

PART ONE

– SETTING THE SCENE –

CHAPTER 1

GOD'S PROVISION FOR SIN

In the first book in the Bible, after God observed that everything he had created was *very good*, He instructed Adam and Eve concerning what food was legitimate to eat from the garden paradise into which He had placed them, and what food was forbidden. After they disobeyed God, by eating from the prohibited *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, their conscience was awakened and they realised they were naked. To hide their guilt and shame Adam and Eve *sewed fig leaves together for coverings* and hid themselves from God.¹

However, in Genesis 3:21, we find that *God made tunics of skin and clothed them*.² This is the first mention of an animal being killed in God's new creation – a doleful task, either carried out by God, or, by Adam under conviction from God – so that the animal's hide could *conceal* Adam and Eve's nakedness, and *cover up* the significance of their disobedience!³ But, even though they were afterward clothed in sacrificially provided God-crafted garments, Adam and Eve's primal rebellion against God's instructions – plus their desire to be god-like (knowing good and evil) – resulted in specific and consequential *curses* being pronounced on them: they were expelled from paradise, their interaction with each other and the land was debased, and their relationship with God became estranged. (Genesis 3:6–24)

The second Biblical reference to the death of an animal occurs when Adam and Eve's two sons, Cain and Abel, brought their offerings to the LORD. Abel's offering was an animal (a first-born blood sacrifice) from the flocks he kept, and Cain's offering was from the ground that he tilled.

And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. Abel also brought of the first born of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. (Genesis 4:3-5)

We read further in Hebrews 11:4 that Abel's offering imparted righteousness to him.⁴ Thus, according to the pattern that God had initiated with Cain's parents: without the shedding of blood—through the death of a substitute animal—Cain's sin could not be *covered* and cleansing and righteousness could not be experienced by him.⁵ There is an inference (via God's response to Cain's anger) that Cain already knew that, but he decided that the work he wrought with his hands and the produce he brought from tilling the ground, would do for an offering to God! Perhaps Cain thought his own deeds could make him righteous in God's sight!⁶

Some people think the greater degree of Cain's problem lay in his attitude rather than in the nature of his offering; maybe his actions did not stem from a spontaneous act of gratitude toward God, or perhaps he was trying to compete with his brother on a level he thought he could attain.⁷ But, conceivably, God's disdain for Cain's offering was simply because Cain disregarded the pattern previously established by God! He flouted God's prerequisite: only the blood shed by a substituted animal sacrifice could adequately *cover* Cain's inherited sinful nature.

Cain sulked because God did not respect him or his offering, so he lured Abel out into the field where he murdered his brother in a fit of jealousy. God lamented that Abel's *blood cried out... from the ground!* Henceforth, Cain would be ejected from the presence of the LORD and *cursed* as a wandering fugitive; he was expelled to the land of Nod, east of Eden. Anyone who killed Cain would suffer a *sevenfold* vengeance.⁸

Ages passed by, and after the deluge in Noah's day, which is depicted in Genesis as a punishment from God for the wickedness of mankind, we read:

Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. (Genesis 8:20)

Thus, after countless years—and via diverse circumstances—God's innovation of sacrificing an animal to *cover* human-kind's sin became established as a sacramental ritual!

Generations afterward, God made a covenant with Abraham (Abram), which required animal or avian sacrifices for its confirmation (Genesis 15:7-21). The same covenant practice continued with Abraham's son Isaac (Genesis 26:24-25), with his grandson Jacob who was renamed Israel (Genesis 31:54; 32:28; 33:18-20; 35:1, 7), and with Jacob's twelve sons and their descendants who were called the Children of Israel, or simply, Jacob (Exodus 12:1-13; 20:24).⁹

After Moses led the Children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt in mid. 15th Century BC (see ⁹ above), and right at the start of their journey towards the Promised Land, God instructed Moses to build a *sanctuary* in the form of a *tabernacle* or *tent* for Him to dwell in. It would contain various *furnishings* that were to be constructed according to the patterns revealed

to Moses in Exodus 25–27. Indispensable to the tabernacle *furnishings* was a box-shaped object called the *Ark of the Covenant* that contained the Tablets of the Law.

The *Ark* was a simple rectangular box built of Acacia wood, which was lined and overlaid with beaten gold. It was adorned with two golden cherubim (angels) whose outspread wings reached over a gold-plated lid called the *mercy seat*; this was where God's presence—called *Shekinah Glory*—hovered in a visible cloud between the cherubim. The *mercy seat* was where the blood of a sacrificed animal should be sprinkled—as a substitute offering—to *cover* their sins. From this point onward in the history of the Twelve Tribes, the blood of a sacrificed animal was the only practical and acceptable offering the people could make to Holy God to *cover* their sin and disobedience, and provisionally secure their relationship with Him! The God-designed *Ark of the Covenant* would henceforth become a portable altar and sanctified instrument for intercession, mediation and reconciliation between God and the Children of Israel.¹⁰

Although the maintenance of the daily services in the Tabernacle or Temple facilities were borne by mature men from the priestly tribe of Levi (*Kohanim* or *Levites*), only a descendant of Aaron could be appointed High Priest (*Kohen gadol*), to perform the required rituals on the annual Day of Atonement. On that day the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies (viz., the innermost sacred room in the Tabernacle or Temple complex, which was shielded from external view by a thick veil), and present himself as mediator between God and His people, while he sprinkled the sacrificial blood offering onto the *mercy seat* to *cover* the sins committed by the nation. However, the animal sacrifices and offerings—made by the priests on behalf of the people—were only temporary in their effectiveness and required repeated observance.¹¹

Israel's Law (the Ten Commandments), and the Levites' priestly duties, rituals and regulations, had been established via the Covenant that God made with the Children of Israel (through Moses) at Mount Sinai, Circa 1450-1410 BC, (Exodus 19-20). At the same time, Moses attached a caveat of *blessing* and *cursing* to the reading of the Law:

Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today; and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known. (Deuteronomy 11:26-28)

NOTE: See Deuteronomy 28:1-14 for the *blessings*, versus the *curses* described in Deuteronomy 28:15-68, which would engulf them if they disobeyed the Law.

However, in spite of Moses' warning, the Children of Israel were destined to wander in the desert wilderness for forty years as a punishment for their idolatry and multiple disobediences to God's Law. During those years and afterward, when the surviving descendants from Jacob's twelve sons entered the Promised Land to fight against the inhabitants of Canaan—under the leadership of Moses' deputy Joshua—the *Tabernacle* and the portable *Ark of the Covenant* were of vital importance to the Children of Israel, enabling them to maintain their relationship with God. Eventually, by military conquest and the exercise of civil rule (by Judges who were appointed to rule over the Twelve Tribes), the Children of Israel became established in the Promised Land. Later on, when the discontented people demanded a king, God granted them their wish and a period of monarchy under Saul, David and his son Solomon, was inaugurated by the prophet Samuel.

Thus, for hundreds of years the *Ark of the Covenant* was housed in the *Tabernacle* or Tent of Meeting (in various locations), until the *Ark* was finally installed in Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem (Circa 10th Century BC). Basically, the *Ark* contained the Ten Commandments, and symbolised the dwelling place of Israel's Holy God. It was used as an instrument for mediation between God and His people, and it was sprinkled with the blood of a substitutionary sacrifice each Day of Atonement to *cover* the sins of the nation.



CHAPTER 2

THE SEVEN TIMES CURSE

Following King Solomon's reign, his kingdom became divided, and the ten northern tribes separated from the rest; they became known as Israel (with Samaria as their capital), and their continual sin and idolatry broke God's Covenant of Law. After ignoring Moses' earlier prescient warnings, and those made by contemporary prophets (such as Amos and Hosea), the northern House of Israel suffered the consequences of their sinful disobedience: Samaria was invaded by the Assyrians in 721 BC, and subsequently the ten Northern Tribes were conquered, captured, and dispersed into Assyria's provincial areas.¹²

More than a century later, in 597 BC, a similar fate engulfed the southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin together with the Levites, when Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, invaded Judaea from the north and besieged Jerusalem their capital city. Judah's 18 year old king Jehoiachin, his household and the leaders of Jerusalem surrendered, and were taken prisoner (2 Kings 24:8-12; 25:27-30). Many of the golden treasures in the temple and in the king's house were either looted or cut up and taken to Babylon.¹³ At the same time, Daniel, along with other youths of noble birth from Judah's elite families were seized, and taken to Babylon to be trained for service in the court of king Nebuchadnezzar. The poorest people were left to eke out a living in Judaea. Mattaniah, better known as Zedekiah (Jehoi-

achin's uncle), was appointed to be Babylon's vassal king in Judaea.¹⁴

A decade later Zedekiah failed to heed the warnings uttered by the prophet Jeremiah and he rebelled against his Babylonian overlords. As a result, Jerusalem was besieged for two years by the Babylonian army, led by Nebuzaradan, a captain of the guard, and the city fell to Babylon in July 587 BC (2 Kings 25:1-10). On this occasion, all of the large bronze structures adorning the temple and those used ceremonially, were broken up into pieces, and the remaining solid gold, silver and bronze vessels were taken to Babylon. In 586 BC the Temple and all the great houses in Jerusalem were burned, the walls of Jerusalem were destroyed, and the leaders of the rebellion were killed. The remaining population were taken captive to Babylon.¹⁵ Major invasions of Judaea were carried out by Nebuchadnezzar in his 7th, 18th, and 23rd year of rule, and he eventually took 4,600 Jewish captives to Babylon (Jeremiah 52:28-30).

Prior to, or during the destruction of Solomon's Temple in 586 BC, the *Ark of the Covenant* disappeared! It may have been cut up and destroyed by the Babylonians, or, taken along with some of the other temple vessels to the pagan temple of Bel-Marduk in Babylon. Some people believe the *Ark* was hidden somewhere safe by Jeremiah before the Babylonian invasion, but its fate or location was never reported, nor has it ever been recovered or replaced.¹⁶

Because the Temple sanctuary in Jerusalem had been destroyed, and because the holy vessels that facilitated the priestly rituals to *cover* the sins of Judah were either taken to Babylon, or cut into pieces and removed from service, neither the *Ark of the Covenant* nor the *mercy seat* were available for the Southern Tribes to negotiate with God during the long years of servitude and exile that lay ahead for them in Babylon. Just as Mo-

ses had warned the Children of Israel (eight centuries earlier), to desist from sin, or the dreadful punishment for turning away from God would fall on them (Deuteronomy 28:15-68), so *the curse of disobedience* to the Laws of God had inexorably now fallen on Judah as well!

As it happened, the reasons for *the curse* coming upon them were multiple:

1. They broke the Mosaic covenant!

Judaea was conquered by Babylon, the nation was destroyed, and the people of Judah were taken captive because of their continual idolatry and breaking of God's Law. The *Marriage Covenant* that God made with all of Israel at the foot of Mt. Sinai was broken almost immediately, in spite of their corporate promise to obey His commandments and have no other gods. (Exodus 19:5-8; 20:1-17)

2. They failed to rest the land!

Adding weight to their broken vows at Sinai was their failure to observe the Law in Leviticus 25:3-4, 18-22, which commanded them—while they occupied the Promised Land—to leave the land fallow in the seventh-year (Sabbath). God added this complaint to their sins, and indicated that because the Sabbath years were ignored, the land would consequently enjoy its Sabbaths while they were in captivity in Babylon.

Then the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths as long as it lies desolate and you are in your enemies' land; then the land shall rest and enjoy its Sabbaths. As long as it lies desolate it shall rest—for the time it did not rest on your Sabbaths when you dwelt in it. (Leviticus 26:34-35)

Aligning with this seventh-year Sabbath (rest) requirement was their deceit and disobedience over their promise to Zedekiah that they would release – on the seventh year – any Hebrew countrymen whom they had enslaved.¹⁷

3. They ignored Jeremiah's warnings!

Jeremiah stated that he had been preaching the same message for ten years, warning them to turn from their evil ways and stop their idolatry.

*From the **thirteenth year** of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even to this day, this is the **twenty-third year** in which the word of the LORD has come to me; and I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, but you have not listened. And the LORD has sent to you all His servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, but you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear. (Jeremiah 25:3–4)*

Finally, Jeremiah warned them that Babylon would come against Judaea as their punishment.

Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Because you have not heard My words, behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, says the LORD, and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land, against its inhabitants, and against these nations all around, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, a hissing, and perpetual desolations. (Jeremiah 25:8–9)

*And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and **these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.** (25:11) ¹⁸*

But why did Jeremiah say that *seventy years* would be the stipulated period for their exile? Plainly, in spite of Jeremiah's repeated warnings during the preceding *ten years* the people of Judah had not listened or repented; so, Jeremiah simply used the *seven times punishment* formula established by God in Genesis 4:15, 24 (relating to Cain's enemies); this was the same warning that Moses had repeated four times in Leviticus 26:14-39!

Judah's failure to heed the warnings given by Jeremiah—during *ten years* of preaching—meant their terrible punishment would be multiplied *seven times* to become *seventy years* of captivity. Their sin had brought *the curse* of exile upon them, via the *seven times* formula:

*I will punish you **seven times** more for your sins.*

*I will bring on you **seven times** more plagues, according to your sins.*

*And I will punish you yet **seven times** for your sins.*

*And I, even I, will chastise you **seven times** for your sins. (Leviticus 26:18, 21, 24, 28)*

The *seven times curse* for breaking the Mosaic Covenant regarding idolatry, for not allowing the land to rest or releasing their Hebrew slaves, and for ignoring Jeremiah's warnings, had fallen like a hammer blow—wielded by Babylon—upon the people living in Judaea.¹⁹ Even so, for the sake of the various covenants that God had previously made with their ancestors—Jacob, Isaac and Abraham—God also promised a gracious restoration if they repented. (Leviticus 26:41b-46)

Thus, their eventual return to the land is described in compassionate terms:

Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.

The LORD your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good. For the LORD will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers. (Deuteronomy 30:5, 9)

~~~~~

## CHAPTER 3

### DANIEL'S PRAYER

For ten years, the prophet Jeremiah had continually warned the Southern Tribes of Judah that their idolatry and disobedience towards God and His Law would cause a powerful nation from the north to invade their lands and take them captive. It had all happened just as Moses' *seven times curse* and Jeremiah's *ten years* of warning, had said it would: the Babylonians had invaded Judaea, destroyed the Temple, and enslaved its people.

Then unexpectedly, in 539 BC, Babylon had fallen to Persia. Daniel – who became of great political importance in the Babylonian court during his decades of servitude – began searching through Jeremiah's written records, trying to find the answer to Judah's dilemma. He also prayed to God: questioning how their national and spiritual restoration could be accomplished under their present exiled circumstances, especially since their holy city Jerusalem remained desolate and destroyed! Although Daniel doesn't mention that the Temple had been razed, or that the whereabouts of the *Ark of the Covenant* was unknown to him, it is taken as read that these historical facts would have been in his thoughts as he prayed.

During his anguished prayer for enlightenment (Daniel 9), Daniel realised that **all Israel** had sinned: it was the Twelve Tribes' combined transgressions and their departure from the

Law that had triggered the implementation of the *curse* pronounced by Moses so long ago. Moses had warned the people that any disobedience or transgression from the Law (even after they entered the Promised Land), would bring a devastating and dire *curse* upon them. Moses had documented *the curse* in such graphic terms of terror in Leviticus 26:14–46 it left them in no doubt that if they were disobedient, God would remove His *blessing* from Judah's people, and He would allow them to be struck down by their enemies. That *curse* had been put into effect via the invasion of the 10 northern tribes by the Assyrians, and the invasion of Judaea by the Babylonians; the *curse* resulted in the destruction of both kingdoms, the capture of their tribes-people, and the long-term banishment of the people of Israel and Judah from their lands! <sup>20</sup>

*Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your Law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him. (Daniel 9:11)*

Daniel obviously knew all about *the curse*, therefore, he would have also known that a *blessing* option was pronounced on the Twelve Tribes by Moses when he ordered them to stand before two mountains: viz., Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal (near the Jordan River), before they entered the Promised Land. These two mountains were chosen respectively as mountains of blessing and cursing in Deuteronomy 11:26–32. Daniel would have known too, that their eventual restoration to the land of Judaea from foreign captivity had been spectacularly set before them by Moses in Deuteronomy 30:1–20.<sup>21</sup> Leviticus 26:1–13 specifically stated that obedience to the Law was essential for the people of Judah to be blessed by God, and Daniel knew that if they kept His statutes and commandments then certain bless-



ings would follow. And so, they endured their captivity and servitude...

In 539 BC a sudden change occurred in the destiny of the exiled people of Judah. It came about through the conquest of Babylon and its territories by the armies of Cyrus, king of the Medes and Persians, whose troops penetrated Babylon's defences by surreptitiously diverting the flow of the Euphrates River so they could enter the city via the dried-up river bed. Since Babylon had fallen suddenly, and God's punishment on Judah's enemies had been swift in coming, Daniel probably hoped their captivity in Babylon would end quickly as well. Surely it was time for something momentous to happen? It did! Amazingly, during his first year after conquering Babylon (538 BC), Cyrus commanded that a voluntary group of Judean captives should return to Jerusalem to build a new Temple for God; he also promised to release the temple vessels looted by Nebuchadnezzar. This unprecedented decree—affecting all of the nations previously subjugated by Babylon—would have reminded Daniel of the verses in Deuteronomy 30 where God promised He would restore His people to the land of their fathers.

By this time, Daniel had been confined to Babylon's precincts for many decades, and during his long service in the court of the Babylonian kings he had been elevated to the third highest position in the government—subject only to king Nabonidus and his son Belshazzar. Daniel's prior service to the Babylonian Court had subsequently been recognised by the new Persian government, and he was retained as a principal president or governor over the princes of the realm during his remaining years.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, while searching for God's answer to the dilemma facing his people, Daniel examined *the books of Jeremiah the*

*prophet* during the first year reign of Darius, a Mede (Daniel 9:1–2).<sup>23</sup> Whether this was his first reading of *the books* we are not told, but we know that some of Jeremiah’s writings had been committed to Judah’s records around the first Babylonian invasion into Judaea in 597 BC. Back then – because Daniel was only a youth – he may not have had access to the letter that Jeremiah addressed to Judah’s exiled elders in Babylon. However, decades later, when he was spurred on by the surprising events that led to their recent change in fortunes, Daniel searched the writings of *Jeremiah* for answers to his questions regarding the desolation of Jerusalem, and he discovered that their exile had been forecast to last for *seventy years*. Jeremiah’s prophetic words only became known to Daniel when he had served the kings of Babylon for about 68 years, and during that time he had matured from being a terrified young captive on his way to exile, to being a very old man with great influence in the new Persian government!

Today, since we can easily trace any references to *seventy years* in our Bible, we find that the words occur only in chapters 25 and 29 in *the book of Jeremiah*. Daniel would have read those two chapters and others, with hope rising in his heart:

*And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon **seventy years**. Then it will come to pass, when **seventy years** are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, says the LORD; and I will make it a perpetual desolation.<sup>24</sup> (Jeremiah 25:11–12)*

*For thus says the LORD: **After seventy years are completed at Babylon**, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to*

*return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. **Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.** And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.*  
(Jeremiah 29:10–14)

These verses explain why Daniel was so earnestly praying and interceding for his people (Daniel 9:3–19); he had found the way out of their dilemma – prayerful repentance – and a conditional promise that would hopefully free them from captivity and restore them to fellowship with God! However, he must also have recognised that they lacked the two artefacts that were vitally important for Israel’s broken relationship with God to be repaired and revived (i.e., the Ark of the Covenant that was lost, and the Temple in Jerusalem that had been destroyed). As far as Daniel was aware, without them Judah’s broken relationship with God couldn’t be restored or maintained! How else could God possibly deal with their sin, and how would the people of Judah be restored as God’s chosen people?

Accordingly, Daniel did precisely what Jeremiah 29:10–14 instructed him to do. His recorded prayer shows his total pre-occupation in repenting the sins of his people, even as he bemoans the evil that came upon them as a consequence of their rebellion and idolatry. He asks God to restore his people. In Daniel 9:5, 7–9, 11–13, and 15–16, he describes the multiple sins of the people of Judah and Israel, which caused the disaster

that fell upon them, their land and the city of Jerusalem. Throughout his anguished prayer Daniel acknowledges that his people are under *the curse* because of their rebellion against God and His Law; he concedes – with great passion – that God is a covenant keeping God, and that He righteously punished Israel and Judah for departing from His precepts, laws and judgments. Daniel recognised that *the curse and the oath* uttered by Moses so long ago (Daniel 9:11), had been poured out on them via the evil disaster brought against Jerusalem, the Temple, and the people of Judah. Daniel asks for *the curse* to be turned away, and desperately implores God to respond to their sin problem:

*O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. O Lord, hear! O Lord forgive! O Lord, listen and act! (Daniel 9:18-19)*

~~~~~

CHAPTER 4

JEREMIAH'S WRITINGS

Not only did Daniel follow the instructions given in Jeremiah 29:10–14 to pray and intercede for his people over their present predicament and future restoration, but while he searched through the writings of Jeremiah, he must also have discovered God's previously unrecognised blueprint for solving their sin problem. Furthermore, that plan had been subtly attached to a time-marker and future events. What Daniel stumbled on was contained in two documents written by Jeremiah under God's specific instructions: the first was *a letter* (Jeremiah 29) that he was already cognisant of, but the blueprint for their salvation and recovery was contained in a second document, *a book* (Jeremiah 30–33).

