jews. But before we begin to unravel this mystery, let us review the various words and phrases which are used to describe this mysterious object in both the Old and the New Testaments. They include the following:

- abomination of desolation
- overspreading of abominations

- he shall make it desolate
- poured upon the desolate
- the desolation thereof is nigh

Now we have to figure out what it was that Jesus was telling His followers to watch out for, so that they'd know that it was time to flee to the Judean hills before it was too late. To begin, in the New Testament verses we have examined thus far, the word "abomination" is derived from the Greek word "bdelugma". This word signifies a foul thing, or something that is detestable, particularly to God. It can be used to refer to idols and other things pertaining to idolatry, as well as to things and people which are considered unclean, including certain animals and foods. Aside from the verses which we have already covered, following are two more where "bdelugma" is used. The meaning is clear in both of them:

"And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."

Luke 16:15, KJV

"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Revelation 21:27, KJV

We find three more verses in the New Testament where the word "abominable" is used. While in each case a different Koine Greek word is used -- that is to say "bdeluktos", "athemitos" and "bdelusso" -- nevertheless, the general meaning of each word is still the same for the most part. That is to say, it is something or someone that's seen as being foul, detestable and worthy to be abhorred. In the case of "athemitos", it is used to mean abominable when something is prohibited by law. Following are the verses where these three words are found:

"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."

Titus 1:16, KJV

"For the time past of our life may suffice us to have

wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:"

1 Peter 4:3, KJV

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."
Revelation 21:8, KJV

So taking into consideration all of the New Testament verses where the words "abomination" and "abominable" are used, we can conclude that Jesus appears to be saying that when the Apostles witness something foul, detestable, unclean, worthy to be abhorred and idolatrous standing "in the holy place" -- that is to say, somewhere on the Temple Mount -- they should take it as a clear sign that it's time for them to flee from Jerusalem.

In the three verses we examined earlier from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke where the word "desolation" is used, the original Greek word is "eremosis". This word itself is derived from another Greek word; that is, "eremoo". Thayer's Greek English Lexicon informs us that these two words mean to make something desolate, to ruin it, or to lay it waste, so that it is empty and uninhabited. There are four other verses found in the New Testament where the Greek word "eremoo" is used, and in all cases, it conveys the very same idea of being brought to ruin and falling, and left abandoned. The first two are the following:

"And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:"
Matthew 12:25, KJV

"But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth."
Luke 11:17, KJV

The other two verses where the Greek word "eremoo" is used are found in the Book of Revelation. Personally, I find this fact very interesting, because as I point out in my series "Who is Babylon the Great?", I have long believed that the mysterious city which John refers to as Babylon the Great is

actually Jerusalem itself. So in my opinion, all of these prophetic verses regarding the destruction of Jerusalem fit together like a hand in a glove:

"And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."

Revelation 17:16, KJV

"And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate."

Revelation 18:19, KJV

Directly related to the Greek words "eremosis" and "eremoo" is the word "eremos". As with the first two words, Thayer's Greek English Lexicon informs us that it means to be lonely, solitary, deserted or uninhabited. It can refer to a desert or a wilderness area, or even to an abandoned position. It can also refer to the state of a person being abandoned or neglected by others. For example, the verse below describes how the position which Judas held as an Apostle was left empty or uninhabited following his betrayal and suicide:

"For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take."

Acts 1:20, KJV

Regarding women being neglected by their husbands, consider this verse where the same Greek word "eremos" is used:

"For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband."

Galatians 4:27, KJV

However, for the purposes of our current discussion, the most important two verses where "eremos" is used are the same two verses I shared you with earlier. Both of them are talking about the very same events which occurred in 70 AD. Let me share them with you one more time:

"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

Matthew 23:38, KJV

"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Luke 13:35, KJV

Following is a more complete copy of exactly what Jesus had to say to His unbelieving enemies. As you can see, He really blasted them with the truth regarding their miserable and murderous spiritual condition, before finally informing them that their house -- which seems to mean the temple -- would be left unto them desolate:

"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. 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. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Matthew 23:33-39, KJV

As should now be clear to you, the Jews' house -- the temple -- was indeed "left unto [them] desolate" when General Titus and his Roman armies utterly destroyed the temple compound. To reiterate my previous point, in those three verses which are found in the Gospels where the phrase "Abomination of Desolation" is used, Jesus appears to be saying that when the Apostles see something foul, detestable, unclean, idolatrous and worthy to be abhorred standing "in the holy place", they should view it as a warning signal of the coming destruction and desolation of the temple compound and Jerusalem, leaving it solitary and uninhabited. As two of those verses clearly state "whoso readeth, let him understand". Thus, if you are a Believer when that signal appears, it is time for you to get out of town and to flee to the hills to safety.

Please go to part twelve for the continuation of this series.