Jeremiah's Letter:

This special letter was written by Jeremiah in 597 BC shortly after the first Babylonian invasion, when he was left behind in Jerusalem; it was sent via King Zedekiah's messenger to the elders and elite of Judah who were among the first group of captives taken to Babylon. It was in this *letter* that Daniel found Jeremiah's second reference to their *seventy year* exile, together with God's instructions to the elders and people about their responsibilities during their captivity.

Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the remainder of the elders who were carried away captive – to the priests, the prophets, and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon. (Jeremiah 29:1)

For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform my good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. (Jeremiah 29:10)

This letter instructed the people to build houses and settle down for the duration of their exile, so that they might increase in number, and prosper together with the city to which they had been taken. They are reassured that God's plan was to increase them and not harm them during their captivity, but those who were left behind in the land of Judaea would suffer a trilogy of trouble via the sword, famine and plague. Furthermore, any false prophets who spoke presumptuously against the true words of God, spoken by Jeremiah, would be condemned.

Jeremiah's Book:

The second document, Jeremiah's *book* (chapters 30–33), was penned in the 10th year of Zedekiah, on the eve of the second major invasion of Judaea by the Babylonian army in 587/6 BC. In the interim, Jeremiah had been imprisoned by King Zedekiah in the guards' courtyard in Jerusalem for prophesying against the king and city, saying they would both fall to Babylon (Jeremiah 34:1–3). However, it was Zedekiah's rebellion against their Babylonian overlords that caused the army (led by General Nebuzaradan) to return and invade Judaea; this time they battered down the walls of Jerusalem, and the Temple was destroyed along with everything else that stood against Baby-

lon's rule. Although the worst possible disaster for Jerusalem was happening (even as Jeremiah was writing his *book*), it was still *a book of hope* for the future of Judaea and its people.

*The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Thus speaks the LORD God of Israel, saying: **Write in a book** for yourself all the words that I have spoken to you. For behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, **that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah,** says the LORD, **And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.** (Jeremiah 30:1–3)*

Exactly when Jeremiah's *book* was sent to the captives in Babylon, we are not told, but it obviously arrived at some point during their continuing exile to inform them of their promised return to the land and provide hope for the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Its contents not only described the glorious restoration awaiting them after their exile, but it also described the future coming of a servant of God called *The Branch* (Messiah), who would one day sit on David's throne in Jerusalem! (Jeremiah 33:14–18)

Decades later, as Daniel examined Jeremiah's *letter* and studied his *book*, he would have remembered the dire period of Babylon's dominion over Judaea (597–539 BC), and the repeated attacks that ravaged the towns and countryside when anyone who resisted King Nebuchadnezzar was enslaved or put to death. Daniel would have observed that the grim and foreboding events written in the *book* in Jeremiah 32:26–36 had all come true. Yet, in spite of the fact that his words were recorded at the peak of Nebuchadnezzar's power – during his eighteenth year on the throne (587 BC) – and despite the disasters Daniel's people had experienced in the ensuing years, Jeremiah 32:37–41

still gave great hope to the exiles that even if they didn't live to see the fall of Babylon, perhaps their offspring would?

Now, Babylon had fallen, just as God had promised...

For it shall come to pass in that day, says the LORD of hosts, That I will break his yoke from your neck, and will burst your bonds... Jacob shall return, have rest and be quiet, and no one shall make him afraid. (Jeremiah 30:8a, 10b)

Having already read Jeremiah's informative *letter* (chapter 29) about their *seventy years* at Babylon, there is no doubt that Daniel (in his old age) would have read further on into Jeremiah's *book* (chapters 30-33), during his anxious and determined quest for information about how their exile would end. In those four chapters he would discover several prophecies about Judah's restoration and Jerusalem's future, plus an intriguing piece of information saying that *after those days* (of exile) God would make a *New Covenant* with the house of Judah, which would solve their sin problem!²⁵

Since Daniel had seen so many of Jeremiah's prophetic statements written in his *letter* come true, those historic fulfillments would have given him great hope that the recently discovered predictions documented in his *book*, about their restoration and the mysterious *New Covenant*, would also come true!

~~~~~



## CHAPTER 5

### JEREMIAH'S NEW COVENANT

When Babylon, the capital city of Chaldea, fell intact to a covert invasion by Cyrus, king of Persia in 539 BC, the words and prophecies in Jeremiah's *letter* and *book* were partially vindicated; thus, Daniel's hopes regarding the full restoration of Judah—i.e., physically, materially, and spiritually—would have risen to new heights, as is evident in his prayer.

So, as Daniel concentrated on Jeremiah's writings—searching for more details about their restoration—he soon discovered a treasure-trove of verses about a *New Covenant*.

*Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a **new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. (Jeremiah 31:31–32)*

No doubt this fresh information excited Daniel and got him praying even more fervently; because—although he already knew that his God was a covenant-keeping God—after reading Jeremiah's *letter* and *book* it seems he had to reinforce his own belief, and also remind God during his prayer (Daniel 9:4).

Since these words about a distinctive *New Covenant* were specifically written down by Jeremiah in 587 BC, on the eve of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonian army led by General Nebuzaradan, it was reassuring to know that God intended to restore all of His people (both Israel, and Judah): i.e., those who had previously been exiled to Assyria and to Babylon, as well as those who were about to join them. Jeremiah's statement indicated that God's great plan was decisively set in place. These comforting words undoubtedly gave the besieged population great confidence that God would not only care for them in a foreign land during their exile, but the promised *New Covenant* would give them great hope for the future.

According to Jeremiah, God was going to make a brand new *Covenant* with His people; and since almost everything else that Jeremiah foretold had been fulfilled in Daniel's lifetime, he would hope that he lived to see this promise fulfilled as well! However, although the promised *New Covenant* was plain and simple—in recording *what* God was going to do—Jeremiah did not explain *how* God was going to do it, or state precisely *when* it would occur.

Daniel was aware that there were several covenants already in place between God and the ancestors of his people, and he would have known that none of them dealt *permanently* with the sins of the people of Judah. Daniel would have realised that if the promised *New Covenant* was the channel through which God was going to restore the houses of Israel and Judah to fellowship with Himself, then it would have to be achieved through an (as yet) unexplained process. The thought of such a covenant must have thrilled Daniel—especially in view of his advanced age—and he would have had many questions that needed answers. No doubt the lack of details intrigued him greatly, causing him to pray even more earnestly for enlightenment regarding what he had read in Jeremiah.

But right now, Daniel wanted to know what was going to happen next? As he read further into Jeremiah's book he saw what was written:

*But this is **the covenant** that I will make with the house of Israel **after those days**, says the LORD: **I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.** No More shall every man teach his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. **For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.***  
 (Jeremiah 31:33-34)

He read that – somehow – God was going to put *His Law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and forgive their iniquity, and their sin* (Jeremiah 31:33-34). This was astonishing news to Daniel, and definitely something for him to enquire about! Even as Daniel was reading Jeremiah's *letter and book*, and praying and confessing the sins of Judah (on behalf of his people), God sent the angel Gabriel to talk with him: advising him of the solution to their predicament, explaining *when* the promised *New Covenant* would be effected, *how* it would be achieved, and *who* would activate it.

~~~~~


CHAPTER 6

THE ANGEL GABRIEL APPEARS

Gabriel's sudden reappearance, right in the middle of Daniel's spoken prayers, no doubt shocked and surprised the old prophet, so Gabriel wasted no time in assuring him that his questioning thoughts were about to be answered.

Yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly; reached me about the time of the evening offering.²⁶ And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision...

(Daniel 9:21–22)

Although Daniel appears to have been searching primarily for information about how and when the *seventy year* desolation of Jerusalem would end; while wondering how the physical restoration of his people to Judaea would be accomplished; it was actually his prayer of repentance – over Judah's historic disobedience, sinfulness, and failure to pray – which brought Gabriel forth with God's immediate answer to his prayer. Notwithstanding Daniel's intent, Gabriel's conversation with him

covered more than just the return of Daniel's people to the land: it also revealed how Judah's spiritual relationship with God would be restored.

Thus, having just read about God's intended *New Covenant* in Jeremiah 31:33–34, and being well aware of its scarcity of details, it is understandable that Daniel's conversation with the angel Gabriel would have included some queries regarding that mysterious *New Covenant*, its purpose, and especially its timing! Fortunately for Daniel, the missing information—as to when, where, and how the *New Covenant* would be implemented—formed the greater part of Gabriel's message.

Thus, Gabriel's dissertation (recorded in what we now call Daniel's *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks*), focussed on Judah's problems, viz., Jerusalem's restoration, the exiles' return, and their ultimate salvation from sin—all of which were profoundly connected. Gabriel revealed God's plan to solve them, and how His plan would be initiated, implemented, and confirmed. Daniel's *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks* discloses the time-table committed to restoring God's people to their land (including the rebuilding of Jerusalem and its environs), as well as revealing God's far-off future plan to revive His relationship with Judah by *confirming* an unprecedented *New Covenant*.

Interestingly, the designated time period to achieve these goals, was once again calculated using the number *seven*; but this time, instead of applying the *seven times curse*, Gabriel's time period used a special word (i.e., Strong's Hebrew word No. 7620 *sabua*), which means *seven* (translated as *week*); it is a word that intrinsically carries connotations of *blessing* and rest.²⁷ Under the Law of Moses, the word *sabua* or *seven* referred to a seven year period of time that culminated in the seventh year being a *Sabbath of solemn rest* that was to be ob-

served when they occupied the Promised Land (as commanded in Leviticus 25:1-7).

Sabua also referred to the *Feast of Weeks* (*Shavu'ot*) or Feast of First-fruits, which was the annual memorial for Moses receiving the Law (Torah) – hundreds of years earlier – at Mount Horeb, which signified God's Mosaic covenant with His people. The Feast of First-fruits was first observed *seven sabua* (i.e., $7 \times 7 = 49$ days) after the dire and momentous events of the first Passover hastened their exodus from Egypt.²⁸ Consequently, the profound meaning behind the word *sabua*, not only applies to their residing in the Promised Land, and the festival for receiving the Law at Sinai, but also to what God would accomplish through the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks/Sabua*.

Daniel already knew that *sabua* referred to the Israelites' long-term, repetitive religious calendar: in that context, seven *sabua* meant seven (times) *Sabbath years of solemn rest*, which would culminate 49 years later in Israel's (fiftieth year) *Jubilee*, (Leviticus 25:8-12).²⁹ However, in the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks*, *seventy* (times) *sabua* represented a particularly long period of 490 years. The use of the word *sabua* (within the prophetic calculation) also infers that the 490 years would culminate in a *ten times greater Jubilee of blessing and rest* – at the end of that multiplied cycle – than would normally occur at the 49 year *Jubilee* mark!

But perhaps what surprised Daniel the most, was Gabriel's revelation that this explicit timetable for their restoration included the appearance (in time and place), of Judah's long-awaited Messiah! It also listed six major tasks that had to be accomplished within that extended 490 year time-frame, which would deal with their sins and restore their fellowship with God. Although their return to the land and Jerusalem's restoration were secondary in importance to Messiah's tasks, it would

have been obvious to Daniel that his people urgently needed to return to their homeland to physically rebuild the temple and city before their spiritual restoration could take place. However, the 490 year period would not begin until *a command* to restore Jerusalem was announced, and it would not end until all of the tasks and details listed in the prophecy were accomplished.

NOTE: Considering that two separate *commands* were issued by two Persian rulers over a span of years, which permitted building the temple, and establishing judicial law and autonomy for the nation, plus an authorisation to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem at a later date; the particular *command* that started the *seventy weeks* agenda is often disputed by scholars. This topic will be explored in chapters 8 and 9.

While Daniel did not specifically record in this prophecy that a Second Temple would be built on the Holy Mount in Jerusalem, he already knew – from Cyrus’ recent decree, and Gabriel’s words about the restoration and building of Jerusalem – that a temple, i.e., *the house of God*, would eventually be in existence.³⁰ Understandably, Daniel would have been seriously perplexed by the dire portent in the prophecy regarding yet another destruction of the city and sanctuary, which would inevitably make it desolate once again! (Daniel 9:26b) Apparently, the consequences of the *New Covenant* being confirmed by Messiah would automatically result in the sacrifices and rituals under Mosaic Law being made redundant.

The release of this astonishing and unexpected news must have totally overwhelmed the old prophet, but fortunately Gabriel’s conversation helped Daniel understand the significant details concerning Judah’s return to Judaea to restore Jerusalem, and comprehend all of the issues that needed to be resolved in the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks*. And so, after his discussion with the angel Gabriel, Daniel recorded for posterity the time-

table he was given for his nation's imminent restoration to the land, and God's future programme for the salvation of the people of Judah! No doubt Daniel hoped that future generations of his people would be enlightened as they read the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks*, and recognise the documented events when they eventually occurred.



CHAPTER 7

THE PROPHECY OF SEVENTY WEEKS

Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.

*Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem Until **Messiah the Prince**, There shall be **seven weeks and sixty-two weeks**; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.*

*And after the **sixty-two weeks** **Messiah shall be cut off**, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.*

*Then **he shall confirm a covenant with many** for one week: But **in the middle of the week** **He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering**. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate. (Daniel 9:24–27) (NKJV, Bold text added)*

Although the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks* has not been officially labelled as an expansion of the *New Covenant*, it is the premise of this book that Gabriel provided additional and essential information relating to the implementation of Jeremiah's *New Covenant* (via the six objectives that Messiah would fulfil) to ensure its operation within a set time period. Let us remember that Daniel read about the *New Covenant* in Jeremiah's book (Daniel 9:2); then in his prayer in Daniel 9:4 he recalls that God is an *awesome God who keeps His covenant*; afterward Gabriel refers to Messiah's *covenant with many* in Daniel 9:27a (above). (Cf. Isaiah 53:8; Matthew 20:28, 26:28) It is believed these three phrases all refer to Jeremiah's *New Covenant*.

Jeremiah said the *New Covenant* would be introduced *after those days* [of captivity and affliction] (Jeremiah 31:23, 28); so, with Cyrus' recent decree and the promise of salvation in Jeremiah 31:34b, the old prophet might have believed the time for implementing the *New Covenant* had arrived! However, Gabriel's dissertation would have caused great disappointment for Daniel, as it clearly sets out an extremely long waiting period before God's *Covenant* plan would even begin to be realised. The timetable was:

Seventy weeks are determined...

The beneficiaries of it, and the location for its expression:

For your people and for your holy city.

The six objectives that had to be achieved for its confirmation:

*To finish the transgression,
To make an end of sins,
To make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness,
To seal up vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.*

Thus, through this astonishing prophecy, Gabriel apprised Daniel of the fundamental details about Jeremiah's *New Covenant*: i.e., the timetable for its introduction, whom it would benefit and where, and what it would do. It describes how Messiah would confirm the *New Covenant*, and the rest of the prophecy tells of the consequences that would arise from His actions.

Isaiah had already given notice of God's future intentions, via his declaration about a *righteous servant* who would be given *as a covenant to the people*; surprisingly, this covenant would also apply to Gentiles or non-Jewish people. That the *New Covenant* would be initiated and confirmed by *a person* who is *spiritually anointed* for the task, is evident in Isaiah's prophetic words:

Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles... I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, And I will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles, To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house. I am the LORD, that is my name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images. Behold, the former things have come to pass, And new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them. (Isaiah 42:1, 6–9)

Indeed, when you follow the scriptures giving details about the Messenger of the Covenant, the Servant of God, you find an abundance of evidence (contributed over thousands of years), revealing how the Old Testament prophets – under the urging of the Holy Spirit – added verse on verse, and line on line to the

all-important details about the work Messiah was ordained to do on earth. As promised, God revealed the former things that have since become history, but He has also told us about the things to come before they spring forth.³¹ (It is just a matter of discovering them and interpreting them correctly!)

Because we have already followed Daniel's prayerful and investigative trail that led him to read about Judah's *seventy year* exile in Jeremiah's *letter* and discover the promised *New Covenant* in Jeremiah's *book*, it is logical to conclude that the missing information about *when the countdown would start* and *how the covenant would be implemented*, would have to be revealed before the process could begin!³² Accordingly, Gabriel was commanded to go urgently to Daniel to divulge the crucial details about God's *when* and *how* (via the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks*), in a timely manner: especially since some of the older surviving Jews who had been taken captive to Babylon decades before were about to be released; they would soon depart with Zerubbabel and Joshua to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem under the orders of Cyrus, king of Persia.³³ They needed to know what lay ahead of them.

And so Gabriel revealed that a time period of *seven sabua* (49 years), would pass by while the *street and wall* (viz., central Jerusalem and the city walls) were being rebuilt, then another prolonged period of *sixty-two sabua* (434 years) would elapse; this would all occur during *troublesome times* for Judaea and its inhabitants. Afterward Messiah the Prince would appear to fulfil the tasks required for their salvation and restore their fellowship with God. This special assignment would occur during the *seventieth sabua* (the last seven-year period).

NOTE: Although there are clear divisions within this prophetic timetable, which describe different events and stages, there is no indication whatsoever that the three

divisions were not to run on without a break—until the end of the whole period. Thus, the time allotted for the principal events to occur falls within the *seventy sabua* i.e., 490 year boundary. This topic will be examined in chapters eight and nine.

For the purposes of clarity and understanding, the major details about the *New Covenant* and the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks* have been combined and abridged on the next page. By comparing the emphasised phrases we can see God's progressive revelation of His solution to Israel and Judah's interrelated problems with sin.

Thus, the *New Covenant* tells us what God is going to do, and the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks* tells us how He is going to do it, within a specific time period. Both prophecies show that God's plan for the forgiveness of sin and the restoration of His people to fellowship lies exclusively in the work of ***Messiah the Prince***; it is ***Messiah*** who will be given *as a covenant to the people* (cf. Isaiah 42:6b above).

The full expression of the promised *New Covenant* (i.e., when and how it would be implemented, and who would confirm it), can only be appreciated by combining the two scriptures...

The New Covenant

But this is *the covenant* that I will make with the *house of Israel*
after those days, says the LORD,

I will put My Law in their minds, and write it on their hearts;

and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

No more shall every man teach his neighbour,
and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,'
for they all shall know Me, from the least of them
to the greatest of them, says the LORD.

**For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin
I will remember no more.**

(Jeremiah 31:33-34)

~~~~~

## The Prophecy of Seventy Weeks

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

Know therefore and understand, that **from** the going forth of the  
**command** to restore and build Jerusalem **until Messiah** the Prince,  
there shall be **seven weeks and sixty-two weeks...**

And **after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off,**  
but not for Himself...

Then he shall confirm **a covenant with many for one week;** but  
in the **middle of the week** He shall bring an end to sacrifice and  
offering.

(Daniel 9:24, 25b, 26a and 27a)



As portrayed in the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks*, the *New Covenant with many*, can only be confirmed when **Messiah is cut off** in a sacrificial act of atonement for the sins of all Israel, and for the sins of Gentiles. The phrase **cut off** is derived from Strong's Hebrew word No. 3772, *karat*, which means 'to cut off, cut down, to make a covenant/agreement' and it implies the cutting of a sacrificial animal to confirm a covenant.<sup>34</sup>

Thus, in the middle of the special *seventieth sabua* (that had been purposely reserved for instituting the *New Covenant* for Daniel's people, and for the holy city Jerusalem) *Messiah* would be **cut off** to become *The Covenant!* His willing compliance to confirm the *Covenant* by bearing the sins of the nation had already been described and prophetically forecast by Isaiah in his four Servant Song passages (Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-7; and 52:13-53:12), the last of which is partially quoted below.<sup>35</sup> (Bold text added)

*The LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all...*

*For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgression of My people He was stricken. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When you make His soul an offering for sin...*

*He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities...*

*Because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors. (Isaiah 53:6b, 8b, 10a, 11, 12b)<sup>36</sup>*

Isaiah's Holy Spirit derived foresight—noticeably recorded in the prophetic past tense—reveals that the *New Covenant* was activated by ***cutting off from the land of the living***, God's righteous Servant, Messiah, (just as described in the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks*); thus confirming that the *New Covenant* is the supreme and everlasting *covenant* provided by God, which never needs to be repeated. For this reason it freely offers **forgiveness for sin** to all who believe in Jesus Christ, both Jew and Gentile alike!

Intriguingly, during His last supper with the disciples (before His death), Jesus' acted out what he was about to accomplish the following day. He showed them how the old Mosaic covenant (embedded in the Passover Feast), would soon be superseded by the *New Covenant* in his blood.<sup>37</sup>

*And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take eat; this is My body.' Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is **My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.**'*  
(Matthew 26:26–28)

Within hours, He would become the paschal Lamb of God. At the very moment Jesus ***was cut off from the land of the living***, His sacrificial death and His outpoured blood confirmed the *New Covenant*. The animal sacrifices being killed at the same time—via the priestly rituals exercised in the Temple in Jerusalem under the old Mosaic Law—were instantaneously made ineffective, obsolete, and totally redundant. Other parallel events proved this to be so!

Saint Matthew reported at the time of Jesus' crucifixion:

*And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split... (Matthew 27:50–51)*

The earthquake that struck Jerusalem at the time of Jesus' death dislodged the gigantic capstone that supported the thick veil above the entrance to the Holy of Holies; its momentum as it crashed to the floor split the huge veil in half from the top to the bottom. At that moment, the way into God's presence was disconnected from the ceremonial Law and the Mosaic covenant, and it was transferred to the *New Covenant* in the blood of Jesus Christ! He was now the only *Way* for repentant sinners to gain access to God.<sup>38</sup> As Jesus said:

*'I am the way, the truth, and the life, No one comes to the Father except through Me.'* (John 14:6)

Forty years later, in AD 70, the utterly redundant and repetitive sacrifices that were still being offered in the magnificent Temple in Jerusalem were prevented from ever occurring again, when the Temple complex was consumed by fire and completely obliterated in the middle of the First Jewish-Roman war (AD 66–73).

Thus, the holy temple site was once again made *desolate* in fulfilment of Gabriel's prediction.<sup>39</sup> According to Daniel's post-script on the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks*, it is doomed to stay that way until God's pre-planned events for the consummation of the Gospel age are fulfilled.





## CHAPTER 8

# TROUBLESOME TIMES

And so after the first group of Jews who were taken captive in 597 BC had endured 58 years of slavery in Babylon, the great Babylonian Empire fell into the hands of the Medes and Persians in 539 BC! No doubt the elderly prophet Daniel hoped that *the seventy years* and *those days*, mentioned in Jeremiah 29:10; 31:33a, would soon be nearing their end. Daniel's perplexity over Jeremiah's statement about their restoration to Jerusalem and Judaea, and his questioning thoughts—over how and when the *New Covenant* might finally deal with their national sin problem—led him to pray earnestly for insights into God's plans. Daniel was anxious to know when it would all happen! The answer came immediately via the angel Gabriel who reappeared suddenly to talk with Daniel!

While Gabriel provided more specific details about their return to Judaea and explained how the *New Covenant* would be brought into being, Daniel must have been really disappointed when he learned—during their conversation—that Judah's *transgression* that caused their exile would not even begin to be dealt with by Messiah, until an even longer period of time had elapsed (i.e., 7 *sabua*, plus 62 *sabua* = 483 years). This was way ahead in Judah's very dim future, and Daniel's days would have long since ended. Furthermore, Gabriel described this whole extended period in general terms as *troublesome*

*times!* To Daniel, it must have seemed as if the *seven times curse* of Leviticus was in operation again. God's plan of salvation and the ultimate redemption of the people of Judah, whom Gabriel persistently called *the saints of the Most High* (Daniel 7:18, 22, 25, 27), was apparently being delayed for an unconscionable number of years.

While Jeremiah stated that the *New Covenant* would take place *after those days* (of exile), Gabriel's information contained in the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks* showed there would be three divisions of time attached to the process: i.e., *seven weeks* (49 years), *sixty-two weeks* (434 years), plus one final *week* (7 years) for Messiah to fulfil the Prophecy within the 490 year period from when the appropriate command was made.<sup>40</sup> The first two time divisions—joined together—meant that 69 *weeks* (483 years) would pass by before God's covenant programme through the Messiah could begin in the final *week*.

Gabriel said a specific command would start the countdown so hopefully—whenever it was made—it would free the exiles to return to Judah to start the work; but it would obviously take a long time for the first two phases to end.<sup>41</sup> Gabriel assured Daniel that the whole city and its protective wall would eventually be rebuilt.

*The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.* (Daniel 9:25b)

The Bible informs us that only two major commands, and a permit, were issued by the kings of Persia relating to building and restoring in Judaea during this very long period of time. The first command was issued by Cyrus for the Temple to be built and for the temple furnishings that had been taken to Babylon to be returned (Ezra 1:1-2; 6:3-5). The second, was issued by Artaxerxes for Ezra to re-establish the Levitical Law in Jerusalem making it once again the capital of Judaea (Ezra 7:13,

25–26). Also, a special permit was granted – at a later date – for Nehemiah to return to rebuild the city’s walls. However, to understand what occurred during this very long period, we will first investigate what is meant by *troublesome times!*

**In 539 BC a command was issued by Cyrus I (559–530 BC).** Cyrus’ made his proclamation after he conquered Babylon and his command only related to freeing some Jews to build a Temple in Jerusalem, which Cyrus called *the house of God*. The construction work would be carried out by any of the exiles willing to return to the land of Judaea, who were capable of building the second Jewish Temple under the leadership of Zerubbabel the Governor, and Joshua, the High Priest. When Cyrus made his decree in 539 BC, the first group of elite Jews taken to Babylon in 597 BC (who survived), had been dwelling there for 58 years, and by then Daniel was a septuagenarian.

*Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the work of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he **made a proclamation** throughout all his kingdom and **also put it in writing**, saying, Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And **He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem** which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May 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 God), which is in Jerusalem. And whoever is left in any place where he dwells, let the men of his place help him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, besides the freewill offerings for **the house of God** which is in Jerusalem. (Ezra 1:1–4) In the first year*

*of Cyrus king of Babylon, King Cyrus issued a decree to **build this house of God.** (Ezra 5:13)*

Unfortunately, Cyrus' rule ended in 530 BC – just nine years after he had conquered Babylon – and during subsequent years his important decree was forgotten and obscured amongst the myriad documents stored in the Persian archives. Meanwhile, Ezra, a Jewish scribe, who was born in Babylon and studied the Torah, was called upon to play an important role in recording details about the restoration of Jerusalem; he verified that the first task of the exiles who returned was to erect an altar, and offer burnt offerings to the Lord, and he reported that the old Jewish men who returned to Judaea from Babylon (after enduring multiple years in exile), wept when the foundation for the Second Temple was laid (Ezra 3:1-13).

However, it didn't take long for the Jewish workers to encounter – and contend with – the *troublesome times* that Gabriel had warned Daniel about, when the neighbouring people groups who opposed their building *the house of God* harassed them, and thwarted their progress at every opportunity. Throughout the frequent disruptions to their building efforts, the Prophets Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the builders to keep working, but even so, it took 23 years to finish the second Jewish Temple. It was finally completed in 516 BC (exactly 70 years after Solomon's Temple was destroyed in 586 BC), but it was regarded as a poor substitute for Solomon's glorious Temple.<sup>42</sup>

From his later perspective, Ezra was able to record what happened during the *troublesome times* foreseen for Judah's return, which spanned the reigns of several Persian kings:

*Then the people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah. They 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. In the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. In the days of Artaxerxes also, Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabel, and the rest of their companions wrote to Artaxerxes king of Persia. (Ezra 4:4–7a)*

Ezra diligently recorded that the exiles who returned to Judaea to build the temple—and their own homes—faced crippling opposition during the reigns of all four kings: Cyrus, Darius, Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes. The *troublesome times* relative to our topic, which began soon after Cyrus made his decree about the *house of God* in 539 BC, continued on after King Artaxerxes gave Nehemiah permission to repair the walls of Jerusalem, which were not finished until 445 BC.<sup>43</sup> This extensive reconstruction period lasted for more than 94 years, so realistically, by the time the Second Temple was finished, Ezra had reinstated the Law of God in Jerusalem and the city walls had been repaired by Nehemiah, the exiles who first returned to Judaea with Zerubbabel and Joshua (in 539 BC) would have all died. Furthermore, the younger exiles born in Babylon, who travelled to Judaea for the rebuilding effort, would have entered an unfamiliar and foreign land!

Judging from the Biblical records relating to this long period of time that encompassed the work of Joshua and Zerubbabel, the Prophets Haggai and Zechariah, and Ezra and Nehemiah (in later years), we could safely say that the *troublesome times* that existed during the first period of *seven weeks* (49 years) most certainly overlapped the next period of *sixty-two weeks* (434 years). Any of the exiles who returned to Judaea from Babylon during the first 100 years, would most certainly have had to endure very *troublesome times!*

Interestingly, Ezra's ability to record details about this period was due to his freedom to access some of the documents held in the Persian Archives. He lists the persistent complaints and appeals made by disgruntled and vindictive local officials to various Persian rulers, which resulted in the work on the Temple in Jerusalem being stopped. Ezra lists some of the complaints made to the King of Persia – by those who derided their efforts and slandered the city as well as the people who lived in it – accusing the former exiles of not paying tax, tribute, or custom duties. Cf. Ezra 4:9–22; 5:6–17; 6:2–12.

*This city is a rebellious city, harmful to kings and provinces, and that they have incited sedition within the city in former times, for which cause this city was destroyed. We inform the king that if this city is rebuilt and its walls are completed, the result will be that you will have no dominion beyond the River. (Ezra 4:15–16)*

Fortunately, all of the false charges and emotional appeals against the Jews were negated when a scroll, containing Cyrus' original decree, was found amongst the Persian archives. The scroll revealed details regarding the foundations for the Temple in Jerusalem, and it instructed that all of the funds required to complete it were to come from the Persian kings' treasury.

This discovery turned the baseless accusations back on the heads of the complainants, who, (if they were not executed for disobeying Cyrus' decree and Darius' later endorsement of it), ended up paying for the Temple's costs through their own taxes, as well as providing animals and produce for the daily burnt offerings (Ezra 6:3–12). And so the second Jewish Temple was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, in the sixth year of King Darius (516 BC).<sup>44</sup> (Ezra 6:15)

However, the deliberate combination of the *seven weeks* and *sixty-two weeks* in Daniel's prophecy, tells us that the *troublesome times* the exiles encountered during the first Jubilee period of *seven sabua* (49 years) would continue to threaten Judaea during the subsequent *sixty-two weeks* (434 years) before their Messiah appeared.

NOTE: According to generally accepted interpretations of Daniel's vision of the four wild beasts recorded in Daniel 7:3-7, four Gentile empires (in total) were to rise up from the Mediterranean Sea onto the surrounding territories and continuously dominate the people living there during this very long period of time. Since the Jews in Judaea had already experienced the Babylonian invasion, and witnessed Babylon's capitulation to Persia, it seems that their *troublesome times* would continue during the reign of the two cruel beast empires that were yet to conquer those regions, i.e., the Macedon-Grecian and Roman Empires.

Thus, from the wording contained in Daniel 9:25 (below), it is clear that the whole time period encapsulated in the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks*, which encompassed Jerusalem's complete restoration until the appearance of Messiah, the Prince, should be depicted as endlessly *troublesome times*.

*Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah, the Prince There shall be *seven weeks and sixty-two weeks*; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. (Daniel 9:25)*

Unfortunately, during the *troublesome times* that disrupted the first repatriation of Jews to Jerusalem to build the Temple, an additional problem had come to light: the male descendants of the Levitical Priests, who had been born in Baby-

lon's precincts and remained there, had not been trained to serve as priests in the Second Temple in Jerusalem, nor had they received any legal authority from Persia to dispense justice in Judaea according to the Law of Moses! The responsibility for this task would eventually fall on the shoulders of the young Levite and trained priest Ezra.

However, in spite of Cyrus' decree, made in 539 BC regarding building *the house of God*, and the *troublesome times* that the people of Judah would experience as they re-established themselves in Judaea, Cyrus' decree is not considered to be the actual *command to restore and build Jerusalem* (Dan. 9:25).

Gabriel's 483 year waiting-time—for Messiah to appear—would commence as soon as the command was made to restore Jerusalem as the capital of Judaea, then the walls of the city would be rebuilt. Until this particular decree was made, the restoration of Jerusalem as the capital of Judaea would remain in an indeterminate state!



## CHAPTER 9

### DANIEL'S PROPHECY COVERS THREE PERIODS

#### **First period – seven *sabua* (49 years): 458/57–409 BC**

This first period of *seven sabua* began with a decree/command made by Artaxerxes I, King of Persia, on 1<sup>st</sup> Nissan in his 7<sup>th</sup> Year (458/57 BC), to restore Jerusalem as Capital. (Ezra 7:8-11)

*Artaxerxes, king of kings, to Ezra the priest, a scribe of the Law of the God of heaven: Perfect peace, and so forth. I issue a decree that all those of the people of Israel and the priests and Levites in my realm, who volunteer to go up to Jerusalem, may go with you. And whereas you are being sent by the king and his seven counsellors to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, with regard to the Law of your God which is in your hand. (Ezra 7:12-14)*

*And you Ezra, according to your God-given wisdom, set magistrates and judges who may judge all the people who are in the region beyond the River, all such as know the laws of your God; and teach those who do not know them. Whoever will not observe the law of your God and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily on him, whether it be death, or banish-*

*ment, or confiscation of goods, or imprisonment.*  
(Ezra 7:25–26)

This decree was made 80 years after Cyrus' command to build *the house of God*, and although the Second Temple had been completed for about 58 years Artaxerxes decree included additional provisions to beautify the house of the Lord (Ezra 7:15–24). Nonetheless, this decree is the only one that established Jerusalem as a self-governing city centre (under the Law of God and the king), and Judaea as a semi-independent state; thereby giving the Jewish population autonomous government over their internal affairs! To some degree however, Judaea remained under the suzerainty of Persia, and as had happened during the last 80 years, many of Judaea's exiled population (including Daniel) chose to remain at their posts in Persia.

However, as a result of Artaxerxes' decree, Ezra a young scribe and priest—who was a 16<sup>th</sup> generation descendant from Aaron (the first High Priest), and the son of Seraiah, (the last chief priest to serve in Solomon's Temple, who was killed in Riblah, Cf. 2 Kings 25:18–21)—took up the challenge to restore the Mosaic Law (Torah), so that it could once again be disseminated from the Second Temple's precincts.<sup>45</sup> King Artaxerxes gave Ezra the necessary authority to re-establish the theocratic judicial Law of God in Judaea, and train and appoint a new generation of Levites to be magistrates, judges and priests. The ongoing repair of Jerusalem's infrastructure would not be an easy task either, so, thanks to Gabriel's warning, the exiles returning in the second repatriation group with Ezra knew that *troublesome times* still lay ahead for all those who wanted to achieve this work!

**Thirteen years later (during the first period of seven *sabua*) permission was granted by Artaxerxes in his 20<sup>th</sup> Year, 445/444 BC, for Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.**

Nehemiah was born in Babylon, and a descendant of early Jewish exiles; he served as cup-bearer to King Artaxerxes in Shushan, the citadel. When Nehemiah heard of the prevailing run-down state of affairs in Judaea—about 95 years after the first exiles returned under Cyrus’ decree—he sought permission from the king to go to Jerusalem, to the city of his fathers’ tombs in Judaea (for a limited time), in order to see it first-hand and decide what to do. And so thirteen years after Artaxerxes’ decree instructed Ezra to restore Jerusalem’s independence as the legal capital of Judaea, Artaxerxes gave Nehemiah permission to return to the city to rebuild the walls. Thus, in Nehemiah 2:11–20, he describes his first visit to Jerusalem and his surreptitious ‘night-time’ survey of the broken walls and burned gates of Jerusalem.

As a result of Nehemiah’s clandestine visit and survey, Artaxerxes released a further group of exiles—under Nehemiah’s leadership—specifically to rebuild the walls and gates of Jerusalem; he also provided lumber for the gates. However, although it appears this release was instigated in the month of Nisan, there is no record of an actual decree being made by the king for the purpose of rebuilding the walls (Nehemiah 2:6–8). Nehemiah only records that he *set a time* with the King who sent a military escort and letters to ascertain their safe passage through neighbouring hostile people groups.

Nehemiah states that the walls of Jerusalem were completed within 52 days because of the strategy he used: viz., pairing some armed guards with the stone-masons so their work on the walls would not be hindered, but the workers were always in danger of being attacked by the Samaritans living in the region (Nehemiah 4:1–23). Furthermore, there is ample evidence in Nehemiah’s report that the Gentile governors living in the region were anything but pleased to see that an envoy from the

King of Persia had *come to seek the well-being of the children of Israel* (Nehemiah 2:9-10).

As a result of his efforts, Nehemiah was appointed Governor of the land of Judaea for 12 years until the 32<sup>nd</sup> year of Artaxerxes reign (433/432 BC). And so the decree, made by Artaxerxes for Ezra to restore Jerusalem as the legal capital of Judaea, and the permission he granted for Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of the city, were satisfied. The record of their accomplishments was written into history during the first seven *sabua* (49 year period of *troublesome times*) described in Daniel's *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks*, which stretched from 458-409 BC.

Accordingly, the record in Ezra 4:5-7 recognises that all of the necessary decrees and permissions for building the Second Temple, restoring Jerusalem as Capital, and repairing the walls of Jerusalem were granted by the Persian kings at their leisure, i.e., Cyrus, Darius, Ahasuerus, and Artaxerxes; he also states that their actions were primarily initiated *according to the commandment of the God of Israel* in order that Jerusalem would be restored, and the people of Judah could be established in their land once again. (Ezra 6:14)

## Second period – 62 *sabua* (434 years): 410 BC-AD 26

NOTE: When crossing dates from BC to AD, 1 BC and AD 1 are counted as a single year, and there is no year 0. The span has a + or - of 1-2 years, depending on which month in the year the calculation was started and finished.

During the second period of 62 *sabua* (434 years), equally tumultuous and *troublesome times* were predicted for the descendants of the original exiles, who had previously been described by Gabriel – in Daniel's vision of the four beasts – as



*the saints of the Most High*, (Daniel 7:18, 22, 25, 27). Thus, while waiting for Daniel's prophecy to come to its climax, Judaea's territory and its people suffered from a repeated state of flux and turmoil as unbridled Gentile empires rose to power, vying to take control over the Levant, Europe and Asia.

Persia, the largest empire the world had seen – up to that point in time – was finally defeated by Alexander the Great (AD 536–323), and absorbed into the Macedon-Grecian Empire as it expanded east toward India. Then, after Alexander's death, his great empire was eventually divided into four pieces by his warring generals. Subsequently, Judaea became a pawn in the long-running Hellenistic conflicts and Syrian wars between the Greek Seleucid kings who ruled Syria in the north, and the Greek Ptolemy Dynasty that ruled Egypt to the south. (Information about this period is recorded in Daniel chapters 8 and 11.) After the Romans intervened in their frequent engagements and took Syria for themselves, Judaea was made a client state of the Roman Empire in 63 BC, and it finally became a Roman Province in AD 6 under Herod Archelaus – all to the detriment of Judaea and its people!

Corresponding with this prolonged 434 year period of combative upheaval in Judaea, *the saints of the Most High* suffered from a roughly four hundred year-long hiatus in prophetic utterance – via an importunate silence from heaven – shortly after the last words of warning in the Old Testament were penned by Malachi about 430 BC. <sup>46</sup>

*Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, **Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.** (Malachi 4:5–6)*

This interminably long period of prophetic silence extended from the prophet Malachi until John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judaea (about AD 26), preaching in the spirit of Elijah.

NOTE: John the Baptist's mission had been foretold in Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1, and it was fulfilled according to Luke 7:24-28 and Matthew 14:10-14. John the Baptist was the 'forerunner' whose mission was to prepare the way for the Messenger of the Covenant, Judah's Messiah.

Thus, the lengthy two-part waiting period of 483 years—predicted by Gabriel to precede the dramatic events forecast for the third period—the *seventieth sabua*, came to an abrupt end in AD 26/27.<sup>47</sup> Messiah's work of salvation was about to begin, and the prolonged silence from heaven was decisively shattered when John the Baptist cried out in the Judean wilderness: '*Repent and be baptised!*'

### Third period—1 *sabua* (7 years): AD 27-34

*And **after the sixty-two weeks** Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself.*<sup>48</sup> (Daniel 9:26a)

*Then he shall **confirm a covenant with many for one week:**<sup>49 50</sup> But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.* (Daniel 9:27a)

The word *after*, clearly shows that the previous *seven* and *sixty-two sabua* (483 years) had ended; the events described afterward in the prophecy would occur within the final, *seventieth sabua*! While the whole 490 year prophecy was intended for the people of Judah and for their holy city, the final *sabua* had been deliberately set aside for Messiah's exclusive mission

to *the Saints of the Most High* living in Jerusalem; this seven year period would witness the fulfilment of God's promise to forgive their sin—via the *New Covenant*—which would be proclaimed, performed and confirmed by Jesus Christ, and afterward preached by His disciples.

At the beginning of the *seventieth sabua*, Judah's Messiah would come suddenly to His Temple, and in the first half of the *week* He would reveal Himself as *The Way* for their sins to be forgiven. Then, right in the middle of the final *sabua*—in a holy week where the Passover festival was destined to fall—Messiah would be *cut off* as a substitutionary sacrifice, and accomplish the six tasks that had to be resolved to secure Judah's salvation. His actions would achieve redemption for Daniel's people and activate the *New Covenant* announced in Jeremiah 31:33–34. As a result, the regular sacrifices and offerings in the Temple would become redundant.

The Messiah had come to His people:

*To finish the transgression,  
To make an end of sins,  
To make reconciliation for iniquity,  
To bring in everlasting righteousness,  
To seal up vision and prophecy,  
And to anoint the Most Holy. (Daniel 9:24)*

It is the premise of this book, therefore, that the three separate time-periods mentioned in Daniel's prophecy, i.e., 7 *weeks/sabua*, plus 62 *weeks/sabua*, plus the final *sabua* that was reserved for the confirmation of the *New Covenant*, represent the complete and uninterrupted 490 year time-frame described in the *Prophecy of seventy weeks* (which fulfilled the broad promises made in the *New Covenant*, Jeremiah 31:33–34). The 490 year period began in 458 BC with Artaxerxes command to restore Jerusalem as the legal and religious capital of Judaea,

and it ended in AD 34 on the day Stephen preached the Gospel to the Sanhedrin (Judah's judicial and administrative council), who afterward suffered martyrdom at their hands. (Acts 6:8-7:59)

This meant that the time allocated for establishing Jeremiah's *New Covenant* for the Jews and Jerusalem – *after those days* (of exile) – had also ended; Jesus had finished His great work of salvation, as described in Daniel's *Prophecy of seventy weeks!* Thereafter, a great persecution – perpetrated by the Jewish leaders who opposed the Gospel – arose against the Church in Jerusalem; the Jewish believers in *The Way* were scattered, and the Gospel was afterward preached to the Gentiles, as recorded in Acts 8.