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SEVENTY WEEKS PROPHECY : WHAT IT MEANS - PART 12

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Jesus' Followers Were Not Appointed To Wrath But Unbelieving Jew Were Appointed To Wrath, Jews = Children Of Disobedience, Unbelieving Jews Viewed Gospel Of Christ As A Heresy And As Unrighteousness, Jews Believed God Would Protect Them From Harm Inside The Temple, False Prophet Deceived Thousands Of Jews To Run Inside Temple During Roman Siege, Thousands Were Killed, Same 3.5 Years Written In Different Ways, The Hebrew Words In Old Testament Translated As "Abomination" Mean An Abominable Foul Idolatrous Detestable Filthy Disgusting And Idolatrous Thing, "Desolate" In The Old Testament Means To Be Made Desolate Devastate Ravage Or To Cause Oneself Desolation Or Ruin, "Shamem" Can Mean To Appall Stun Stupefy Astonish Amaze Or To Show Or Cause Horror, A Place Which Has Been Laid Waste, A Place Of Ruin Devastation Destruction And Desolation, Babylon The Great And No More At All, Same Thing Happened To Jerusalem In 70 AD, "Overspreading" Is Translated From Hebrew Word Which Can Mean Wings Winged Wing And Feathered, Unclean Detestable Abominable Winged Or Feathered Idol, Titus Built A Siege Wall Around Jerusalem, Whoso Readeth, Let Him Understand, Continuous Destruction In Jerusalem Until The End Of The War

Continuing our discussion from part eleven, the reason why Jesus told the Apostles to flee from Jerusalem when they see the Abomination of Desolation standing in the holy place of the temple where it ought not, is obviously because He saw them as His friends, His chosen, and He loved them dearly. Furthermore, they were NOT "appointed to wrath". That is to

say, to the Wrath of God via the hand of the Roman legions. In contrast, the unbelieving Jews who rejected Christ were in fact appointed to wrath, because they were the children of disobedience, as we see by the following verses:

"But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and WRATH UPON THIS PEOPLE."

Luke 21:23, KJV

"But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the WRATH TO COME?"

Matthew 3:7, KJV

"Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the WRATH TO COME?"

Luke 3:7, KJV

"For the WRATH OF GOD is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;"

Romans 1:18, KJV

In the previous verse, when Paul writes "men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness", he is apparently referring to the unbelieving Jews who viewed the Gospel of Christ as a heresy against Judaism, or Pharisaism. Thus, as Paul also said in the Book of Acts:

"But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:"

Acts 24:14, KJV

Following are some additional verses regarding "the wrath to come", which befell the hard-hearted, unbelieving, murderous Jews in 70 AD:

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be SAVED FROM WRATH through him."

Romans 5:8-9, KJV

"For which things' sake the WRATH OF GOD COMETH ON THE

CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them."

Colossians 3:6-7, KJV

"And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from THE WRATH TO COME."

1 Thessalonians 1:10, KJV

"For God hath NOT APPOINTED US TO WRATH, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,"

1 Thessalonians 5:9, KJV

Having now thoroughly discussed how the words and phrases "abomination", "abominable", "desolation" and "desolate" are used in the New Testament, let us move on to the Books of the Old Testament. While we have not yet clearly identified what the Abomination of Desolation was, we have come to understand why it was called what it was called, and what it meant for the Apostles and Disciples of the late First Century. It was in fact their life line and green light to quickly flee from Jerusalem in order to escape God's Wrath, just as the Hebrews had to mark their doors with lamb's blood in order to avoid God's Wrath during the Old Testament period. The meaning and identity of the Abomination of Desolation will become even more evident as we continue to explore the Scriptures.

Turning again to the Book of Daniel, the word "abomination" is derived from the Hebrew word "shiqquwts", or "shiqquts". Just like in the New Testament, the Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew Aramaic English Lexicon informs us that this word signifies a detestable, abominable thing, or an idol. Out of the twenty-eight times this Hebrew word is used in the Old Testament, it is translated as "abomination" a total of twenty times. In one verse it is translated as "abominable filth". Following are the two verses in the Book of Daniel where it is used:

"And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate."

Daniel 11:31, KJV

"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, KJV

As you can see, the previous verses sound very similar to the events that the Lord spoke about in the Gospels, and to the events that we've been discussing in Daniel 9. Remember again, as I pointed out to you in part ten, that the word "arms" in the previous verse is referring to military might, or armies. The word "pollute" is derived from the Hebrew word "chalal", which means to defile or to profane. The word "sanctuary" is of course referring to the Jewish temple, and is derived from the Hebrew word "miqdash". It is referred to as "the sanctuary of strength" because the word "strength" is derived from the Hebrew word "ma'owz", which signifies a place or means of safety and protection. That is to say, a refuge or stronghold.

Not only did the ancient Jews believe that God would protect them from their enemies inside the temple, but as I briefly mentioned to you in part eight, the Zealots and the Sicarii had taken over the temple compound -- turning it into their military stronghold -- locked down Jerusalem, and foolishly defied the Romans. To make matters worse, a false prophet had convinced thousands of Jerusalemites to take refuge in the temple, by deceiving them into believing that God would protect them there. However, those who were not killed by the Zealots and the Sicarii, were burned to death when the temple was burned to the ground by the Romans.

So it should be clear to you that all of these verses we have examined thus far in the Old and New Testaments are actually describing the same people -- General Titus and the Romans -- the same war -- the seven-year First Jewish-Roman War -- the same Jewish temple in First Century Jerusalem, the same daily sacrifice and oblation being ceased, and the same Abomination of Desolation. All of these events were prophesied to occur sometime during the 70th week -- the last seven-year period -- of Daniel's Seventy Weeks Prophecy.