~~~~~

CHAPTER 10

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NUMBER 490

It is interesting to note that when Peter came to Jesus to suggest that forgiving his brother *seven times* for his trespasses was commendable, Jesus corrected him and increased the acceptable number of times to '*seventy times seven*' i.e., 490 times! (Matt. 18:21-22) In multiplying Peter's *seven times* forgiveness by *seventy*, perhaps Jesus was trying to tell His disciples (in a subtle way) that the *seventy times seven* number, i.e., 490 years, was the outermost time limit that God had allowed for Judah and its leaders to be forgiven their transgressions! Possibly, Jesus' reply was intended to direct them toward Jeremiah's promise of a New Covenant to forgive their sin, and the timetable given in the *Prophecy of seventy weeks*, to remind them that time was running out!

In this sense, Jesus' retort was also a reference to the approaching total number of times that God had *forgiven* Judah's sins, during the annual Days of Atonement that had passed since Artaxerxes command to restore Jerusalem as capital of Judaea. When Jesus spoke these words, it was over 483 years since Ezra's reforms had advanced the repatriation of their distant ancestors, and the Law of Moses had been reinstated; God had been accepting animal sacrifices to *cover* the sins of Judah for all that time. Only a few years of the 490 year period was left!

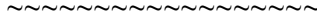
Even while speaking to Peter and His disciples about forgiveness, Jesus knew that the historical sacrifices made under the Law of Moses would soon be transcended by His own sacrifice: as the prophesied *Messenger of the New Covenant*, His consummate act would supersede the Covenant of Law. This would be accomplished in a way that none of His disciples (at that time) seemed to comprehend, but Jesus knew that His sacrificial death was the only way to permanently forgive their sin, nullify *the curse*, and pay the price required under the Law to redeem His people!

Jesus' personal knowledge and awareness of the timing of His appearance in Judaea at the beginning of Daniel's final *sabua* was significant!⁵¹ He knew that the time had come for Him to secure Judah's redemption and salvation by confirming the *New Covenant*, and for His disciples to preach the Gospel (exclusively to the Jews) during the second half of the allotted *sabua*. Jesus recognised that the final *seven years* of Daniel's prophecy for His visitation to the Jews was in motion, and His actions during the fast approaching mid-way point would be critical to its success.⁵²

The *seven times curse* pronounced in Leviticus had twice been exercised against Judah: firstly, for the *ten years* they ignored Jeremiah's warnings that resulted in *seventy years* of exile; and now those *seventy years* had been multiplied by *seven/sabua* to become 490 years, before the salvation promised to the Jews and Jerusalem would be completed. Obviously, something drastic had to be done before this extended period of God's magnanimous tolerance toward Judah's sins ran out!

So, Messiah proceeded: now was *the time of His visitation*, He would devote the final *sabua* to activating Jeremiah's *New Covenant*. This Covenant that was conceived by God, which was to be fulfilled by Messiah, was designed to *finish the*

transgression, to make an end of sins, and thereby nullify the seven times curse that had fallen on the people of Judah and the lost sheep of the House of Israel! ⁵³



CHAPTER 11

MESSIAH CONFIRMS THE NEW COVENANT

Jeremiah wrote that a *New Covenant* would come into effect *after those days*, thereby implying that the Jews' exile would end, and they would return to Judaea and Jerusalem where the promised covenant would be enacted.

When that time came, God had promised:

I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts...

I will be their God, and they shall be My people...

They all shall know Me...

I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more... (Jeremiah 32:33b, 34b)

Isaiah's prophecy (below) shows that Messiah will come to Jerusalem to the descendants of Jacob (Israel and Judah), who were repentant of their sins and who sought forgiveness:

*The Redeemer will come to Zion, and to those who turn from transgression in **Jacob**, says the LORD. 'As for Me,' says the LORD, this is **My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words** which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth. (Isaiah 59:20–21) ⁵⁴ ⁵⁵*

In the fullness of time, Jesus came personally as the *one anointed* by the *Spirit* of God, who was preordained to become the *New Covenant*—for the whole House of Israel (i.e., Jacob’s descendants)—when he appeared suddenly in the Temple in Jerusalem in AD 26–27. Surprisingly, Daniel had previously affirmed in the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks* that the Covenant would be extended to *many* other people, and not just serve the people of Judah or the offspring of Jacob!

*Then he shall confirm a Covenant **with many** for one week. (Daniel 9:27)*

To clarify when and how this would happen, and who would facilitate it, God further revealed to Daniel (via Gabriel), the six tasks or objectives that Messiah needed to accomplish to make the *New Covenant* operational for the redemption and salvation of all people; the six tasks were:

*To finish the transgression,
To make an end of sins,
To make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness,
To seal up vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.
(Daniel 9:24)*

Although the six objectives listed above are not specifically part of Jeremiah’s *New Covenant*, they were most certainly achieved and made effective through Messiah’s sacrificial death and resurrection, and it was only through their completion that Jeremiah’s *New Covenant* for the forgiveness of sins could be made operational. They are also fundamental to the unnamed *covenant with many* mentioned in Daniel 9:27.

We will compare the six objectives listed in Daniel 9:24 (above, and bold print below), with the *New Covenant* promises listed in Jeremiah 31:31–34.

**To finish the transgression.
To make an end of sins.
To make reconciliation for iniquity.**

For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more. (Jeremiah 31:34b)

Unfortunately, Jeremiah gave no indication as to how God would achieve these blessed results, and although the goals had been clearly stated by Gabriel, Daniel did not seem to comprehend the means by which God would undertake them, either! In fact, in spite of all the prophetic utterances made about Messiah throughout Judah's history (as scripture was added to scripture), there appears to be little understanding of what His real work would involve. Rather, the Jews in Jesus' days expected Messiah to free them from the oppression exerted on Judaea by the Roman Empire; but they could not imagine that the suffering servant portrayed in Isaiah's book referred to their Messiah, or that he would die on a cross as the Lamb of God – a substitutionary sacrifice – to atone for Judah's sin!

To bring in everlasting righteousness.

I will put my law in their minds, and write it on their hearts. (Jeremiah 31:33a)

This promise of everlasting righteousness was expedited and made effective for every Jewish believer in Jesus Christ after His resurrection, on the Day of Pentecost AD 30 (and afterward), when the Law of God was implanted in the hearts of Jesus' disciples via the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. On that day, three thousand devout Jewish believers from the whole House of Israel became reconciled and reunited with

God when the righteousness of Jesus Christ was imparted to them. (Acts 2:1-12, 41)

To seal up the vision and prophecy.

I will be their God, and they shall be My people... they all shall know Me. (Jeremiah 31:33b, 34a)

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets, I did not come to destroy but to fulfil. (Matthew. 5:17)

And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. (Luke 24:27)

The attainment of these five objectives constituted the physical and earthly mission of Messiah. Nevertheless, since Messiah's duty was to complete and seal up all prophecy (i.e., to fulfil what was previously unfulfilled about Himself, and reveal details about God's future programme), the final vision for the end of the age was given to St. John by Jesus Christ when John wrote the Book of Revelation, circa AD 90. Thereafter, all prophetic revelation was complete. Revelation 22:18-19 says nothing was to be added to or taken away from the final vision and prophecy in the Book of Revelation.

However, although Jesus' ultimate and sixth objective was profoundly connected to the first five, its achievement did not occur on earth, but in the heavenly realm:

And to anoint the Most Holy.

For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more. (Jeremiah 31:34b)

When Daniel wrote down Gabriel's words: *And to anoint the Most Holy*, he may have been thinking about the historic and ritualistic sprinkling of blood on the *mercy seat* above the Ark of the Covenant, in the Holy of Holies in Solomon's Temple (back in the days), when they both still existed. That ritual—conducted by the High Priest—took place on the annual Day of Atonement, but Solomon's Temple had been destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC as a condemnation and consequence of Judah's continual sin.

Although the exiles were later freed, to returned to Judaea to build the Second Temple (that stood for more than 500 years in Jerusalem), we know that the Second Temple did not contain the Ark of the Covenant, therefore there was no *mercy seat* to sprinkle with blood for the remission of their sin, and consequently there was no *Most Holy* to be anointed! So what was Gabriel referring to?

Fortunately, we also know that the Tabernacle in the wilderness and Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem were only man-made earthly representations of God's true heavenly sanctuary; so the words used by Gabriel: *to anoint the Most Holy*—in the context of a blood offering for sin—must refer to Messiah's sacrificial offering when He was **cut off** to permanently atone for Judah's sin and blot it out of God's sight forever!

Furthermore, this phrase points to Jesus' alternative role as our *Great High Priest*, when, after His resurrection, He ascended into heaven—where God dwells—to offer His bruised and pierced body as an offering for sin. To complete His work of salvation on earth, and to comply with the demands of God in heaven, Jesus had to fulfil the dual roles: He is The Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, and He is The great High Priest who became the Most Holy anointed One!⁵⁶ It was only in this manner that all of the requirements for the for-

giveness of sin, for *those who turn from transgression*, could be accomplished by Jesus Christ during His two-part ministry. By doing so, He became the *New Covenant!* His Covenant is effective forever because He remains at the right hand of God, interceding for sinners as our great High Priest, offering forgiveness to everyone who confesses their sin and becomes a believer.

As an interesting exercise, let us consider two opposing scenarios; on the negative side: if Jesus had come to die a sacrificial death—simply as a substitute Lamb of God—and that was all, His death would not have been any more effective in *covering* Jacob's sins than the sacrifices (under the Law of Moses) had been effective for 1,500 years! Such a finite 'sacrifice' would have needed repeating again and again to be effective.

Conversely, on the positive side: the *resurrection* had to take place for the work undertaken by the Lamb of God to be *finished*, and for the *New Covenant* to be confirmed eternally before the throne of God!

*And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne
and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of
the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been
slain...*

And they sang a new song, saying:

*You are worthy... for You were slain, and have re-
deemed us to God by Your blood... Worthy is the
Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches
and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory
and blessing!*

*Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him
who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever
and ever. (Revelation 5:6a, 9a, 12, 13b)*

In this manner, *the curse* that was originally decreed as a punishment for *sin and disobedience*, was finally abolished; but this could only happen after Messiah's resurrection and ascension into the heavenly sanctuary! It was there, in the heavenly sanctuary, that Jesus *became* the *anointed Most Holy One*, interceding eternally (for His people) in the throne room of God.

Thus, Jesus' most extraordinary and loving act, in casting off His eternal glory to become the sacrificial Lamb of God, necessitated His resurrection into the heavenly realm to continue His ministry as the great High Priest. This is when the *New Covenant* was confirmed, which made forgiveness for sin and everlasting life available to all penitent believers.

Through His life, death, resurrection and ascension into the heavenly sanctuary, Jesus Christ remains available in the throne room of God (for all believers) as He officiates His priesthood: being eternally *the Most Holy anointed One*, and the *New Covenant* for the forgiveness of sin.

~~~~~





## CHAPTER 12

# THE MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT

God's anointed One was anticipated by the prophets:

*Behold! **My Servant** whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! **I have put My Spirit upon Him**; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. I, the LORD have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and **give You as a covenant to the people**, As a light to the Gentiles. (Isaiah 42:1-6)*

*Thus says the LORD: In an acceptable time I have heard You, And in the day of salvation I have helped You; I will preserve You and give You as a **covenant to the people**, To restore the earth, To cause them to inherit the desolate heritages. (Isaiah 49:8)*

*Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And **I will make an everlasting covenant with you** – The sure mercies of David. Indeed I have given him as a witness to the people, A leader and commander for the people. (Isaiah 55:3-4)*

*The Redeemer will come to Zion, and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob, Says the*

LORD. As for Me, says the LORD, **this is My covenant with them:** My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants, says the LORD, from this time and forevermore. (Isaiah 59:20–21)<sup>57</sup>

This last passage of scripture was written about 698 BC, a hundred years before the Babylonians first invaded Judaea in 597 BC; it is often called the *Covenant of the Redeemer*. Isaiah's verses progressively release Jehovah's plans for the redemption of Judah and Israel via His *anointed one*, (aka Isaiah's *Suffering Servant*, Zion's promised *Redeemer* and Judah's *Messiah*).

The New Bible Commentary states:

The climax of the chapter is reached in the manifestation of the divine deliverance and succour in response to the cry of the people. When things are at their worst and there is none to help, the Lord God Himself comes in might to deliver and save the inheritance of His people. Only by such active intervention of God can the situation be saved at all... With Isaiah 59:20–21 [above] compare Jeremiah 31:31–34.<sup>58</sup>

Additional statements in Isaiah 60–66, Joel 3, and Ezekiel 36–37, plus the information about the *New Covenant* announced by Jeremiah, all proclaimed that the **primary function** of the anointed one, Messenger of the Covenant, was to deal with the sins of the people and redeem them back to God. The Messenger of the *New Covenant* would also fulfil His **secondary function** as God's representative, by teaching the people.

*No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to*

*the greatest of them, says the LORD. (Jeremiah 31:34a)*

*All your children shall be taught by the LORD.  
(Isaiah 54:13)*

And as the Gospel records show, Jesus Christ fulfilled these prophecies:

*He who has seen Me has seen the Father... The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.*

*(John 14:9b, 10b)*

*And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. (Matthew 7:28–29)*

The **secondary function** of the *New Covenant* was further fulfilled (after Jesus' death) when, on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit became their teacher.

*But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, **he shall teach you all things**, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

*(Luke 12:12; John 14:26)*

Jesus' reward for fulfilling His tasks as the Messenger of the Covenant had already been portrayed to Daniel in a dream (Daniel 7:9–10, 13–14). The old prophet had been privileged to see a pre-incarnation enactment of that ceremonial event when he viewed the procedure via a heavenly panorama:

*I watched till thrones were put in place,  
And the Ancient of Days was seated;  
His garment was white as snow,*

*And the hair of His head was like pure wool.  
 His throne was a fiery flame,  
 Its wheels a burning fire;  
 A fiery stream issued  
 And came forth from before Him.  
 A thousand thousands ministered to Him;  
 Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.  
 The court was seated,  
 And the books were opened. (Daniel 7:9–10)*

*I was watching in the night visions,  
 And behold, One like the Son of Man,<sup>59</sup>  
 Coming with the clouds of heaven!  
 He came to the Ancient of Days,  
 And they brought Him near before Him.  
 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a  
 kingdom,  
 That all peoples, nations, and languages should  
 serve Him.  
 His dominion is an everlasting dominion,  
 Which shall not pass away,  
 And His kingdom the one  
 Which shall not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13–14)*

Thus, Jesus, the Messenger of the *New Covenant*, fulfilled His destined role; He became *The Way* for our sins to be forgiven during the *seventieth sabua* named in Daniel's prophecy. *The Way* to salvation and reconciliation with God remains open to everyone, while a resurrected life in the Kingdom of God is guaranteed for believing Jews and Gentiles, for ever!

Jesus said:

*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes  
 to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)*

# PART TWO

–PROVING THE POINT–



## CHAPTER 13

# INTRODUCTION

The aim of the second part of this booklet is to explain how and why the six objectives listed in the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks* in Daniel 9:24 needed to be accomplished before God's *forgiveness of sin*—enshrined in Jeremiah's *New Covenant*—could be made effective. All six tasks were fulfilled by Messiah during the first half of Daniel's *seventieth sabua* (AD 27-30); while the remainder of the *seventieth sabua* was devoted to preaching the Gospel to the Jews in Jerusalem via the new-born Church (AD 30-34). Thus, the two important declarations made in Daniel 9:26a and 27a regarding Messiah—being *cut off but not for himself*... and *he* [Messiah] *confirms a covenant with many for one week*—both point to the fulfilment of Jeremiah's *New Covenant* for the forgiveness of Judah's sins during that special *seventieth sabua* (seven year period).<sup>60</sup>

There are two very sound reasons for believing that the words used in Daniel's prophetic phrases (emphasised above) demonstrate exactly how Jeremiah's *New Covenant* would be implemented. The first overarching reason is that the word translated as *cut off* (Strong's Hebrew word No. 3772, *karat*), means 'to cut off, cut down, destroy or kill. To *cut a covenant* is to make a covenant, a figure of the act of ceremonially cutting an animal into two parts, with an implication of serious consequences for not fulfilling the covenant.'

The second reason is that the word translated as *covenant* (Strong's Hebrew word No. 1285, *brit*), is translated 264 times in the KJV Old Testament as *covenant*, 'meaning an association between two parties with various responsibilities, benefits and penalties' but not once is *brit* interpreted as a *treaty*, let alone a spurious *peace-treaty*! In fact the word *treaty* is not used in English translations of the Old Testament at all; the closest related interpretation of *brit* with that 'type of meaning' uses the word *league*, and that word is used only 17 times!

The close association connecting these two Hebrew words, *karat* and *brit*, shows the intent behind their use by Daniel: '*Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself*' (as history proved), and because of his sacrifice '*he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week!*'<sup>61</sup> The combination of these two words in Daniel's prophecy would automatically direct the thoughts of Jews to the initial *covenant* instigated by God, which was revealed to their patriarch Abraham—in a vision while he slept—Genesis 15:7-21; 17:1-8. Integral to the Abrahamic covenant: a heifer, a goat and a ram were *cut in two, down the middle*, in an act that confirmed God's *covenant* with Abraham; this action was similar to the Levitical sacrifices required by the Law of Moses during the Old Testament covenant era, which were confirmed annually via the death of a substituted animal on the Day of Atonement.<sup>62</sup>

The Law required that the person seeking forgiveness should bring a free-will offering, and identify himself with it:

When anyone of you brings an offering to the LORD...  
 Let him offer a male without blemish... of the flock...  
 He shall offer it of his own free will...  
 Then he shall put his hand on its head...  
 And it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for  
 him...



And he shall slay it...

And the priest shall sprinkle the blood on the altar...

(Extracts: Leviticus 1:1-5, 10-11)

*For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul. (Leviticus 17:11)*

Thus, Leviticus is full of Old Testament symbolism that conveys New Testament Gospel truth. It was only by the sinner identifying with the animal being sacrificed that the offering was accepted as atonement for sin, and the Levitical Law was satisfied. These requirements were fully enacted during Jesus' Passion Week (Passover AD 30) after He entered Jerusalem and moved around amongst the people: while doing so he was being identified as one of the flock. Exodus 12:1-6 states the chosen 'lamb' should be kept for five days before it was killed on the eve of Passover.

We should note especially, that the Passover Week when Jesus was *cut off (karat)* to *confirm a covenant (brit)*, occurred in AD 30; so in effect, it was during the special Passover Holy Week (of 7 days), in the middle year *of the special covenant sabua* (of 7 years, AD 27-34), that *Messiah* was *cut off!* This emphasises a fact about the timing for Jesus' visitation that is often missed!

*Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in **the middle of the week** He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering...*  
(Daniel 9:27a)

Furthermore, during the preparation period for the Passover Feast, the intended sacrifice (Jesus, the Lamb of God) was examined by Pilate and found to be 'without blemish' when Pilate *found no fault in Him*. Then the people of Jerusalem said

*His blood be upon us and our children, as they (unwittingly) identified themselves with Jesus' sacrificial death! Even Caiaphas the High Priest advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.* <sup>63</sup>

The Old Testament symbolism was thus transformed into New Testament Gospel truth that is explained by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews 9:15–20, who states that:

***Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is in force after men are dead...***

The next six chapters will address several proofs and explanations regarding the premise of this study.

~~~~~

CHAPTER 14

THE CONTEXT AND CLUES FOUND IN DANIEL

First, a brief recap... Daniel introduced chapter nine by stating that he had been reading *the books of Jeremiah*, and learned from them that the desolation of Jerusalem and Judah's captivity would be *seventy years* in length. We know precisely where, and what Daniel read about, because Jeremiah's reference to *seventy years* occurs in only two places in his writings, i.e., Jeremiah 25:11, and 29:10.

Jeremiah had anticipated Babylon's rise to power in the North as early as 606 BC, and he was well aware that his people had disobeyed the Law of Moses. Jeremiah also knew what the consequences of their disobedience would be, because centuries earlier Moses had graphically and terrifyingly documented the punishment that would befall them for their sins in Leviticus 26:14–39. Jeremiah's alarm over the colliding circumstances that threatened the security of their nation drove him to write to his people about the danger of imminent invasion and the consequences they would face. And so Jeremiah 25 was written in the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, in 606 BC, to warn the people living in Judaea that, because of their failure to obey the word of God and repent from their evil doings, their punishment would involve the destruction of Jerusalem and their exile into service and slavery in Babylon for *seventy years*.

The inevitable came true in 597 BC when Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judaea, and Daniel (along with many other elite Jewish youths) were deported to Babylon with the first group of elders, priests and prophets. Afterward, Jeremiah wrote *a letter* (**Jeremiah 29**) from Jerusalem to the aristocracy of Judah living in exile in Babylon. He repeated the fact that their servitude would last for *seventy years*, so they should settle down and dwell peacefully in Babylon during that time.

Ten years later in 587/6 BC, during a second major invasion, the city of Jerusalem was besieged and razed by Nebuchadnezzar's Army. On the eve of this siege God asked Jeremiah to write *a book*; so the next four chapters of his record (**Jeremiah 30-33**) take that form; it contained instructions for the Jewish captives regarding their prospects in exile, as well as several promises concerning their restoration to the land of Judaea. It was while reading this *book* that Daniel came across previously unknown information about a mysterious *New Covenant*.

Since Daniel was only a captive youth when Jeremiah wrote his *letter*, and a young adult when Jeremiah's *book* was sent to the elders in Babylon, Daniel probably didn't have access to Judah's holy books at that time; but now, decades later—as an old man of importance in the new Persian Court, and as a revered Jewish leader who eagerly awaited deliverance—Daniel studied the writings of Jeremiah; especially those concerning the duration and conditions of their exile in Babylon; no doubt hoping he could find out what would happen next.

Thus, Daniel's reference to *the books*, and *the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet*, plainly tells us where he learned that their desolations would last for *seventy years*; it also implies what he found out—unintentionally—about their nation's future forgiveness and restoration via a promised *New Covenant*. However, Daniel's subsequent, and anguished

prayer to God, which is recorded in Daniel 9:3–19, appears to have been triggered by an even more detailed pledge that he discovered in Jeremiah’s letter:

For thus says the LORD; After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive. (Jeremiah 29:10–14)

What was written—revealing God’s invitation to the exiles to seek Him in prayer—encouraged Daniel to begin the lonely task of confessing the historic sins of his people and lamenting their failure to keep God’s Law, all the while hoping that God would act and answer him in accordance with his plea.

After reading Jeremiah 29:10 (above) and learning that *after seventy years are completed at Babylon* God would visit them, and then finding that God would make a *new covenant* with the *house of Israel after those days* [of captivity] in Jeremiah 31:33, no doubt Daniel was intrigued by the reference to a covenant that promised forgiveness for their collective sins. Therefore, it would have been Jeremiah’s *New Covenant* that Daniel obliquely referred to—in his prayer of confession—even though he didn’t yet know what it was all about!

*O, Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love him.
(Daniel 9:4)*

Logically therefore, when Gabriel suddenly appeared during Daniel's established prayer-time to help him understand God's future plans for the people of Judah, the topic of the *New Covenant* would have arisen. Why you might ask? Because their conversation elicited the six objectives listed in Daniel 9:24, which would deal with Judah's sin problem – forever!

That is exactly what Daniel was praying about, and that is why Gabriel came to explain what the *New Covenant* was all about! Who would do it, how it would be achieved, who would benefit from it, and when it would occur, are all recorded in one simple verse in the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks*.⁶⁴

Then he [Messiah] shall confirm a covenant with many for one week. (Daniel 9:27)⁶⁵

On the other hand, if the *New Covenant* and the *covenant* that was to be confirmed in the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks* (above) are not one and the same, then Daniel's reference to a *covenant* would have been totally out of context with the six clauses at the beginning of this prophecy, which list Messiah's objectives to deal with Judah's sin (Daniel 9:24). Also, if Daniel is not referring to the *New Covenant*, then the question would have to be asked: why would Gabriel via Daniel introduce a vague and unnamed *covenant* into a prophecy about the restoration of Judah and Jerusalem, which promised their future forgiveness of sin? The simple answer is – he wouldn't! These references to a *covenant* are all about the *New Covenant* that Messiah would confirm in His blood (Luke 22:20), not about some fanciful end time peace treaty between a supposed anti-Christ and Israel!⁶⁶

The truth is: the whole prophecy is about Messiah and what He would achieve, as well as the consequences arising from His actions, which would depend on Judah's response to His confirmation of the *covenant!* Thus, while the opening verse of Daniel's prophecy begins with a timetable for the beginning of Judah's restoration, the subject quickly switches to the six objectives that needed to be accomplished by Messiah: to *finish the transgression of Judah*, deal with their unforgiven state of sin, and ultimately reunite them with God via the *New Covenant*. After that, they would know God, and He would know them as His people!

Sending Gabriel to provide more specific details about the objectives of the *New Covenant*, and describe its implementation via the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks*, was God's immediate answer to Daniel's prayer (Daniel 9:23). The two principal themes discussed by Daniel and Gabriel during their conversation concerned the restoration of Jerusalem (*after those days of captivity*), and God's future plan for the salvation of the people of Judah via the *New Covenant* that would be confirmed by the work of Messiah in the *seventieth sabua*—as itemised in the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks*.

The remarkable series of events that occurred in Jerusalem during the final *sabua*—prefigured by these two themes—were intrinsically connected to one another, and therefore the *seventieth sabua* should not be separated from the preceding 483 years of history!



CHAPTER 15

THE WITNESS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Epistle to the Hebrews (among other Epistles), shows that Jeremiah's promised *New Covenant* was confirmed by Jesus Christ (Messiah). The author writes that the previous covenant of the Law (of Moses)—involving sacrificial offerings—is old and is therefore ready to vanish away.

Its pending redundancy was first implied in Jeremiah 31:32 with the introduction of a *New Covenant*, and this intention was fully affirmed in Daniel 9:27a, where it says: *But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.* Indeed, the six objectives listed in Daniel 9:24—which had to be achieved to accomplish forgiveness of sin for the people of Judah—are quoted by the author of Hebrews to prove that Jesus completed them all, which inevitably meant that the *New Covenant* superseded the previous Mosaic Covenant.

In support of that claim, the Epistle to the Hebrews quotes Jeremiah's *New Covenant* details twice; Hebrews 8:6-8a (below) contain direct quotes from Jeremiah 31:31-34, which have been [bracketed and indented] in 11 pt. font.

*But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, in as much as **He is also Mediator of a better covenant**, which was established on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless,*

then no place would have been sought for a second. Because finding fault with them, He says:

[Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah – not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD.]

[For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days says the LORD; I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbour, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.]

In that He says, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. (Hebrews 8:6–13)

In addition, the author states:

*For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, **but into heaven itself**, now to appear in the presence of God for us; not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another – He then would have*

*had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, **once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.** (Hebrews 9:24–26)*

The *New Covenant* is quoted yet again in Hebrews 10:

For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before,

[This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them, then He adds, Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.]

*Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin. Therefore, brethren, **having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus**, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and **having a High Priest over the house of God**, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrews 10:14–22)*

Thus, the Epistle to the Hebrews contends that Jesus Christ (the Jewish Messiah and great High Priest), confirmed the *New Covenant* promised in Jeremiah 31:31–34, which made the old Mosaic Covenant obsolete and of no further use! Interestingly, the *New Covenant* was not confirmed by two parties – as at Mt. Sinai, where God and the Children of Israel both agreed on the terms – instead, it was initiated by God in a magnanimous act that was exercised on earth solely by Messiah, to solve the House of Jacob’s perpetual sin problem!

Furthermore, Hebrews states that because Jesus – the perfect sacrifice – achieved remission for sin, there is nothing more that needs to be sacrificed or offered by the Jews, and as a result, the Old Testament Mosaic covenant and rituals were made obsolete and needed to cease (Daniel 9:27a and Hebrews 10:14). To support this argument the six objectives from Daniel 9:24 (numbered below), which required completion for the *New Covenant* to be confirmed, have been matched with New Testament writers’ own comments and arguments.

NOTE: Relevant scriptural references are mainly from Hebrews, but some verses are quoted twice because they deal with different aspects of the six covenant objectives. [Bracketed] words and bold text are added for emphasis.

1. To finish the transgression:

*And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, **by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant**, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. (Hebrews 9:15)*

~~~~~

**2. To make an end of sins:**

*Not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another – He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, **He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.** (Hebrews 9:25–26)*

*But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God. (Hebrews 10:12)*

*And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For **this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.** (Romans 11:26)*

~~~~~

3. To make reconciliation for iniquity:

*Therefore, in all things He [Jesus] had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to **make propitiation** [i.e., appeasement or conciliation] **for the sins of the people.** (Hebrews 2:17)*

*Now all things are of **God, who has reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ**, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that **God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them**, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5: 18-19)*

These first three tasks were all accomplished by Jesus Christ to fulfil the two promises contained in the New Covenant:

***For I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will remember no more.** (Jeremiah 31:34b)*

~~~~~

**4. To bring in everlasting righteousness:**

*For He [God] made Him [Jesus] who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Corinthians 5:21)*

*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. (Romans 10:4)*

Believers are credited with His righteousness that was far above the righteousness demanded by the Mosaic Law!

*'Christ is the end of the law, now superseding its sway and gaining its goal.'*<sup>67</sup>

This fourth objective to provide everlasting righteousness in Christ is summed up in the words of the *New Covenant*:

*I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts... they shall be My people... they all shall know Me. (Jeremiah 31:33b, 34b)*

~~~~~

5. To seal up the vision and prophecy:

Jesus said he came to fulfil all that was spoken of him in the scriptures. In this sense, all vision, and prophecy, have been sealed up and completed in Him, as stated in the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks*. Revelation ended with Christ!

Then He [Jesus] said to them, These are the words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me. (Luke 24:44)

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants – things which must shortly take place. (Revelation 1:1-3)