In fact, let me mention here that there are a number of other places in the Scriptures where this very same war is likewise mentioned and described to different degrees. As I explained to you in part seven, one reason why it is difficult for some Christians to connect the Scriptural dots, is simply because this same time period is described in various ways throughout God's Word. Let me share that list from part seven with you one more time:

1. "forty-two months"
2. "1,260 days"
3. "time and times and the dividing of time" (3 1/2)
4. "time, times, and an half" (3 1/2)

If you do the math yourself, you'll discover that forty-two months is the same as Revelation's and Daniel's 1,260 days, and equates to three and a half Jewish years. As you should also recall from part seven, a Jewish year equals 360 days. That is why Daniel's seventieth week is divided into two equal periods of the same length, each one being 1,260 days. The Prophet Daniel also mentions a 1,290 day period, as well as a 1,335 day period. This latter time span is the same as 44.4 Jewish months at thirty days each, while the 1,290 days equals exactly forty-three Jewish months.

While I have mentioned that the word "abomination" is used two times in the Book of Daniel, and that it means the very same thing as its New Testament Greek equivalent, let me add that while the word "abomination" is only used four times in the New Testament, it is used seventy-two times in the Old Testament. Furthermore, it is not always derived from the Hebrew word "shiqquwts" or "shiqquts". There are other words which are translated as "abomination" as well. These include "towebeh", "pigguwl", "shegets", "shaqats" and "ba'ash". The last one even means to stink, smell bad, or to become odious and abhorred by one's enemies.

But regardless of which of the Hebrew words is used, they all generally mean the same thing -- that is to say, abominable, detestable, filthy, disgusting or a foul and idolatrous thing -- and they likewise agree with how the word "abomination" is used in the New Testament as well. So insofar as the phrase "abomination of desolation" is concerned, we can safely say that the first part of the phrase means basically the same thing no matter where we look in the Scriptures.

So what about the latter half of the phrase? In the Book of Daniel where the phrase "abomination that maketh desolate" is used, the word "desolate" is derived from the Hebrew word "shamem". According to the Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew Aramaic English Lexicon, this word has a variety of meanings. The ones which best fit with what we've discovered thus far include to be desolated or to be made desolate, to

devastate, ravage, or to cause oneself desolation or ruin. As we learned earlier, its New Testament Greek equivalent means the very same thing. The word "shamem" is translated a total of forty-nine times as "desolate", three times as "destroy", five times as "waste" and seven times as "desolation". A few places outside of the Book of Daniel where "shamem" is also used include the following:

"I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your high ways shall be desolate . . . And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours. And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it."
Leviticus 26:22, 31-32, KJV

"For I will lay the land most desolate, and the pomp of her strength shall cease; and the mountains of Israel shall be desolate, that none shall pass through. Then shall they know that I am the LORD, when I have laid the land most desolate because of all their abominations which they have committed."
Ezekiel 33:28-29, KJV

"And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword."
Amos 7:9, KJV

"Therefore also will I make thee sick in smiting thee, in making thee desolate because of thy sins."
Micah 6:13, KJV

"I have cut off the nations: their towers are desolate; I made their streets waste, that none passeth by: their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant."
Zephaniah 3:6, KJV

With this word "shamem", what we are witnessing in all of the previous verses -- and in many others which aren't even listed here, is a judgement so strong from the Lord, that a place is not only left destroyed, but it is left deserted, abandoned, empty, without inhabitant. It basically returns to being a wilderness area again for some period of time. That is how fiercely God's judgments fall on it and on its people. This word "shamem" can also mean to appall, stun,

stupefy, amaze, astonish, or to show or cause horror, which is precisely what happens when the Lord's judgments do fall. A few other words in the Old Testament which are translated as "desolate" include "yasham", "charab", and "asham".

Other Hebrew words which are translated as "desolation" in the Old Testament include "show'ah", "chorbah", "sh@mamah", "shammah", "shod", "she'th" and "m@show'ah". In looking at the various definitions for each of these words in the BDBG Lexicon, we discover that generally, they can all be used to refer to a place which has been laid waste, to a place of ruin, devastation, destruction and desolation. It is a place without inhabitant, or at least with very few of them. Thus, clear across the Scriptures, we plainly see that the phrase "Abomination of Desolation" means the same thing. It was some detestable, filthy, idolatrous thing which was abhorred by the Jews, which would serve as a warning sign, and mark the coming destruction of Jerusalem and the Jews' beloved temple, leaving the place pretty much deserted.

You may recall that earlier in this series, while discussing the meaning of the word "desolate" in the New Testament, we also examined a few verses which describe the desolation of the mysterious, proud, sinful city which John the Beloved referred to as Babylon the Great. I briefly mentioned to you how I have long believed that Babylon the Great was just a coded name for the city of Jerusalem itself. Let me remind you again that this is a topic which I discuss more in depth in the article "Who is Babylon the Great?". At any rate, keeping in mind what the words "desolate" and "desolation" actually mean in the Holy Scriptures, consider now how the aftermath of Babylon the Great's destruction is described:

"Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her . . . And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all . . . And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more

at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived."

Revelation 18:8, 14, 21-23, KJV

We are told six times that Babylon's destruction would be so complete, that she would be found no more at all. All of the things which made her so popular, so rich and so powerful, would all be gone. They would be found no more at all. She would become uninhabited. She would be desolate. She would be an empty, ruinous place of utter devastation once God's judgments fell upon her. In so many words, this is also what Jesus and the Prophets said would happen to Jerusalem during the completion of the 70th week of Gabriel's Seventy Weeks Prophecy. The temple would be utterly destroyed, leaving not one stone upon another, and Jerusalem would be burned and brought to her knees by the armies of Rome, under the cruel command of General Titus, the son of Emperor Vespasian.

Similar to quite a few other Christians, for many years, I erroneously assumed that the Abomination of Desolation was a singular object. However, please notice that in Daniel 9:27, it actually says "and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate". As you can see, the verse says "abominations" and not just "abomination". In other words, there appears to be more than one Abomination of Desolation. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the prophecy was NOT just referring to one great idol or statue standing in a futuristic third temple, or at any other time in history for that matter. In this case, the word "abominations" finds its origin in the Hebrew word "shiqquwts" or "shiqquts". As we learned before, this implies that it was something that was viewed by both God and the Jews as being unclean, utterly detestable, and idolatrous. So what was it?

At this point in our discussion, let's return to Daniel 9:27 -- which is the last verse in the Seventy Weeks Prophecy -- because there is something else in it which gives us a clue regarding what the Abomination of Desolation was. Here is the last half of the verse:

". . . 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, KJV

In the previous verse, the word "overspreading" is derived from the Hebrew word "kanaph". We are informed by the Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew Aramaic English Lexicon that out of the 108 times that "kanaph" can be found in the Old Testament of the KJV Bible, this Hebrew word is translated 74 times as "wing" or "wings", 2 times as "winged", and 2 times as "feathered". In other words, more than 72% of the time that "kanaph" is used, it is used to describe something that has wings and is feathered. For example, it is used to describe the wings of cherubs -- such as the two cherubs that were placed in Solomon's temple -- and of birds. This is made evident by verses such as the following where the Hebrew "kanaph" is used:

"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself."
Exodus 19:4, KJV

"And within the oracle he made two cherubims of olive tree, each ten cubits high. And five cubits was the one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the other wing of the cherub: from the uttermost part of the one wing unto the uttermost part of the other were ten cubits. And the other cherub was ten cubits: both the cherubims were of one measure and one size. The height of the one cherub was ten cubits, and so was it of the other cherub. And he set the cherubims within the inner house: and they stretched forth the wings of the cherubims, so that the wing of the one touched the one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house."
1 Kings 6:23-27, KJV

"And in the most holy house he made two cherubims of image work, and overlaid them with gold. And the wings of the cherubims were twenty cubits long: one wing of the one cherub was five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house: and the other wing was likewise five cubits, reaching to the wing of the other cherub. And one wing of the other cherub was five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house: and the other wing was five cubits also, joining to the wing of the other cherub. The wings of these cherubims spread themselves forth twenty cubits: and they stood on their feet, and their faces were inward."
2 Chronicles 3:10-13, KJV

"Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks? or wings and feathers unto the ostrich?"

Job 39:13, KJV

"And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind."

Psalms 18:10, KJV

"He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea:"

Psalms 78:27, KJV

"He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler."

Psalms 91:4, KJV

"Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl:"

Psalms 148:10, KJV

"And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped."

Isaiah 10:14, KJV

"In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell."

Ezekiel 17:23, KJV

"And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood."

Ezekiel 39:17, KJV

So in all of the previous verses, the words "wing", "wings", "feathered" and "flying" are derived from the word "kanaph". This same Hebrew word is also used to a much lesser extent to refer to the skirt or border of a garment, or to the end, border or corner of something else. However, as you can see by our previous example verses, its primary definition is in fact the feathered wing of a cherub or bird. This definition of the word "kanaph" provides us with a major clue regarding exactly what the Abomination of Desolation -- or according to

the Archangel Gabriel's actual words, Abominations -- really were.

Please take note of the fact that in the previous verse from the Book of Daniel, the phrase "and for the overspreading" is derived from this one Hebrew word "kanaph". In other words, in the original Hebrew text, there are no separate words for each of the other three words in the phrase. What I find very odd here, is that Daniel 9:27 is the only verse in the entire Old Testament where "kanaph" is translated in this manner. In fact, stranger still, this is the only verse in the entire Old Testament where the word "overspreading" is used at all.

This begs the question: If the primary meaning of "kanaph" is wings or feathered, why would the translators not only decide to not use this translation, but in fact translate it as an English word that is found nowhere else in the entire Old Testament? Is it possible that it was simply a translational oversight on their part? Should we consider that they didn't quite know what it meant so they just translated it the best they could? Or is it possible that they did grasp what this Hebrew word means, and decided that "overspreading" was a very appropriate translation, considering what these verses are discussing? As you will come to understand momentarily, there is an important reason why I am highlighting the odd way this verse has been translated.

Just as the English phrase "and for the overspreading" finds its origin in one Hebrew word, in the very same fashion, the phrase "of abominations" is derived from the one Hebrew word "shiqquwts". In other words, the entire phrase "and for the overspreading of abominations" is translated from just two Hebrew words. That is to say, "kanaph shiqquwts". So based on the definitions which are provided by the BDBG Lexicon, what these two words suggest in a very literal sense is "a detestable, unclean, abominable winged or feathered idol". Now, in order to acquire a better idea of what Gabriel is talking about in Daniel 9:27, let us review what Jesus said in the Gospel of Luke:

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled."

So while Daniel writes "the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary", "with the arms of a flood", and "arms shall stand on his part", Jesus says "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." It is quite evident that Jesus is saying the same thing, because He is in fact referencing Daniel.