For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: **If anyone adds to these things**, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and **if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy**, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. (Revelation 22:18-19)

~~~~~

## 6. To anoint the most Holy:

**But with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption...** And for this reason **He is the Mediator of the new covenant**, by means of death, **for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant**, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. (Hebrews 9:12b, 14-15)

For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, **but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.** (Hebrews 9:24-26)

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to **enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus**, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, **through the veil, that is, His flesh**, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. (Hebrews 10:19-23)

In this manner, various New Testament scriptures show how the *New Covenant* promised by Jeremiah, and the six objectives recorded in the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks* in Daniel 9:24 – for the salvation of the whole house of Jacob – were completely fulfilled by Jesus Christ. Jesus achieved all six of those tasks in the middle of the *seventieth sabua* of Daniel’s prophecy (AD 30) when He was *cut off* to confirm the *New Covenant* and make it operational.

During the last half of Daniel’s *seventieth week* the now pertinent and effective Gospel (The Good News of Salvation), was preached by Jesus’ disciples exclusively to the Jews in Jerusalem (via the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost and thereafter) until AD 34, which completed the prescribed time-period total of 490 years for the *New Covenant* to be confirmed with the House of Israel and with the house of Judah. Jesus had done His part, and the disciples completed the task. The New Testament’s Jewish writers certainly believed that the six objectives required for their salvation listed in Daniel 9:24, as well as the promises of forgiveness contained in Jeremiah’s *New Covenant*, had all been fulfilled. Jesus believed that too, when He declared:

*‘I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.’*  
(John 17:4)

And on the cross He said:

*‘It is finished’; and bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.* (John 19:30)





## CHAPTER 16

### BOTH NARRATIVES FIT POST-EXILIC TIMES

These two Old Testaments narratives (i.e., Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Daniel 9:24-27), provide overlapping details about one distinct *covenant*. They both contain the principal Old Testament promise that God would deal permanently with Judah's sin, and they both place its fulfilment after the Babylonian exile.

For Jeremiah's *New Covenant* the time-frame for God's intervention and its introduction was:

*After seventy years are completed at Babylon...  
after those days* [of exile] (Jeremiah 29:10 and 31:33a).

And for Messiah's coming to fulfil the six objectives for the forgiveness of sin listed in Daniel 9:24, the time-frame was:

*From the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks...*

*And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off...* (Daniel 9:25a and 26a)

Consequently, 483 years after Artaxerxes' command was given, Messiah would appear in Judaea to initiate the *New Covenant* and he would afterward be *cut off* to confirm it by His blood during the final *sabua*. Thus, the timetable to initiate

Jeremiah's *New Covenant*—and achieve the six tasks required for salvation listed in the *Prophecy of seventy weeks*—fit the same *seventieth sabua* as Jesus mission and ministry in the world (AD 27-34).

His death confirmed everything that the *New Covenant* promised (via the six steps preordained in Daniel 9:24), i.e., He died for the forgiveness of Judah's sins, He reconciled them back to fellowship with God, and He implanted the Law of God—via the Holy Spirit—in the hearts of three thousand Jewish believers on the Day of Pentecost in AD 30. No other *covenant* in the Bible achieved those results. Through His own sacrifice, Jesus confirmed this already twice described Covenant as:

*The new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you. (Luke 22:20)*



## CHAPTER 17

# THE TIMING OF JESUS' VISITATION

A close study of the relevant scriptures reveals that Jesus—during His earthly mission—was well aware of *the time* that had been appointed for Him to pay the ultimate penalty for Judah's sin. The dating of events in the New Testament record proves that the window of opportunity for the *New Covenant* to be fulfilled by Jesus was aligned with the final *sabua* (seven-year period) of Daniel's *seventy weeks* prophecy, i.e., approx. AD 27–34.

Accordingly, when Jesus and His group of disciples attended the wedding in Cana of Galilee where Jesus performed His first miracle, John records Jesus' rebuke to Mary (His mother) for prematurely involving Him in a domestic matter, when he said:

*Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour is not yet come.* (John 2:1–4)

This reprimand implies that Mary had pushed Jesus into doing something miraculous prior to the 'stipulated time' that He was well 'aware' of. The *Harmony of the Gospels*, in *Thompson's Chain Reference Bible* (1957) shows that this miracle occurred after Jesus' Baptism in the Jordan River, where John the Baptist testified that Jesus was *the Lamb of God*, and where Je-

Jesus' anointing was endorsed by the Holy Spirit and His Father's voice from heaven (Mark 1:9-11). We also read in Mark's Gospel that soon after His Baptism and 40 day temptation, Jesus announced:

*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, Repent and believe in the gospel.*  
(Mark 1:15)

In addition, Matthew tells us it was only after John the Baptist had been imprisoned that we are informed:

*From **that time** Jesus began to preach.*  
(Matthew 4:17)

These statements may, or may not, have occurred prior to Jesus' sudden preordained appearance as an adult at the Passover Feast in Jerusalem, when he cleansed the Temple, (Cf. John 2:11-17 with Malachi 3:1). What we can be sure about is that Jesus' self-commissioning claim to be Messiah occurred in the synagogue at Nazareth early in His Galilean Ministry as Luke's record shows:

*Then Jesus returned [after His Baptism in the Jordan River, and after being tempted in the wilderness] **in the power of the Spirit** to Galilee... He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read. And **He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah**. And when He had opened the book, **He found the place** where it was written:*

*'The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me. Because **He has anointed Me** to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are*

*oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.'* (Luke 4:14–19)

After Jesus read those words from Isaiah 61:1–2a, He informed his listeners:

*Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.*  
(Luke 4:20)

Some scholars believe Jesus' declaration from Isaiah regarding the *acceptable year of the LORD*, on that particular day was a deliberate and strategic move on His part: perhaps because He already knew that Isaiah would be the book chosen for that particular Sabbath, and therefore His reading from it would give Him opportunity to announce His mission. Others believe that this event occurred on, or near, the Day of Atonement in AD 27, which was also the last possible Jubilee Year before Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70.<sup>68</sup> We are not told the actual day on the Jewish national calendar, but if Jesus read this particular scripture from Isaiah (claiming to be the anointed one) on the actual Day of Atonement, then its significance would have been obvious to those who heard him; maybe that is why they tried to kill Him immediately afterward! (Luke 4:28–30) It is equally possible that the reading from Isaiah occurred during a *Sabbath Year of rest for the land* (which occurred every seventh year) and coincided with Jesus' year of popularity in Judaea. If so, thousands of Jews were free from the constraints of manual work, to follow Him and hear His teaching.

Even the demons seemed to have some vague knowledge about the *timing* of Messiah's appearance and ministry, when they asked:

*What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?* (Matthew 8:29)

Interestingly, some of Jesus' frequent altercations with the Scribes and Pharisees arose over their lack of knowledge about the predicted *time* and purpose for which Jesus had come.

He said to them:

*But how is it **you do not discern this time?***  
(Luke 12:56)

Later, Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem, lamenting:

*...you did not know **the time of your visitation.***  
(Luke 19:44)

And finally on the eve of His crucifixion (when His mission had almost run its course), Jesus knew that the *very hour* for His sacrificial offering had come when he prayed to His Father:

*Father, **the hour** has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.*  
(John 17:1, 4b)

Messiah's death would later parallel the sacrifices being made in the Temple in the sixth hour (about mid-day), as the Priests killed the lambs 'without blemish' for the impending Passover Feast (John 19:14). Just as the Jewish Passover memorialised Israel's freedom from slavery in Egypt when the Angel of death passed over the lamb's blood that *covered* their doorways (Exodus 12:12-14), so Jesus' death would fulfil His commission, and permanently free the people of Judah from the shackles of sin and the curse of punishment.

His death would fulfil His self-commissioning promise to:

*Heal the brokenhearted, give liberty to the captives,  
and open the prison to those who are bound.*  
(Isaiah 61:1)

From these scriptures it is clear that there was nothing haphazard about the timing of Messiah's appearance in Judaea to inaugurate the *New Covenant* promised by Jeremiah. *The time of His visitation* was in accordance with the timetable in Daniel's *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks*: i.e., 483 years after Artaxerxes' command allowed the Jews to establish the Law of God in Judaea and restore Jerusalem as their capital, Messiah came to fulfil both prophecies!

God's plan of salvation for the Jews was accomplished in the middle of the *seventieth sabua* when the Messiah was *cut off* for the forgiveness of their sins. By this act, and due to His righteousness, believing Jews were redeemed back to God and restored to fellowship, exactly as promised.

*For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 'Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth,' who, when He was reviled did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; **who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we having died to sins, might live for righteousness** – by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have **now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.** (1 Peter 2:21–25)*







## CHAPTER 18

# JESUS CITED JEREMIAH AND DANIEL

Jesus put His mission and ministry into perspective on the night before His crucifixion, during the Last Supper, when He made reference to the *New Covenant*, saying to His disciples:

*For this is **My blood** of the **New Covenant**, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. (Matthew 26:28)*

God had promised this *New Covenant*, via Jeremiah:

*Behold, the days are coming says the LORD, when I will make a **new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah... For I will forgive their iniquity, and **their sin I will remember no more.** (Jeremiah 31:31, 34b)*

Jesus' actions echoed Daniel's prophecy:

*To finish the transgression, to make an end of sins. (Daniel 9:24a)*

*Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself. (Daniel 9:26a)*

*Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week. (Daniel 9:27a)*

That it was actually God's *New Covenant* that was accomplished—through Jesus' sacrificial and substitutionary death for the *remission of sins, for many*—in the middle of Daniel's *seventieth week* (AD 30) is made clear, both by Jesus' words and by His actions. His disciples would complete the remainder of the *seventieth sabua* by preaching exclusively to the Jews in Jerusalem.

Compare the four Old Testament prophecies from Jeremiah and Daniel (above) regarding the *covenant* and its purpose, with Jesus' words stating what He came to do, as recorded by the three New Testament Gospel writers.

*For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*

*(Matthew 26:28)*

*This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many.* *(Mark 14:24)*

*This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.* *(Luke 22:20)*

These verses in Matthew, Mark and Luke, undeniably match the description of the *New Covenant* given in Jeremiah 31:31-34. They also relate to the six objectives listed in the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks* that had to be fulfilled *to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins.* *(Daniel 9:24)*

Finally, to achieve the required solution to Judah's sin problem, the *New Covenant* was instituted: *Messiah shall be cut off...He shall confirm a covenant with many for one week.* *(Daniel 26a, 27a)*



## CHAPTER 19

# MESSIAH CAME FOR JUDAH AND JERUSALEM

It is clear from Jesus' own actions during His ministry, and His instructions to His disciples' to preach the Gospel exclusively to the Jews, that the *New Covenant* promised by Jeremiah and the special *seventieth sabua* cited in Daniel's prophecy, were uniquely pledged to attend to the needs of *the lost sheep of the house of Israel*. (Cf. Matt.10:5b-6, 15:24; Luke 19:9-10.)<sup>69</sup> In addition, the Holy Spirit (Comforter and Teacher) was received first by the one hundred and twenty Jewish followers of Jesus, who were gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. Subsequently, when Peter preached the Gospel to devout Jews (from all over the Roman Empire), who had gathered in Jerusalem for the Feast, they miraculously heard the Gospel in their own language, and three thousand Jews were converted, baptized and received the Holy Spirit that day.

Corresponding with Jesus' instructions, the Apostles' continued to preach the Gospel exclusively to the Jews in Jerusalem for about three years, while believers were *added to the Church daily* (Acts 2:5-12, 37-47). Jesus' disciples were able to use the Temple precincts as their preaching platform, until the Assembly of Jewish leaders (Sanhedrin) heard the Gospel via Stephen's testimony during his trial, and rejected it! (Acts 7)

Thus, the *seventieth sabua* came to a definite and not coincidental conclusion in AD 34, when the unbelief of the Jewish Sanhedrin and their declared opposition to the Gospel resulted in Stephen being stoned to death!

Stephen's death marked the end of the exclusivity of the Gospel for the Jews in Jerusalem. The nascent persecution against Jesus' disciples and Jewish converts in Jerusalem increased in intensity in AD 41, causing them to flee and preach the Gospel in the *regions of Judaea and Samaria*, (Acts 8:1-40). Reportedly, only the Apostles remained in Jerusalem during the decade following Stephen's death. Thus, the scriptures and historical events show that the entire 490 year period in Daniel's *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks* was allocated specifically:

*For your people and for your holy city, [Jerusalem] to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins. (Dan. 9:24a)*

As a result of Philip's evangelistic preaching throughout Gaza, Ashdod and Caesarea (Acts 8:26-40) and following the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, the Gospel began to be preached to the Gentiles. After Cornelius received his spectacular vision and sent for Simon Peter to come to his house in Caesarea (Acts 10:3-4), and following Peter's vision (Acts 10:9-16) the Apostles confirmed that the Gospel should be preached to other nations. The scriptures tell us that Cornelius (the first named Gentile Christian), was a devout believer in God, who fulfilled all the outward requirements of piety. Even as Peter preached to the Gentiles who were gathered in the house of Cornelius to hear the Gospel, the Holy Spirit fell upon them and they too accepted the Salvation offered through the blood of Jesus Christ. The age of the Gentile Church had begun...

**Summary:**

For the six reasons outlined in chapters 14–19 (above), the promised *New Covenant* for the forgiveness of sin (Jeremiah 31:31–34), and the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks* that provided specific details for its implementation (Daniel 9:24–27), are deemed to be two expressions of the same Covenant! Although the *New Covenant* promised to deal with the transgressions of Israel and Judah, Jeremiah only recorded what the results would be (i.e., God would forgive their iniquity). So, the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks* was provided via Gabriel, to set out the timetable for the *Covenant's* fulfilment, and describe how it would be achieved by Messiah.

Subsequently, Jesus Christ came to confirm the *New Covenant* in His Blood, by His death, resurrection and ascension during the first half of Daniel's *seventieth week* (AD 27–30). Afterward, His disciples preached the Gospel exclusively to the Jews during the last half of Daniel's *seventieth week* (AD 30–34). There is, therefore, no additional sacrifice OR any other covenant to be made with the house of Jacob/Israel. The *seventieth week*, specifically for the Jews in Jerusalem, had been fulfilled.

Only Jesus Christ, the long awaited Messiah, could confirm God's promised *New Covenant* with the Jews by offering Himself as the paschal Lamb of God, (John 1:29). His personal blood-sacrifice far transcended the requirements of the Mosaic Law. Thus, Jesus became only *The Way* for the Jews' previously fraught relationship with God to be restored. Jesus said to Thomas:

*'I am the way, the truth, and the life, No one comes to the Father except through me.'* (John 14:6)



# PART THREE

## –THE REPERCUSSIONS–





## CHAPTER 20

### THE CURSE IS REPEATED

For the Jews in Jerusalem, who rejected and reviled Messiah who came as *The Messenger of the Covenant*, history has shown that a consequential and alternative *sabua* was imposed on them when the *seven times curse* of Leviticus 26:18, 21, 24, 28, was activated once again! Although this additional seven-year period of time (AD 66-73) lay outside of Daniel's designated 490 year time frame, the repercussions arising from the Jews' rejection of Messiah during Daniel's *seventieth sabua*, not only devastated their city, but also the generation of Jews and their immediate descendants who lived there! (Matt. 27:1-2, 11-12, 20-25) It is possible – during this consequential *sabua* – that perhaps some of the chief priests and elders who had plotted against Jesus were still alive, and maybe some of those who had so boldly proclaimed:

*'Let Him be crucified!'*

*'Let Him be crucified!'*

*'His blood be on us and on our children.'*

*(Matthew 27:22b, 23b, 25b)*

Because they demanded His crucifixion, Jesus called this consequential period – the *days of vengeance!* He predicted that their rejection of Him would result in the Jews' alienation from their land, and worse desolations for Jerusalem's future:

For these are the *days of vengeance that all things which are written may be fulfilled...* And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.  
(Luke 21:22, 24; cf. Luke 23:28–31)

Jesus was referring to Daniel's forecast for the same period:

*And the people of the prince who is to come [i.e., Messiah's people, cf. verse 25a] shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined. (Daniel 9:26b [brackets added])*

Because of Messiah's coming, the citizens of Jerusalem were faced with a clear-cut choice: those who accepted the Gospel message would find that the *seventieth sabua period* (specifically proposed by God to achieve their salvation) would become ***the acceptable year of the Lord***; while those who rejected the Gospel message would experience a consequential *seven year period* called ***the days of vengeance of our God***.

NOTE: Jesus announced ***the acceptable year of the Lord*** from Isaiah 61:2a in the Synagogue at Nazareth at the beginning of His ministry (Luke 4:19), but He didn't proclaim the other half of that verse (Isaiah 61:2b) regarding ***the days of vengeance of our God*** until the conclusion of His ministry, (cf. Luke 21:22 above).

These two quotations—both spoken publicly by Jesus—split Isaiah 61:2 into historic halves that reflected the contrasting consequences arising from their opposing responses to Messiah's Gospel of salvation. If they trusted in Messiah's *good tidings*, the ***acceptable year of the Lord*** would bring about God's ***blessings***: through Him they could *receive healing for their bro-*

*ken-heartedness, liberty for those held captive, and freedom from the bondage of sin, (as in Isaiah 61:1-2a). But, for those who rejected Him, cursing would strike them sometime in the future via **the days of vengeance**, bringing with it *mourning, ashes, and a spirit of heaviness*, (cf. Isaiah 61:3 with Psalm 102:1-11).<sup>70</sup>*

However, even if Jewish believers suffered during the days of vengeance (because they were trapped in the city), Messiah could still bring them *comfort and consolation* and transform their experience into occasions for expressing *beauty, joy and praise*, with the promise of becoming God's *trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified!* (Isaiah 61:2b-3)

Appropriately, Daniel's prophecy had previously warned the Jews that even after Messiah had confirmed the *New Covenant* in the middle of Daniel's *seventieth week*, a second long-lasting *desolation* of the sanctuary and city would occur.

*Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation... (Daniel 9:27)*

Before his death, Jesus had also pointedly explained to his disciples that Jerusalem's Holy Temple would soon be destroyed.

*Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down. (Matthew 24:2)*

Also, after denouncing the Jewish leadership, and that particular generation for their unbelief, and upon leaving the Temple before his trial, Jesus exclaimed:<sup>71</sup>

*See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' (Matthew 23:38–39)*<sup>72</sup>

From God's perspective, Messiah's death in AD 30, meant the priestly rituals, sacrifices and offerings in the Jerusalem Temple would henceforth become entirely redundant.<sup>73</sup> Consequently, the now obsolete nature of the Temple and its functions were presciently foreshadowed—at the hour of Jesus' death—by an earthquake that caused the heavy and extraordinarily thick veil suspended before the Holy of Holies in the Temple, to be ripped from top to bottom. Tradition also states that afterward, the abnormally heavy Temple doors that required several priests' efforts to open them, would frequently open by themselves, among other unusual phenomena seen on the Temple Mount during the following days.<sup>74</sup> These events indicated that God's presence had finally departed from the Temple precincts, and *The Way* into God's presence was now via Jesus Christ!

Fortunately, for that same disbelieving generation of Jews, 50 days after Jesus' Passion, God miraculously allowed thousands of Jews who had gathered in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost (AD 30) to hear the Gospel preached in their own language via the Holy Spirit and the Apostle Peter. Meantime, those Jews who had converted to *The Way* were able to continue to congregate, preach and teach in the Temple's precincts (Acts 2:46–47; 3:1–4:4; 5:20–25; 21:15–30). Obviously, once the Church was established and flourishing, the Temple in Jerusalem was no longer needed as a meeting place for the followers of *The Way* (i.e., Messianic Jews).

However, not long after Stephen's death in AD 34 (Acts 8:1–6), with Jesus' warning in mind, and because of imminent per-

secution, most of the Jewish Messianic community – except for the Apostles – moved out of Jerusalem into Judaea, Samaria, and further afield to Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch (Syria), where Barnabas and Paul taught the people for a year.<sup>75</sup>

The comparative peace which followed the martyrdom of Stephen was broken for the Jerusalem church by a much more severe persecution about AD 41–44 instigated by Herod Agrippa I until his death. Peter was imprisoned, but escaped death, and the Apostle James was beheaded. Tradition states that the Apostles left Jerusalem twelve years after the crucifixion.<sup>76</sup>

Subsequent to the persecution of the Jewish Church in Jerusalem, records show that by AD 45 a mixed Jewish/Gentile congregation had been established in Antioch, the capital of Syria. Antioch was where Jewish and Gentile followers of *The Way* were first called *Christians*, (Acts 1:3; 9:2; 11:19–26; 18:25–26; 19:9, 23; 24:14, 22).

Thus, a forty-year long period of opportunity existed for those who lived near Jerusalem's precincts to respond to the Gospel message, before the dire judgements foretold by Daniel and Jesus fell on the people of Judah, their Temple sanctuary and their holy city. The priestly rituals, and animal sacrifices offered on man-made altars in earthly temples, would no longer suffice to *cover* the sins of Judah's people – or even be necessary – because salvation and unhindered access to God had been achieved for all believers through the redeeming death of Messiah, the great High Priest. It seems – from Jesus' own words – that it was the vicious rejection of their Messiah and His Gospel, and their failure to recognise the special *time* authorised by God to *end the transgression of Judah* (during Daniel's *seventieth sabua*), which caused the *curses* uttered by Moses to be renewed, hastening the ultimate desolation of Jerusalem.

With regard to the city itself, Jesus had forewarned its citizens:

*If you had known, even you, especially in **this your day, the things that make for your peace!** But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, **because you did not know the time of your visitation.*** (Luke 19:42-44)

NOTE: Many centuries before these impending events took place, Moses had commanded that when the Children of Israel entered the Promised Land, they were to be divided into two groups to stand before two nearby mountains (Deut. 11:26-32). They were to write the Law on large whitewashed stones, and recite the  *blessings*  and the  *curses*  that Moses had recorded as potential consequences that might arise—in the future—depending on their attitude toward God and their behaviour toward the Law. They were to recite the  *blessings*  promised through obedience to the Law of God while standing by Mt. Gerizim (Deut. 27:1-10; 28:1-14), and recite the  *curses*  as retribution for their lack thereof while standing by Mt. Ebal (Deut. 27:14-26; 28:15-68).<sup>77</sup>

Thousands of years later, history showed that the Babylonian invasions into Judaea (597-587 BC) and the subsequent years of exile, desolation and punishments that the Jews and Jerusalem suffered, were very specific to the  *curses*  that were consequential to their disobedience to the Law of Moses (Deut. 28:49-52, 63). However, the Babylonian exile was only a prelude to a longer and more extensive exile and even greater desolation of the holy city that began in AD 66-73 (Deut. 28:64-68;

Lev. 26:36–39). Thus, in a spiritual sense, the consequences arising from Jesus' fulfilment of the *New Covenant* during the final *sabua* of Daniel's *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks*, resulted in a repetition of both **the blessings** (via the *acceptable year of the Lord*), and **the curses** (during *the days of vengeance of our God*), (Cf. Isaiah 61:1-3 with Deut. 11:26–28), depending on the nation's response to Messiah.

Just as the Children of Israel had wandered for forty years in the wilderness after their release from captivity, to test that 'evil generation' before their descendants could enter the Promised Land (Numbers 32:10–13), so God had once again allowed a forty year period of testing to ensue for the people of Judah – giving them time to respond to Messiah's message of release from the bondage of sin, and receive God's forgiveness – before the judgements foretold by Moses, Jeremiah, Daniel and Jesus Himself, could fall on the unbelieving Jews living in Judaea during the first century AD.

Looking back, it seems that *Golgotha* (where Jesus died), like Mt. Gerazim – of olden times – became **the mountain of blessing** for the Jews who embraced the salvation offered by Jesus during the *acceptable year of the LORD*, which *finished the transgression of Judah*, (Daniel 9:24); whereas, *Masada* (like Mt. Ebal of old), became **the mountain of cursing** during the *days of vengeance of God* for those Jews and their descendants who rebelled against their leaders, defied the Roman legions, and chose death at their own hands! Perhaps there were among the fatalities at *Masada* some – still unbelieving – Jews who once boldly said: **His blood be on us and on our children?** (Matt. 27:25)

And so, during Daniel's *seventieth sabua* (AD 27–34), **blessings** were bestowed on the Jewish believers who accepted Messiah's teaching and followed Him, and on those who con-

verted to *The Way* through the preaching of the Apostles. Many of these believers took note of Jesus' warnings recorded in Matthew 24:15–18, Mark 13:14 and Luke 21:20 (below), regarding Jerusalem's imminent fate, and migrated to Judaea and Samaria after Stephen's death because of looming persecution.

However, a revolt against Rome in AD 66 by Jewish zealots, led to Rome's intervention in Judaea: in September–October, the Roman legate Gaius Cestius Gallus' halted a siege against Jerusalem—after only nine days—and retreated to the coast with more than 30,000 men; the subsequent pursuit and rout (by warring Jewish factions) cost Rome 5,000 infantry and cavalry. This lapse in the siege allowed any Messianic Jews still living in Jerusalem to escape the imminent *curses* that threatened their city, by fleeing—exactly as Jesus had warned them—before Jerusalem was besieged again:

*But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judaea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are **the days of vengeance**, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. (Luke 21:20)*

Ultimately, the Jews' rejection of Messiah and the Gospel of Good News (during Daniel's seven-year *covenant* period), and the persistent unbelief and rebellion exhibited by those still living in Jerusalem and Judaea (during the *alternative week* AD 66–73), led to further *curses* being activated during the ongoing *days of vengeance*; culminating in their expulsion from Judaea and the world-wide Diaspora of Jews at the hand of Rome.<sup>78</sup>

The subsequent repression of Jews—who were scattered throughout the world by Gentile nations—lasted for over



eighteen hundred years! (Cf. Leviticus 26:14-46) The Jewish nation's continued absence from Judaea during that historic and prolonged period provided the opportunity for *the overspreading of abominations* to dominate the Holy Land and the Temple site in Jerusalem, which, according to Daniel 9:27, will remain *desolate* until the consummation of the Gospel age.

~~~~~


CHAPTER 21

THE DAYS OF VENGEANCE – AD 66-73

This destructive seven-year period started in AD 66, when fanatical zealots from radical sects of Judaism rioted throughout Judaea and Galilee against Rome's taxes and Nero's oppressive rule. Anti-Judean abuses and pro-Greek favours, imposed by the Roman procurator Gessius Florus, provoked the zealots in Galilee, who disagreed with the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem.⁷⁹ When the zealots' actions triggered Roman retaliation, the rebels fled to Jerusalem and the city was blockaded.

Thus, history records that it was the Jewish zealots, i.e., *the people of the prince* [Messiah] *who is to come...* (Dan. 9:26a), who started the rebellion against Rome in Galilee, and it was the same Jewish rebels who retreated to Jerusalem, killed the Jewish leaders, destroyed Jerusalem's food supplies and infrastructure, and defiled the sanctuary during the three-way Civil War that ensued during following months.

The highly embittered refugees who succeeded in escaping the Galilean massacres fled to the last major Jewish stronghold – Jerusalem. There, they killed anyone in the Jewish leadership who was not as radical as they. All the more moderate Jewish leaders who headed the Jewish government at the revolt's beginning in 66 were dead by 68 – and not one died at the hands of a Roman. All were killed by fellow Jews.⁸⁰

Therefore, it was the anarchy existing in Jerusalem (caused by the Jewish zealots), which triggered Rome's intervention to end what the rebels had started: i.e., finish destroying *the city and the sanctuary* on 9th Av, (August) AD 70. No doubt the accidental burning of the Second Temple reminded the Jews of the destruction of Solomon's Temple on the same date about 655 years before!⁸¹ However, even before the Roman forces breached the walls of Jerusalem, the moderate Jewish leaders had been killed by the zealots, and the Sicarii (one of the rebel factions) had initiated ploys to force the populace to join their fight against Rome. The three-way civil-war that followed caused immense damage in Jerusalem, and the rebellion eventually morphed into the well-documented First Jewish Revolt.⁸²

Josephus (a Jewish rebel leader, who turned collaborator with Rome), wrote a history about the First Jewish-Roman War.⁸³

The complete destruction of the second Jewish Temple (built in 516 BC and enlarged by Herod), and the city of Jerusalem in AD 70, has been well documented by the historian Josephus. The *desolation* that resulted is equally apportioned to the zealots, and opposing rebel sects of Judaism, who started the First Jewish Revolt in AD 66 (**during which a group called Sicarii destroyed the food-stocks in the city, while other groups started fires to impede the Romans.**) The legions under General Vespasian and his son Titus began the siege on April 14—a few days before Passover—when the city was thronged with Jews who had gathered to celebrate the Passover Feast from all over the known world. The Romans allowed pilgrims to enter the city, and then prevented their leaving, while cutting off their food supplies.⁸⁴ [Emphasis mine]

Several Roman rulers participated in the siege of Jerusalem: Agrippa II was unsuccessful; Gallus the Syrian legate spent eight days battering the walls before withdrawing for a time, which allowed many believers to escape the city before the Roman legions returned under Vespasian and Titus. Emperor Nero (AD 54–68), sent General Vespasian and his son Titus against Jerusalem, but after Nero's suicide, and the deaths of several short-lived Emperors, Vespasian became Emperor in July AD 69; he returned to Rome to claim his title, leaving his son Titus in control of the siege of Jerusalem. After months of frustrated effort, the Romans finally built a wall around the entire city to prevent passage in or out. In only three days, the legions completed a 4.5 mile long wall with 13 forts to guard it. They also began building four platforms against fortress Antonia to use as steppingstones to the Temple precincts in the south.⁸⁵ True to Jesus' words...

For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another... (Luke 19:43–44)

Josephus estimated that over one million (mostly Jews) died; the armed and old were put to death, and the remainder were taken into slavery. The anarchy and fighting started by rebel Jews in Galilee in AD 66 resulted in the Roman siege and subsequent burning of the Temple and destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.⁸⁶ The Arch of Titus, in Rome, celebrates this Roman victory. Records state that the burning of the Temple on August 9–10, AD 70, was accidentally started by a Roman soldier and not planned by the Roman authorities who unsuccessfully tried to put the fire out. It is recorded that the immense heat from the flames melted the gold and silver that adorned the Temple

buildings, which ran down between its great stones; they were later prised apart by Roman soldiers who wanted the gold, thereby fulfilling Jesus' words in Matthew 24:2.⁸⁷

Some of the treasures that were salvaged from the Jerusalem Temple were taken to Rome by Titus where they were displayed in his victory parade and celebration. The Arch of Titus still stands in the Forum in Rome as his 'Triumph' memorial, and it shows on its inward face the treasures removed from the Jerusalem Temple: viz., the Menorah (the seven-branched Golden Candlestick), a scroll of the Law, and the Golden Table of Show-bread. Various extant rumours and legends query the possible existence and hiding place of those Temple treasures; but more recent investigations suggests that the gold from those treasures met the cost of building the Colosseum in Rome, which was started by Emperor Vespasian in AD 72 and completed by his son Titus in AD 80. The alignment of these dates suggests that this is a plausible reason for the treasures from the Holy Temple in Jerusalem to have disappeared!

The civil war and rebellion that began in AD 66 continued in outlying areas until the rebels fled to the mountain refuge at Masada, where they were besieged by legions of Roman troops who proceeded to build a massive earthen ramp toward the summit. The Jewish revolt came to an abrupt end with the rebels' mass suicide in April AD 73.⁸⁸ Thus, the Great Revolt started by the zealots not only lasted for seven years, but it caused Jerusalem to remain *a desolation* for sixty years afterward until Emperor Hadrian changed its name to Aelia Capitolina, and the province was renamed Syria Palestina.

As for the city's long-term future: wars, invasions, abominations and destruction would be incessantly heaped on Jerusalem and the (henceforth) *desolate* Temple Mount. Occupations of Judaea by Roman armies, opposing forces of Christianity (i.e.,

Byzantine rulers, Catholic Crusaders), and Islamic Caliphates, would lead to many foreign (non-Jewish) structures being erected on the Holy Mount in Jerusalem: viz., pagan temples, Christian Churches, Islamic Mosques and ancillary buildings, which occupy the 'purported site' even today.⁸⁹

These were indeed, *the days of vengeance* that forecast a *desolate* future for the Holy Temple mount in Jerusalem!