As I explain in "Vespasian, Titus and the Fall of Jerusalem", after encamping outside of Jerusalem, General Titus' forces engulfed the city in a great siege wall which was about five miles in length. A very common tactic back then, a siege wall meant that no one and nothing could get in or out, including food, water, military supplies, etc. As a result, people who were trapped inside a siege wall eventually starved to death, turned on each other, and died from different diseases. As I mentioned to you in part ten, according to both Tacitus and Flavius Josephus, somewhere between 600,000 and 1,100,000 Jews were trapped inside Jerusalem during the seven-year war due to the Passover feast and the feast of unleavened bread, which brought pilgrims from all around the Mediterranean region.

According to one source, this siege wall was so wide on top, that a Roman chariot could run along the course of the wall. Furthermore, being as the siege wall surrounded Jerusalem, it probably made the overspreading of abominations even easier. The historical record also indicates that many thousands of Jews were crucified on the siege wall when they endeavored to escape from Jerusalem. On a side note, I have wondered if the KJV translators chose the word "overspreading" simply because the Roman siege wall spread around Jerusalem. However, there is a better reason regarding why the word "overspreading" was chosen, which I will be discussing momentarily.

So again we see that there is clearly a direct association between these Roman armies which compass Jerusalem about and ultimately destroy it, and these Abominations of Desolation. That is to say, the winged or feathered detestable, unclean idols, which would even "stand in the holy place" as Jesus had warned. It was obviously very important for the Jews of First Century Jerusalem to fully grasp the meaning of this ancient prophecy. Because as we have seen, Jesus told His followers "whoso readeth, let him understand".

The Prophet Daniel likewise tells us in Daniel 9:26 "and unto the end of the war desolations are determined", and in Daniel 9:27 "he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation [or end], and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." In other words, Daniel is informing us that once the war has begun, there will be continuous great destruction in Jerusalem until it ends, and that the city will be left desolate, or uninhabited, for the most part.

Now, if you happen to be a history buff, and particularly if you happen to be a Roman history buff, I suspect that the great mystery regarding the actual nature of the Abomination of Desolation has already been solved. After all, I have pretty much already told you what it was, yet without saying the actual words directly. However, for those of my readers who have not yet figured it out, and who may need a little more help, let us proceed to the conclusion of this matter.

The Romans had something in their possession which the Jews viewed as being filthy, unclean, abominable, detestable and idolatrous. We have seen that it would surround Jerusalem -- and in fact stand on the Temple Mount itself -- just prior to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. Furthermore, whatever this mysterious object was, it would also be quite visible to the Jews of that time period, and serve as a warning sign to get out of Jerusalem as quickly as possible.

Please go to part thirteen for the conclusion of this series.

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SEVENTY WEEKS PROPHECY : WHAT IT MEANS - PART 13

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Abominations Of Desolation Were Roman Aquilas Or Standards, Honored Respected And Sacred To Romans But Feared By Rome's Enemies, Presence Of Roman Aquilas Meant Soon Destruction,

The Jews Foresaw Their Coming Destruction Decades Earlier, Eating Flesh Still Containing Blood Is An Abomination To God, The Eagle Is Unclean And An Abomination For The Same Reason, Bible Verses Regarding Idolatry, Eagles On Roman Standards Were An Abomination, Eagles' Wings Spread Around Jerusalem, "Shamem": Aquilas Instilled Fear And Horror, Eagle Was The Perfect Symbol For Rome Which Tore Apart And Devoured All Of Its Enemies, King Herod The Great Hangs Gold Eagle Over The Temple Gates, Abomination Of Desolation Is Not Associated With Modern Times, Destruction And Desolation To The End Of The War, My Personal Understanding Of Daniel 9:27, Romans Could Not Have Known War Would Last For Seven Years But God Knew, Eleazar's Tragic Speech At Masada, Suggested Reading

Continuing our discussion from part twelve, now it is time to finally spill the beans, as they say. From my personal study of the Scriptures, as well as the historical record, I'm fully and completely convinced that these Abominations of Desolation were nothing less than the Roman standards. Referred to as "aquilas", they were in fact the military flags which were borne by Roman legions as they marched to war, and surrounded their enemies. This flag was mounted on a pole, on top of which was an eagle crafted out of silver or bronze. The Wikipedia website informs us of the great importance which was assigned to the "aquila" by the Roman military:

----- Begin Quote -----

"An aquila was the standard of a Roman legion formed in the shape of an eagle, which was carried by a special grade legionary known as an Aquilifer (aquila-bearer). One eagle standard was carried by each legion."

"The eagle standard was extremely important to the Roman military, beyond merely being a symbol of a legion. A lost standard was considered an extremely grave occurrence, and the Roman military often went to great lengths to both protect a standard and to recover it if lost."

----- End Quote -----

While Roman military men greatly honored and respected the "aquila", and in fact considered it very sacred, to anyone else -- such as the Jerusalemites of the First Century -- it

was greatly feared. Being surrounded by Roman legions with their "aquilas" signified one thing, and only one thing. You were about to be destroyed! It is obvious then that the Jews of Jerusalem knew that their end was near. The end of that age, as had been prophesied by Jesus Himself, was upon them. In complete agreement with the Seventy Weeks Prophecy, even Josephus himself wrote multiple times that the Jerusalemites lamented their coming destruction. Even King Herod, while he tried to save them with his heartfelt speech, realized the futility of the situation, which is why he eventually sided with Titus and his army. In fact, as I've mentioned before, forty years earlier, during the time of Jesus Christ, those Jews had already seen the handwriting on the wall. This is evident by what Caiaphas the high priest stated, as we see by the following group of Bible verses:

"Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad."

John 11:47-52, KJV

The question we need to ask ourselves is why the Jews would view the Roman "aquila" as a filthy, detestable, unclean and abominable thing. Was it just because it was a Roman idol, or was there perhaps something more to it? Utilizing our tried and proven method of comparing Scripture with Scripture -- and thus allowing God's Word to speak for itself -- we find the answer in the pages of the Old Testament. For example, consider the following verses that are found in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah:

"For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many. They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD."

Isaiah 66:16-17, KJV

As you can see, the Lord tells us by way of the Prophet that He is going to consume these particular people. In those two verses, the word "consumed" is derived from the Hebrew word "cuwph", which means to cease or to come to an end. In other words, the Lord is going to destroy them. Why will this be their awful fate? Because they have chosen to eat things God has declared to be unclean. This includes pork, the flesh of mice, and something else which the verse simply describes as "the abomination". But exactly what is this abomination? If we examine the Book of Leviticus, we discover that this can represent many different types of animals. However, we can understand one of the rules which the Lord applies when He classifies something as being unclean, just by reading what He said to Noah after the Flood waters had receded. In the ninth chapter of the Book of Genesis we find the following verses:

"And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat."

Genesis 9:2-4, KJV

What we see then, is that God has forbidden man to eat flesh which still contains the blood. It is considered unclean and an abomination to Him. As we all know, there are many beasts and birds which do eat flesh which still contains the blood in them. In fact, there are certain scavengers which even eat rotten, putrid flesh. As it turns out, in the verses below, the eagle is the very first fowl that is mentioned by God as being an abomination that should not be eaten. Consider:

"And these are they which ye shall have in abomination among the fowls; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, and the ossifrage, and the ospray, And the vulture, and the kite after his kind; Every raven after his kind; And the owl, and the night hawk, and the cuckow, and the hawk after his kind, And the little owl, and the cormorant, and the great owl, And the swan, and the pelican, and the gier eagle, And the stork, the heron after her kind, and the lapwing, and the bat."

Leviticus 11:13-19, KJV

Thus we see that the eagle was considered an abomination to the ancient Jews, because it is a scavenger which eats the flesh of other animals by tearing them apart, while it still contains the blood. Of course, there is another strong reason why the Jews would find the Roman "aquilas" to be abominable and detestable. It has to do with the simple fact that they were graven images. As we have seen, the Roman "aquilas" were molten images atop their standards, which the Roman military prized, respected, honored and protected. They treated it as a god, and Roman soldiers would even sacrifice their lives in order to recover one which had been stolen or lost.

Most Christians already understand what God thinks of idols, but here are some verses for your consideration. How ironic that Paul is writing to the Roman brethren regarding Roman idolatry in the very first two verses below. Notice how Paul includes "and to birds" in his remarks. Surely he must have been thinking about the Roman "aquilas":

"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, AND TO BIRDS, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things."

Romans 1:22-23, KJV

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

Exodus 20:3-6, KJV

"Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them."

Psalms 115:4-8, KJV

"The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of

men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths. They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them."

Psalms 135:15-18, KJV

"They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them: But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood. Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions."

Psalms 106:34-39, KJV

"They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship. They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove: yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble."

Isaiah 46:6-7, KJV

"For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good."

Jeremiah 10:3-5, KJV

"A drought is upon her [Babylon's] waters; and they shall be dried up: for it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols."

Jeremiah 50:38, KJV

"Son of man, set thy face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them, And say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys; Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places. And your altars shall be

desolate, and your images shall be broken: and I will cast down your slain men before your idols. And I will lay the dead carcasses of the children of Israel before their idols; and I will scatter your bones round about your altars. In all your dwellingplaces the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate; that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, and your idols may be broken and cease, and your images may be cut down, and your works may be abolished. And the slain shall fall in the midst of you, and ye shall know that I am the LORD."

Ezekiel 6:2-7, KJV

"And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them? Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols; That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations. For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to enquire of him concerning me; I the LORD will answer him by myself: And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know that I am the LORD."

Ezekiel 14:2-8, KJV

By this time, in light of this preponderance of Scriptural evidence, I hope it is clear to you why the Angel Gabriel would refer to the Roman standards -- or "aquilas" -- as being "the abomination that maketh desolate" when he gave his message to Daniel. Perhaps you also now understand why I made such an issue out of the KJV translators translating "kanaph" as "overspreading", instead of as "wings", "wing", "winged" or "feathered". Just unlocking the full meaning of that one Hebrew word has revealed the truth to us.

However, at the same time, as I also said, having looked

deeper into this matter, I now have a better idea regarding why the KJV translators may have chosen to use the word "overspreading" in the phrase "and for the overspreading of abominations", instead of wings, feathers, etc. According to the Wikipedia website, the "aquila" was made of silver, or bronze, with outstretched wings. Thus, it may very well be that when the translators used "overspreading", they were referring to the fact that the "aquilas" had outstretched wings. Not only that, but the Romans were spreading their eagles' wings all around Jerusalem. Roman eagle wings were just spread out everywhere! One for each legion.

You may recall that while the Hebrew word "shamem" is often translated as "desolate" or "desolation", it can also mean to stun, cause horror, stupefy, appall, amaze or astonish. By proudly displaying their molten eagles on top of their poles which bore their military flags, the Roman military purposely instilled fear and horror in their subjects and their enemies, just as that Hebrew word also means. It was the ancient version of "shock and awe".

As I have said, the appearance of Roman legions with their standards meant only one thing: desolation, destruction and the end of life for the recipients of Rome's wrath. I find it very fitting that Rome would abandon all other animals, and select only the eagle. Why so? Because just like the eagle, the leaders of Rome would use their military might to attack, mercilessly tear apart, and devour their enemies. So it is indeed very appropriate. You will also recall that the Lord Himself had said about forty years earlier "there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword" and "who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

As we know, these molten eagles of the ancient Roman legions were placed on the very temple grounds, where they were not supposed to be. As Jesus said "standing where it ought not". They were an abomination to the Jews. There were probably also flags which bore the images of eagles in some of the chariots of the upper-tier Roman leadership as well. If we consider the size of the siege wall which surrounded the city of Jerusalem, I think it is possible that there were "aquilas" stationed on top of the wall as well. These no doubt caused the trapped Jews additional horror and dread, because they knew that their days were numbered. These abominations must have been overspread everywhere in some form.

On a related note, it might interest you to know that when Herod the Great -- the very first King Herod -- was chosen as the first puppet king of Judea by the Roman Senate, one of the things he did to demonstrate his loyalty to Rome was to place a golden eagle over the gates which gave entrance to the outer courtyard of the temple. The Jewish population was greatly offended by Herod's actions. Eventually, two Jewish men tore down the golden eagle. After rebuking the people, Herod had several dozen of them burned alive. The story is in Book 1 Chapter 33 of "The Wars of the Jews", as we see by the following excerpt:

----- Begin Quote -----

Now the king had put up a golden eagle over the great gate of the temple, which these learned men exhorted them to cut down, and told them, that if there should any danger arise, it was a glorious thing to die for the laws of their country; because that the soul was immortal, and that an eternal enjoyment of happiness did await such as died on that account: while the mean spirited, and those that were not wise enough to show a right love of their souls, preferred a death by a disease, before that which is the result of a virtuous behaviour.

At the same time that these men made this speech to their disciples, a rumour was spread abroad, that the king was dying, which made the young men set about the work with greater boldness; they therefore let themselves down from the top of the temple with thick cords, and this at midday, and while a great number of people were in the temple, and cut down that golden eagle with axes. This was presently told to the king's captain of the temple, who came running with a great body of soldiers, and caught about forty of the young men, and brought them to the king. And when he asked them, first of all, whether they had been so hardy as to cut down the golden eagle? they confessed they had done so; and when he asked them by whose command they had done it, they replied, at the command of the law of their country; and when he farther asked them, how they could be so joyful when they were to be put to death, they replied. Because they should enjoy greater happiness after they were dead.

At this the king was in such an extravagant passion, that he overcame his disease [for the time,] and went out, and spoke to the people; wherein he made a terrible accusation against

those men, as being guilty of sacrilege, and as making greater attempts under pretence of their law, and he thought they deserved to be punished as impious persons. Whereupon the people were afraid lest a great number should be found guilty, and desired that when he had first punished those that put them upon this work, and then those that were caught in it, he would leave off his anger as to the rest. With this the king complied, though not without difficulty, and ordered those that had let themselves down, together with the Rabbins, to be burnt alive, but delivered the rest that were caught to the proper officers to be put to death by them."

----- End Quote -----

To reiterate, personally, I am convinced by both historical evidence, as well as Scriptural evidence, that this is what Jesus meant when He used the well-known phrase "abomination of desolation" in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark. In my view, contrary to what I once believed, and what many other Christians still believe, the Abomination of Desolation has absolutely nothing to do with our current times. It has no connection whatsoever to what modern Christians refer to as endtime prophecy, or to a speculated third temple being built on the summit of Mount Moriah in East Jerusalem. It has nothing to do with a modern idol, or with some kind of modern "image of the beast".

In my view, such thinking is misguided Futurist nonsense, which I likewise embraced for far too many years, due to my ignorance of what the Scriptures really have to say about this issue. It is a false doctrine which has been promoted by Futurists for many years, decades in fact. So with this explanation, you should hopefully now have a much better understanding regarding what Gabriel was talking about in Daniel 9:27. Let me share that verse with you again:

"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, KJV

Thus we see that until the seven-year war ended -- that is to say, consummated, according to the Hebrew word "kalah" -- the

Roman standards with their golden eagles on top would be seen everywhere, as destructions followed one after the other, as God poured out His divine Wrath upon the unbelieving Jews. As Daniel wrote in verse twenty-six, "unto the end of the war desolations are determined." Now if I were to translate the entire verse in a way in which I now personally understand it, it would be something like the following, with words in brackets for clarification:

"And he [Titus, the Prince] shall strengthen the alliance with many [allies/soldiers] for seven years: and in the middle of the seven years he shall cause the [temple] sacrifice and the offering to cease, and because of the winged, detestable idols [spread all around], he shall destroy them [the Jews], even until the end [of the war], and that determined shall be poured upon the destroyed [people]."

Daniel 9:27

My friends, if you step back and really think about it, the modern Futurist interpretation does not make any sense. In these three verses, we see a guy -- a Roman prince and a warrior -- organizing a huge, powerful military machine. So what does he do next? Does he go to Jerusalem to sign some kind of peace treaty or political agreement so that the Jews can rebuild their temple? No he does not. You do NOT create such a powerful fighting machine just to go and sign a peace agreement. You create a huge war machine like that because you are planning on destroying somebody.

If you take the time to read the entire Book of Daniel, that is what it is all about: the rise and fall of political and military powers, and all of the ugly wars which they fight to overpower each other. It is NOT about holding hands and singing along to "Kumbaya". As such, my understanding and interpretation of the three verses fits in perfectly, in my view. Signing a treaty to build the Jews a new temple -- as the Futurists claim -- does not! Think about it!

There's something else interesting about verse twenty-seven. To demonstrate exactly how amazing Gabriel's Seventy Weeks Prophecy really is, consider how it specifically states that the military alliance with Rome would last for exactly seven years. My friends, think about that for a minute. How could Titus and his invading forces know that the war would endure for exactly seven years? They could not possibly know it, my friends. I mean, when a country goes to war, they NEVER know

how long it will last, because all kinds of unanticipated things can occur. However, God most certainly knew, and that is why He passed the message on to the Angel Gabriel, who then gave the message to Daniel.

So, my friends, I have now offered you a full interpretation concerning exactly what I believe the Seventy Weeks Prophecy is all about. I have worked long and hard, and I have prayed hard for God to reveal only the truth to me concerning this amazing prophecy that is found in Daniel 9:25-27. After so many years of waiting, I am convinced that God has finally answered my prayers. I have full confidence that what I have stated in this series stands on solid Scriptural ground, and on solid historical ground as well. I have not attempted to twist or pervert any Scriptures, as so many of the modern Futurist teachers tend to do in order to try to validate and legitimize their erroneous doctrines. I have provided you with clear evidence, even the meanings of many Hebrew words. Now it is up to you to pray about these things, and then to decide what you want to believe.

Before concluding this series, let me leave you with part of Eleazar's tragic speech which is found in Book 7 Chapter 13 of the "The Wars of the Jews". Eleazar was the leader of the Sicarii, or dagger men, who had fled to the desert fortress of Masada after escaping from Jerusalem. He gave this speech to all of his people before they committed mass suicide, so that they could not be taken alive by Flavius Silva, who was the Roman procurator of Judea, and who had besieged Masada:

----- Begin Quote -----

"And where is now that great city, the metropolis of the Jewish nation! which was fortified by so many walls round about, which had so many fortresses and large towers to defend it, which could hardly contain the instruments prepared for the war, and which had so many ten thousands of men to fight for it? Where is this city that was believed to have God himself inhabiting therein? It is now demolished to the very foundations, and hath nothing but that monument of it preserved, I mean the camp of those that hath destroyed it, which still dwells upon its ruins; some unfortunate old men also lie upon the ashes of the temple, and a few women are there preserved alive by the enemy, for our bitter shame and reproach. Now, who is there that revolves these things in his mind, and yet is able to bear the sight of the sun, though he might live out of danger? Who is there so much his

country's enemy, or so unmanly, and so desirous of living, as not to repent that he is still alive? And I cannot but wish that we had all died, before we had seen that holy city demolished by the hands of our enemies, or the foundations of our holy temple dug up after so profane a manner. But since we had a generous hope that deluded us, as if we might perhaps have been able to avenge ourselves on our enemies on that account, though it be now become vanity, and hath left us alone in this distress, let us make haste to die bravely. Let us pity ourselves, our children, and our wives, while it is in our own power to show pity to them: for we were born to die, as well as those were whom we have begotten: nor is it in the power of the most happy of our race to avoid it."

----- End Quote -----

Isn't that just sad? Their stubbornness just boggles my mind. To think that they would prefer killing their own women and children, and then themselves as well, rather than submit to Roman authority. But that same stubborn spirit is revealed throughout the works of Josephus. Time and time again they had opportunity to surrender to General Titus, yet each time they rebuffed his entreaties. That is why he determined that it was pointless, and ultimately chose to destroy the city.

With these thoughts, I will bring this article to a close. It is my hope that you've found it informative and enlightening, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life as well. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or with any other social network, I would really appreciate if you'd take the time to click or tap on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information and further study, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were either mentioned in this article, or which contain topics which are related to this article. All of these articles are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server. To read these articles, simply click or tap on any link you see below.

Abomination of Desolation: Explained!

Are You Flexible?

Donald Trump, Gaza, and the Tyre Prophecy

Fight Against Futurism

He That Shall Endure unto the End

In the Ages to Come
Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?
Modern Deception: Shall a Nation Be Born at Once?
Modern Deceptions: Return to Israel, the Fig Tree and This Generation
My Evolving Theology
Please Stop Misinterpreting the Scriptures
Prophetic Comparisons: Moshiach, Mahdi and Messiah
Psalm 83 War False Doctrine Exposed!
Satan: His Origin, Purpose and Future
Satan: King of Tyrus, King of Empires
The Day of the Lord: What It Really Means
The Fall of Masada
The Great Tribulation and the Rapture
The Last Seven Years Chart
The Misguided End of the World Predictions of Harold Camping
The Significance of Oil in the Holy Scriptures
The Triumphant Touchdown of Jesus Christ
The Two Sackcloth Witnesses of Revelation 11
The Woman in the Wilderness and the 144,000
Tradition or Truth? Old Wine or New Wine?
Understanding the Bible in Context
Vespasian, Titus and the Fall of Jerusalem
When Was Satan Cast Out of Heaven?
Who Hindered the Antichrist?
Who is Babylon the Great?
Who is Moshiach ben David?
Who is Who?: Defining Important Prophecy Terms

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