And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate. (Daniel 9:27b)

~~~~~





## CHAPTER 22

# THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

All three Gospels record that Jesus warned His disciples about the impending **invasion of Judaea**, and the destruction and **desolation of Jerusalem**, just prior to His crucifixion:

*But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its **desolation is near**. Then let those who are in Judaea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are **the days of vengeance**, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.*  
(Luke 21:20–21; Cf. Matt. 24:15–16; Mark 13:14)

First and foremost, it should be recognised that Jesus' urgent warnings—about **foreign armies**, complicit with the **desolation** of the holy city—were intended for the generation living during that era: i.e., Jesus' disciples, the people who followed Him and anyone else who paid attention to His teaching. This fact is emphasised by His words—when you see—recorded in all three Gospel texts (above and on page 133).

They were to flee from Jerusalem and Judaea when they saw an army advancing on the city. This looming threat would become a disastrous personal experience for Jesus' followers if they did not heed His warnings to flee!

A similar scenario was observed by Daniel when, as a youth, he saw the Babylonian army approaching Jerusalem in 597 BC! However, Jesus' references to **Daniel** and the '*abomination of desolation*' in Matthew and Mark do not refer to the historic Babylonian invasions, nor to the period when the Jewish exiles returned from Babylon to Judaea under Persian authority; but these 'specific words' are used by Daniel when describing his prophetic visions about a Greek ruler who would rise to power in greater Syria in the future. This would not occur until Persia had been defeated by Alexander the Great and his kingdom had been divided up by his four generals!

When recording his prophetic visions Daniel used the words: *transgression of desolation* (first recorded in Daniel 8:13), and *abomination of desolation* (used in 11:31; 12:11), which specifically refer to the cessation of the daily offering in the Second Temple in Jerusalem. Incredibly, Daniel wrote these 'memorable words' down in 550 BC: 27 years before the rebuilding of the Second Temple was started, and 34 years before it was finally completed in 516 BC.

- Thus, in the first prophetic passage in Daniel 8:5-14, a future Greek ruler is identified as a descendant from one of the four generals who divided up the former Greek empire (Dan. 8:21-22). The question is asked: *How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?* (Dan. 9:13b) This Greek ruler opposes the daily sacrifices and stops the rituals in the Jerusalem Temple!
- In the second passage, Daniel 11:3-4, the four divisions of Alexander's Macedon-Greek Empire are again described, and in Daniel 11:5-19 the enduring intergenerational battles between descendants from two of the Greek dynasties are

reviewed: these being the Ptolemaic ‘King/s of the South’ (Egypt, 305–30 BC), whose rule coincided with the Seleucid ‘King/s of the North’ (greater Syria, 312–63 BC).

- A third passage in Daniel 11:21–28 describes a ‘King of the North’ who has been recognised as a Greek Seleucid ruler, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, largely because of the intriguing details given about the deceitful confrontations and reciprocal battles he would conduct with a Ptolemaic ‘King of the South’ who ruled Egypt, plus some prophetic verses about Antiochus’ return to Judaea to do damage to the holy covenant.
- A fourth passage (Daniel 11:29–35), tells us that the ‘King of the North’ will lead an unsuccessful raid south: and afterward – in an enraged state – he would return to Judaea to inflict damage on the Jewish people and the Jerusalem Temple by taking *away the daily sacrifices, and placing there the abomination of desolation* (cf. Daniel 11:30–31 below).<sup>90</sup>

Four hundred years later, in 167 BC, Daniel’s vision about the *abomination of desolation* came true! The scenarios above confirm that the perpetrator of these events was Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 BC), and history informs us that the daily offerings in the Jerusalem Temple were deliberately stopped by him, in an effort to Hellenize the Jewish people and destroy Judaism when he ruled over greater Syria (i.e., today’s Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Syria and Palestine).<sup>91</sup>

Thus, the phrase the *abomination of desolation* refers to the desecration of the Temple sanctuary perpetrated by the ‘King of the North’ i.e., Antiochus IV Epiphanes, in 167 BC, just as Daniel had prophesied hundreds of years before:

*For ships from Cyprus shall come against him;  
therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage*

*against the holy covenant, and do damage. So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant.*

*And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the **abomination of desolation**.*

*(Daniel 11:30–31)*

After he returned in a rage to Palestine in 169 BC, Antiochus Epiphanes committed the original **abomination of desolation**, when on the Sabbath in 167 BC he attacked Jerusalem, entered the Holy of Holies in the Temple, and carried off some of the gold and silver vessels.<sup>92</sup> According to the Jewish historian, Josephus, Antiochus desecrated the Temple by offering a pig as a sacrifice on a Greek altar he erected, which was dedicated to Zeus. He forbade all Jewish religious practices and commanded that copies of the Law be burned.<sup>93</sup> Three years later, after a Jewish uprising led by Mattathias and his sons (Gr. Maccabees), the altar was rededicated on December 25, 164 BC, in an event that is still memorialised annually by Jews during the Festival of Hanukah on Kislev 25.<sup>94</sup>

First, it was the Babylonian army that destroyed Solomon's Temple, then the Persian kings allowed the Second Temple to be built, and afterward the Greek Seleucid ruler desecrated the Second Temple by setting up the **abomination of desolation**; but, as Daniel warned in his *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks*, it appeared that a similar event would occur yet again, after Messiah had confirmed Jeremiah's long-awaited *New covenant*.

*Then he [Messiah] shall confirm a covenant with many for one week... And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation... (Daniel 9:27)<sup>95</sup>*

As it turned out, this final affront to Jewish independence befell the people of Judah and Jerusalem during the Roman era, and so Jesus' timely warning given in 30 AD—which was derived from Daniel's ancient prophecy about an invasion, and an *abomination of desolation*—would undoubtedly have informed his disciples that yet another foreign army would besiege Jerusalem and the Second Temple would suffer *desolation* once again, in a similar manner to that committed by Antiochus IV Epiphanes two hundred years earlier.

It would seem that by urgently warning his disciples about the *armies* that would—in their lifetime—*surround* and engulf Jerusalem, (causing an *abomination* to be *standing* [either] *in the holy place*, [or] *where it ought not to be*), that Jesus knew that the window of opportunity for them to escape from what lay ahead, would be of a very brief duration. He simply warned them: foreign armies around Jerusalem meant certain desolation, so flee!

*So when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judaea flee to the mountain. (Mark 13:14)*

*Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, [Daniel 9:27b] standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judaea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes... (Matt. 24:15–18), cf. Mark 13:14, above.*

*For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.*

(Matt. 24:21–22), cf. Joel 2:2 and Daniel 12:1b.

We should note that the remark (*let the reader understand*) with regard to the location of the *abomination of desolation* – which has been inserted into Jesus' warning by both Matthew and Mark – implies either a private understanding, or some wide-spread knowledge about the actual place where the *abomination* would be seen; apparently this special location did not need to be recorded!<sup>96</sup> Because of the two different phrases used in the Gospels for its position (i.e., *standing in the holy place*, or *standing where it ought not*), modern scholars' opinions differ over exactly what *abomination* Jesus was referring to, and where it would be seen.

Jesus may have simply been referring to the destruction that would be inflicted on Jerusalem's infrastructure and Temple precincts by the rebellious Jewish zealots, or to the damage inflicted during the siege of Jerusalem, or perhaps to the desecrations committed by the Roman soldiers whose activities would also make the ravaged Temple site desolate! We should note that one of the first actions taken by Roman soldiers, when gaining a victory, was to make sacrifices to their insignias and their gods; this involved a procession, the slaughtering of animals by an altar (mainly pigs, sheep and goats), libations, prayers and incense, and the examining of the entrails.<sup>97</sup>

However, the words used by Jesus suggest that the *abomination* would be a stationary object, standing in a 'holy place' or in an 'unusual place' that was visible to the populace of Jeru-

saalem. There is also a strong implication in Jesus' prior words that He was the cause of the Temple's initial *desolation* by *departing from it* himself (never to return during almost two millennia), thus leaving a spiritual vacuum within the Holy Temple and Jerusalem's precincts for any pagan *abominations* to be placed there.

*See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple... (Matt. 23:38–24:1a)*

In fact, it might not be too great a stretch of the imagination to consider that when Jesus spoke to His disciples about '*seeing*' *the abomination standing in the holy place*, He wasn't referring to the Temple at all—particularly in view of what He said about the Temple both at the beginning and at the end of His mission—when He said that the Jews of His day had made God's house of prayer into a house of merchandise, and turned it into a den of thieves! Seemingly, the Temple was not a *holy place* in Jesus' opinion! (Cf. John 2:13–17; Mark 11:15–17; 13:1–2; Luke 19:45–46.)

Also (to make an important observation), when Jesus gave His discourse about the *abomination of desolation* to His disciples, He was actually sitting on the Mount of Olives, opposite the temple! (Cf. Matt. 24:3, 15; Mark 13:3, 14). Even during the nights preceding His Passion Week Jesus stayed outside on Olivet (Luke 21:37), and it was in the Garden of Gethsemane (across the Kidron Valley, and half-way up the Mount of Olives), where He travailed in prayer on the night He was betrayed (Matt. 26:36–46; Luke 22:39–46). Therefore, it is quite feasible that Jesus was referring to the Mount of Olives as the *holy place* and not to the Temple at all! <sup>98</sup>

This interpretation, of *the abomination* being seen standing on the Mount of Olives, as Jerusalem was being surrounded by Roman Legions carrying their standards and ensigns, would certainly have spurred the followers of *The Way* and the citizens of Jerusalem to flee from the imminent danger they could see approaching, when they looked up in that direction. Consequently, some scholars believe the *abomination* actually refers: either to a Roman cohort's individual 'standard or *draco*' (i.e., a serpent or dragon image, embroidered on square cloth), which was attached by a gilded cross-tree to a staff; or to a Roman 'ensign' or '*acquila*' (i.e., bronze or silver eagles, with outstretched wings), which were carried aloft by each legion.<sup>99</sup>

These standards and ensigns would have glistened in the sunlight while the Roman 10<sup>th</sup> Legion, Fretensis, camped on the Mount of Olives during the siege of Jerusalem in AD 70.<sup>100</sup> Their camp fires on that elevated site would also have been visible from Jerusalem at night, thus reminding any followers of Jesus of the *abomination... standing where it ought not* i.e., *standing in the holy place* sacred to Jesus' memory.<sup>101</sup>

Furthermore, in support of the above interpretation: if *the abomination* (in Jesus' warning) was seen to be standing on the Mount of Olives, it is the very place where Jesus ascended into heaven in AD 30 (Acts 1:9-12), and that is the precise location where Jesus (Messiah) will return to earth again, according to Zechariah 14:3-4. Therefore, *the abomination* should certainly not be *standing* right there—*where it ought not* to be—because the Mount of Olives is the *holy place* reserved for Christ's Second Coming! Some Christians believe the Second Coming will occur at that *holy place* during a future Sukkot, Feast of Tabernacles, at the ingathering of the harvest.

Because Daniel's pre-recorded prophecy relating to Antiochus IV Epiphanes, Seleucid Emperor, (cf. Daniel 8:9-12, 23-25;



11:29-33) had already come true in historical facts—and because of Jesus’ own warnings about a similar *abomination* in the future—any Jewish followers of *The Way* who were still living in Judaea during the *alternative week* and enduring *the days of vengeance*, would certainly have known what this warning was all about: particularly since the previous horror that occurred in 169 BC began with the Greek/Seleucid invasion followed by intense religious persecution.

Jesus’ disciples knew exactly what to watch out for: pagan armies surrounding Jerusalem, emperor worship, and the adulation of symbols and pagan gods on Jewish territory, to be followed by an intensive siege and persecution of the Jewish people! Since Jesus had previously told His disciples that they would not only be witnesses to Him in Jerusalem, Judaea and Samaria, but go to the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8), they would certainly have known (by such signs) that their days of preaching the Gospel in Jerusalem were numbered.

History would soon prove that Jesus’ dire predictions about the Temple were true, and after AD 70 the Temple site remained in a desolate state. Unfortunately, for the Jews, the *days of vengeance* and the original *curses* that were pronounced by Moses, which fell on Judaea and Jerusalem during the *alternative* and *consequential week* (AD 66-73), only ‘commenced’ the desolation of the Temple mount site that became increasingly ravaged during later centuries by successive invading forces.

Although the prophetic words (quoted below) were written in 750-626 BC, prior to Nebuchadnezzar’s first invasion of Judaea and referred primarily to the destruction of Solomon’s Temple and Jerusalem in 586 BC, they also proved prescient for the devastating events that occurred in Judaea and Jerusalem after Herod’s Temple was destroyed in AD 70.

As the prophets had written:

*And **this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment.** (Jere. 25:11)*

*Therefore because of you **Zion shall be plowed like a field**, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, and the mountain of the temple like the bare hills of the forest. (Micah 3:12)*

These words were literally fulfilled during ensuing decades while Judaea suffered Roman occupation. After Hadrian became Emperor (AD 117-136), he erected a permanent physical abomination on the razed and barren Temple site – purportedly during a visit to Judaea in AD 129-130 – when he had a huge statue constructed of himself, to stand in front of a new Roman Temple that housed a gigantic statue of Jupiter.<sup>102</sup>

Whether Hadrian's pagan edifices were established before, during, or after an accompanying short-lived Jewish revolt led by Simon Bar Kochba (AD 132-136), is not known for sure, but the Roman practice of sacrificing pigs to their deity, and Hadrian's decree banning the Jewish practice of circumcision, united the Jews against the Roman forces.<sup>103</sup> To suppress this Bar Kochba Revolt, the Romans brought six full legions and auxiliaries against the rebels and after two years of fighting, Jews were forbidden to enter the city on pain of death. Emperor Hadrian responded by having the precincts of Jerusalem and the temple site completely ploughed over, so a new Roman city – named after himself – '**Aelia**' **Capitolina** could be built, and Judaea was renamed the Roman province of **Syria Palestina**.

Consequently, Judaea ceased to be a Jewish land, but the name Jew remained synonymous with the dispersed who kept the Mosaic Law. At that time, wherever they gathered:

Prayer replaced the temple sacrifice, and worship in the synagogue and study of the Torah became the central characteristics of the Jewish faith.<sup>104</sup>

Centuries later, after Islamic forces took Jerusalem from Eastern Rome/Byzantine control in AD 637, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, Sophronius, saw Caliph Omar (AD 579–644) standing on the desolate Temple Mount at the entrance to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre! Reportedly, Sophronius said:

This is the *Abomination of Desolation* announced by the Prophet Daniel, and now stands from this point on holy ground.<sup>105</sup> (Emphasis added)

Muslim Caliphs eventually built the Dome of the Rock (AD 687–691) on the derelict foundations of an earlier Byzantine Church situated on the Temple Mount platform, believing it was the site of the Temple, and afterward (in AD 705) the Al-Aqsa Mosque was built on the site of the original small prayer house built by Caliph Omar. As Daniel had written:

*And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate. (Dan. 9:27b)*

Jesus also said:

*And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. (Luke 21:24b)*

Accordingly, until God commands the events decreed for the consummation, and the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, the holy mountain will remain largely off limits to the Jews (Dan. 9:27; Matt. 23:38). Even after the modern nation of Israel was established in 1948, followed by the unification of Jerusalem in 1967, the purported Temple site has remained under the

control of the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf, making it inaccessible to most of the Jewish population.

Apparently, as long as foreign *abominations* exist on the Temple Mount, the original 'ground' and earthly base from which their faith was destined to operate will remain irretrievable to the Jews.



## CHAPTER 23

### SUMMARISING THE EVIDENCE

*Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city. (Daniel 9:24a)*

Daniel's prophecy states that from the date of a decree to restore Jerusalem, a very long period of 483 years would pass by before the final *covenant sabua* (7 year period) would be fulfilled by Messiah, the Prince, via His *Parousia* (or coming) to the holy city of Jerusalem. Messiah's time of visitation was to fulfil God's promises via Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel and many other prophets; thus, the last words (spoken by God) in the Old Testament, were written by the prophet Malachi about 397 BC:

*'Behold, I send My messenger... even the Messenger of the covenant... Behold, He is coming.'*  
*Says the LORD of hosts. (Malachi 3:1)*

With these words from Malachi the voice of prophecy fell silent in Judaea for over 400 years, until John the Baptist saw Jesus coming to the River Jordan, and announced:

*Behold! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29)*

Thus, during the first half of the *final sabua* of Daniel's *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks* (AD 27-30), Jesus Christ, Messiah, preached the nearness of the Kingdom of God.

Unfortunately, for many of the citizens living in Judaea and Jerusalem at that time, the coming of their Messiah was controversial! The common Jews were looking for a temporal leader to fight against the oppressive Roman occupiers and lead them in a national revolt. On the other hand, the Jewish leadership (chief priests, elders and scribes), felt threatened by Jesus popularity and teaching, and especially by His criticism of their interpretation and practice of the Law. Neither group appreciated the teaching they received from Jesus; it was not what they wanted to hear, and they did not understand the spiritual nature of the Kingdom of God that Jesus came to proclaim.

*And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. (Mark 8:31)*

The failure of both factions to understand His mission was underscored by their refusal to have Jesus released after His trial before Pilate, calling instead for His crucifixion, thereby unknowingly collaborating with God via His unique plan for their own salvation.

Subsequently, Jesus Christ fulfilled the six requirements for the salvation of the Jews, by confirming Jeremiah's *New Covenant* in His blood; when, in accordance with Daniel's *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks*, he was *cut off*; this event brought an end to the effectiveness of the Temple's sacrifices and offerings in the *middle of the seventieth sabua* (AD 30), thereafter making them redundant!

After His resurrection, Jesus instructed his disciples for forty days, and before He ascended into heaven He spoke His last words to them:

*Then he said to them, 'These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all*

*things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the 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 to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.’ (Luke 24:44–49)*

Ten days after his ascension, on the Day of Pentecost, several thousand Jews from all over the Roman Empire miraculously heard the Gospel in their own language and the Jewish Church was born by God’s Holy Spirit. On that day the *Law was put in their minds, and written on their hearts*. (Acts 2:41–47; Jeremiah 31:33–34)

The Gospel of Salvation was then preached by the Apostles and disciples, exclusively to the Jews living in Jerusalem, during the last half of the *seventieth sabua* (AD 30–34), until Stephen finished his testimony to the Jewish Sanhedrin (Acts 7–8) in AD 34. Their rejection of the Gospel (preached by Stephen at his trial), and his martyrdom at their hands brought the 490 years duration of the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks*—dedicated solely to the Jewish nation and their holy city Jerusalem—to a conclusion. The Jewish leadership and those who had rejected their Messiah, the Prince of Peace, by demanding His death, accepted that His blood would be on them and on their children! (Cf. Matthew 26:65–68; 27:1–2, 20–25.)

Thus, the six objectives listed in Daniel 9:24 – which had to be accomplished to *confirm* the *New Covenant* for the salva-

tion of the Jews – were all fulfilled by Jesus Christ, Messiah, the Messenger of the Covenant, and afterward preached by His disciples during the *seventieth sabua* of Daniel’s *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks*.

At the appointed time, He came:

*To finish the transgression,  
To make an end of sins,  
To make reconciliation for iniquity,  
To bring in everlasting righteousness,  
To seal up the vision and prophecy,  
And to anoint the most Holy.*

Forgiveness for sin, redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ, and renewed fellowship with God via the Holy Spirit’s indwelling presence was – for all believing Jews – now centred on Messiah and the work of salvation that He came to introduce and conclude. (John 17:4; 19:30)

After Stephen’s death in AD 34, the intense persecution directed at the followers of *The Way* by unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem (led by Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee), scattered the believers from the city, causing Messianic-Jewish congregations to become established in Judaea, Samaria and other areas of the Middle East, e.g., Antioch, Cyprus and Asia. (See Appendix D)

Subsequently, Philip’s evangelistic fervour in preaching the Gospel in Samaria, Peter’s heavenly vision in Acts 10, which led him to preach the Gospel to Gentiles, and Saul’s miraculous conversion to Christianity, to become Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles, meant that Jesus’ great commission to His disciples – to take the Gospel into the entire World – had begun.

Although the Apostles remained in Jerusalem for several years after Jesus’ resurrection and ascension, the great Temple



in Jerusalem was no longer central to God's purposes. As foretold by Jesus, it would soon be destroyed.

Decades later, the *seven times curse* of Leviticus 26:18-28 fell once again on the Jews living in Jerusalem during the consequential *sabua* (AD 66-73). The Jewish zealots' revolt against Rome in AD 66 precipitated a response that unleashed *the days of vengeance* on Jerusalem and its residents, which sealed the fate of the once holy city in AD 70. The rebellion finally ended at Masada: via the Roman siege of the mountain-top refuge, and the suicide of the rebel Jewish remnant, in April AD 73. This event brought the consequential *sabua* (seven-year period), *days of vengeance* and judgement for the people of Judah, the city and sanctuary, to an end. (Daniel 9:26b, 27b)

The final sting in the tail of the seemingly repetitive *seven times curse*, fell upon the Jews (63 years later) when Emperor Hadrian suppressed the Simon Bar Kochba revolt in AD 136 by expelling all Jews from the city and hunting them down in the desert!<sup>106</sup> Those who were not killed, or enslaved, starved to death in their desert cave hideouts.

The Jewish State was brought to an end when Hadrian re-named the territory *Syria Palestina*, and Jerusalem was called *Aelia Capitolina*. Thereafter, a succession of Gentile powers took dominion and authority over Judaea, viz., Roman and Byzantine Emperors, Muslim Caliphs and Sultans, Latin Crusaders, Ottoman Emperors, and British forces (during their mandate over Palestine, 1920-1948). Thus, the Jewish Diaspora was prolonged for eighteen centuries, until yet another Jewish Holocaust caused the name of Israel to once again be stamped on that ancient land.





## CHAPTER 24

# GOD'S PROMISE TO JEWS

Although the Temple and the Ark of the Covenant with its *mercy seat* no longer exist to *cover* Israel's sin year-on-year on the Day of Atonement, thankfully, on a personal level, **The Way** is still open for every Jew to receive forgiveness from God, and have their sins *blotted out* through the atoning work of Jesus Christ, Messiah, The Prince, whom the prophets said would make an everlasting covenant with Israel:

*Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you... Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon. (Isaiah 55:3a, 6)*

*Good and upright is the LORD; Therefore He teaches sinners in the way. The humble He guides in justice, And the humble He teaches His way. All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth, to such as keep **His covenant** and His testimonies. (Psalm 25:8-10)*

*The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him;  
and He will show them His covenant.  
(Psalm 25:14)*

Like the Jewish believers living in Jerusalem during the final *seventieth sabua* of Daniel's *Prophecy of seventy weeks*, Jews (and Gentiles) today, must humble themselves, confess their sins and embrace the *New Covenant* for the forgiveness of sin. God has promised—via the *New Covenant* in Jeremiah 31:33–34—that He will hear them, forgive them, implant His Law (through the Holy Spirit) in their hearts, and restore His fellowship with them. The New Covenant was designed by God especially for the people of Judah. At an opportune time, God promised to regather His people to their land:

*But you, O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to My people Israel, for they are about to come. For indeed I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be filled and sown. I will multiply men upon you, and all the house of Israel, all of it; and the cities shall be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bear young; I will make you inhabited as in former times, and do better for you than at your beginnings. Then you shall know that I am the LORD. (Ezekiel 36:8–11)*

There is also a blessed post-script attached to the Old Testament for the people of Judah at the end of the Gentile age, when, what God has predetermined will be *poured out on the desolate*. (Daniel 9:27b) Referring to that great day, the prophet Zechariah wrote the following words:

*The LORD will save the tents of Judah first... And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhab-*

*itants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a first-born. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem... And the land shall mourn, every family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves [Royal line]; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves [Prophetic line]; the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves [Priestly line]; the family of Shimei by itself, and their wives by themselves [Tabernacle Service line]; all the families that remain, every family by themselves.*

*In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.*

*(Zechariah 12:7a, 10–14; 13:1 ff.)*

That fountain is open today for all who thirst for God and desire Him to forgive their sin. Jesus Christ, Messiah who came to the people of Judah in Jerusalem—during the *seventieth sabua* of Daniel’s *Prophecy of seventy weeks*—to lay down His life for Judah’s sin to be forgiven, has also promised:

*All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

*(Matthew 11:27–29)*

*I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through Me. (John 14:6)*

This message of hope has always existed for the Jews; it evident in the Apostle Peter's sermon on repentance, which he preached in Solomon's Porch in the Temple in Jerusalem, soon after the Feast of Pentecost in AD 30:

*The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But you denied the Holy One and the Just... and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. (Acts 3:13, 14a, 15a)*

*Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' (Acts 3:17-23)*

*You are sons of the prophets... To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to*

*bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities. (Acts 3:25a, 26)*

The unique blessing of the *New Covenant* still endures today. It is available to everyone, Jews and Gentiles alike, because the six objectives that had to be fulfilled to end *the transgression of Judah* for the salvation of the Jews (and for their holy city), were accomplished through Messiah's sacrificial death and the preaching of the Gospel, during Daniel's *seventieth sabua!*

Henceforth, God's presence would no longer dwell in an earthly temple made with human hands; instead, God's Holy Spirit would forever dwell in the hearts of faithful believing Jews and Gentiles who have accepted and embraced the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

God eagerly awaits Israel's national repentance!







## CHAPTER 25

# JESUS' LAST WORDS

Just as the Jewish citizens living in Jerusalem in the First Century AD faced a choice: over whether to put their belief, faith and trust in the work of Jesus Christ, their Messiah, or deny His relevance to their lives; so today in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, we are still confronted with Christ's selfless sacrifice that we must identify ourselves with, for our sins to be forgiven. The *New Covenant* that He came to inaugurate – principally for the people of Judah living in Jerusalem – which was afterward extended to the Gentiles, was confirmed on the cross and endorsed by His resurrection and ascension into Heaven (as attested by many witnesses). Messiah came as promised, to bring the Gospel of salvation to the Jews who willingly responded to His teaching during the special *seventieth sabua* set aside in Daniel's *Prophecy of seventy weeks* for His *time of visitation*.

He is able to come to any one of us today with the same good news, through the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the decisions made by individuals, both past and present, determines whether they enjoy *the blessing* of forgiveness of sin, sanctification (cleansing) and fellowship with God and the Holy Spirit, through the *New Covenant* confirmed by Jesus; or whether – because of sin's bondage and their own unbelief – they experience spiritual desolation, via *the curse* that still alienates them from God. Although Romans 6:23 says *the wages of sin is*

*death... the good news is that Jesus paid the penalty for our sin through his substitutionary sacrifice, and therefore (as the verse says) ...the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

As we have seen in this study, some of the last words written in the Old Testament regarding God's *Messenger of the Covenant* declared:

*'Behold, I send my messenger... He is coming.'*  
(Malachi 3:1)

Although pre-warned, many people living in Judaea and Jerusalem during the first century missed Messiah's first *time of visitation!* Perhaps, because of their preconceived ideas about God or having entrenched political, religious and social bias against His followers, they did not consider that Jesus Christ or His teaching was relevant to their future lives. Today, we could say that many people prefer science rather than religious belief, choose entertainment rather than considered thought, and immorality rather than temperance in their societal interactions, and so the mistakes of the past are repeated today. In all walks of life, it seems the majority have no time for God!

However, Jesus warned that He will also return! He will come back to earth to claim His own, and gather His servants (both resurrected and living) to Himself; so the New Testament ends with a promise of His Second Coming! As the disciples watched (almost two millennia ago), while Jesus ascended into heaven until He was obscured by clouds, the two angels who stood nearby asserted that He would return:

*Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven. (Acts 1:9-11)*

Thus, when Jesus returns to intervene in the affairs of mankind – during His second *time of visitation* – His **Parousia** (appearing) will be public, sudden, loud and unexpected, especially for those who have not believed His promises!

*For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. (Matthew 16:27)*

*Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (Matthew 24:30–31)*

There is no countdown or timetable for Christ's Second Coming in glory! We should therefore act on His warning:

***Watch therefore***, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming... Therefore ***you also be ready***, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect... Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.  
(Matt. 24:42, 44, 46)

As the Apostle Peter wrote:

*But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. (2 Peter 3:8)*

And so, Jesus' last words in the New Testament were:

***'Surely I am coming quickly!'*** (Revelation 22:20)



## APPENDIX A

Comparison of God's principal Covenants:

### 1. The Noahic Covenant:

This was the Covenant made by God with Noah and all living creatures, which has no conditions or obligations by mankind attached to it. It is a covenant that promised the preservation of mankind after the deluge. (Genesis 9:16)

The covenant is, therefore, a sovereign administration of grace and forbearance, divine in its origin, disclosure, confirmation and fulfilment.<sup>107</sup>

### 2. The Abrahamic Covenant: (Circa BC 1913)

The covenant with Abraham promised him physical offspring and that nations would come from him; it was conditional upon their circumcision (Genesis 17:1-14). However, it was also a Covenant of Grace—unmerited by Abraham—and initiated by God, while Abraham was sleeping (Genesis 15:12-18; 17:2). The same covenant was to be extended to his son (Genesis 17:19, 25, 28-34).

The three [promises] expressly mentioned in connection with the covenant are the possession of the Land of Canaan, the multiplying of Abraham's seed, and the promise that God would be a God to him and his seed after him.<sup>108</sup>

### 3. The Mosaic Covenant: (Circa BC 1491)

The Covenant made with the Children of Israel was a covenant that dealt with God's relationship with them as a Nation. (Exodus 19:5-6; 34:10)

This was made with Israel as a people who had been sovereignly chosen in love unto redemption and adoption.<sup>109</sup>

The blessings of the Mosaic covenant were conditional on their keeping the Ten Commandments given at Mt. Sinai. Figuratively, God was to be their husband, and they were to be his wife. The Ark of the Covenant (and its mercy seat) was their life-line to God on the annual Day of Atonement. Their obedience would be displayed in the promised blessings (Exodus 24:3-8), but their disobedience would bring cursing upon them. (Cf. Deuteronomy 11:16-17; 28:15-68)

Even in this early covenant there was a hint that God would expand this covenant to include the Gentile nations (Deuteronomy 29:9-15); this expansion was prefigured in the provisions already made under the Mosaic covenant for the stranger and sojourner to join themselves to the Children of Israel (Leviticus 17:8-13, 22:18). In fact, strangers and sojourners from the Gentile nations were already present at Sinai on that day to hear Moses' speech to the Israelites. Towards the end of Moses' life (Circa 1451 BC), God promised to send the Israelites another Prophet like Moses from among their brethren—i.e., Jesus Christ, Jewish Messiah—whose Gospel message would be preached to the whole world! (Deuteronomy 18:18)

#### **4. The Davidic Covenant:** (Circa 1048? BC)

This was God's covenant promise to King David (from the tribe of Benjamin/Judah), which was later extended to David's son, Solomon. The Davidic Covenant centred on the establishment of a Royal throne in the house of David, whose descendants would rule over Israel. It also deals with the establishment of a house for God to dwell in, i.e., the magnificent Temple built in Jerusalem by David's son, Solomon. The Davidic Covenant is therefore eternal, and messianic in its ultimate reference; it was embellished and confirmed in the writings of Isaiah prior to the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions (Circa 712 BC). The servant

of the Lord is described as a Covenant to the people. (Isaiah 42:6, 8; Psalm 89:3–4; 28–37; 132:11–18; 2 Samuel 7:12–17; 23:5)

### **5. Jeremiah's New Covenant: (Revealed Circa 606 BC, and fulfilled in AD 30)**

According to **his letter** (Jeremiah 29:10), which was sent to the exiles in Babylon, their captivity would last for 70 years, and then God would perform His 'good word' toward them. Jeremiah then wrote **a book** (Jeremiah 30–33) in similar vein, promising the people of Judah that 'after those days of captivity' God would institute a New Covenant to supersede the old Covenant of Law given during their Exodus from Egypt. This **New Covenant** would 'put His Law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; He will again be their God, and He will forgive their iniquity, and their sin, and remember it no more.'

All of these promises were kept at Passover (Pesach), and within the space of 50 days after the Feast of First Fruits on the day of Pentecost (Shavout) in AD 30.

### **6. FINALLY – the Messenger of the Covenant**

This Covenant would include the Gentiles. (Isaiah 42:1, 6; cf. Isaiah 49:8; 55:3–4; Daniel 9:27)

The Messiah is Himself the covenant because the blessings and provisions of God's covenant with the people of God are to such an extent bound up with the Messiah that He is Himself the embodiment of these blessings and of the presence of the Lord with His people which the covenant ensures.<sup>110</sup>

Further promises regarding the coming Messiah of Israel, and His birthplace, were given by Micah the prophet. (Micah 5:2) It was through the purposeful and progressive prophecies uttered by a number of God's prophetic servants that the Messenger of the New Covenant was foreseen and prepared for in Old Testament times.

## APPENDIX B

Major rulings issued by Persian kings concerned:

1. Building the Second Temple.
2. Restoring Jerusalem as capital.
3. Repairing the city walls.

### 1. Building the Second Temple was the focus of the decree made by Cyrus I (Cyrus the Great) in 538 BC. (Ezra 1:1-4)

Counting forward 490 years, from 538 BC when the decree was made, brings us to 48 BC. These dates are too early, and they are not historically appropriate for either the coming of the Messiah, or the conclusion of the Covenant period for the people of Judah and Jerusalem, nor for the establishment of the Spirit-filled Jewish Church. A later passage of scripture emphasises and summarises the multiple prophesies and commands issued regarding the Second Temple:

*So the elders of the Jews built, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they built and finished it, according to the **commandment of the God of Israel**, and according to the **command of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia**. Now the temple was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius. (Ezra 6:15)*

These three kings are named for the rebuilt Second Temple, because Cyrus commanded the building, Darius endorsed his command, and Artaxerxes arranged for additional adornments for the temple in 458 BC, 58 years after it was completed. Although these earthly rulers made decrees regarding the people of God and their institutions, the initiative always remained with the will and purposes of Almighty God.



The passage in Ezra illustrates the protracted time-frame during which the people of Judah were finally able to complete the building of the Second Temple. Although it was commenced in 537 BC it took 21 years to build so it was not completed until 516 BC, exactly *seventy years* after the Babylonians destroyed Solomon's Temple in 586 BC.

**2. The second decree restored Jerusalem as the capital of Judaea. It was made by Artaxerxes in his 7<sup>th</sup> year in 458 BC.**

Its principal focus was to restore Jerusalem as the capital of Judaea, and provide the returning exiles and their leaders with autonomous government as a reinstated Nation; the decree also gave Ezra the authority to re-establish the theocratic judicial Law of God in Judaea. This decree also included provisions to beautify the house of the Lord, fifty-eight years after the Temple was finished.

*Artaxerxes, king of kings, To Ezra the priest, a scribe of the Law of the God of heaven: Perfect peace, and so forth. I issue a decree that all those of the people of Israel and the priests and Levites in my realm, who volunteer to go up to Jerusalem, may go with you. And whereas you are being sent by the king and his seven counselors to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, with regard to the Law of your God which is in your hand. (Ezra 7:12-14)*

Following on, verses 15-24 relate to provisions and finance for the house of God, while Ezra was tasked with the job of selecting, training, and appointing young descendants from the house of Levi to serve in the Temple, because many of the older priests had died in captivity:

*And you Ezra, according to your God-given wisdom, set magistrates and judges who may judge all the people who are in the region beyond the River, all such as know the laws of your God; and teach those who do not know them. Whoever will not observe the law of your God and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily on him, whether it be death, or banishment, or confiscation of goods, or imprisonment. (Ezra 7:25-26)*

This is the only full and detailed command that was given in relation to the restoration of Jerusalem as capital of Judaea; it included the return and reinstatement of priests and Levites, and the appointment of leaders, magistrates and judges. (Ezra 7:12-26) It was initiated and activated eighty years after the first repatriation command was made by Cyrus the Great.

Ezra exercised this decree on Nisan 1, 458 BC. Counting forward for 490 years = AD 32.<sup>111</sup> This is a suitably appropriate date (+ or - one/two years), for the end of the *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks*. This date falls after the death of Jesus, and before the martyrdom of Stephen, which ended the exclusive period for the Jews and Jerusalem.

### **3. Permission to mend the walls of Jerusalem was granted to Nehemiah. It was issued in Artaxerxes 20<sup>th</sup> year in 444 BC.**

Nehemiah's request for permission to return to Jerusalem is contained in Nehemiah 2:1-10. Artaxerxes' released a second group of exiles in his 20<sup>th</sup> year when Nehemiah returned to the city – specifically to rebuild the walls and gates of Jerusalem – having heard of the sad state of affairs still existing there ninety-three years after the first exiles returned.

However, although it appears their return was instigated in the month of Nisan, it only states in Nehemiah 2:6 that he 'set a time' with the king who sent a military escort and letters with Nehemiah to ascertain safe passage and provide lumber for the gates. There is no indication that an actual 'decree' was made on a specific date in Nehemiah 2:7-8. Thus, it seems more likely that—after Nehemiah's conversation with the king—permission was given for him to rebuild the city's defences. The walls and gates were finished on Elul 25 (Nehemiah 6:15), and it took 52 days to complete the work: therefore the work must have started about Tammuz 3 (their 4<sup>th</sup> month) in 444 BC. Nehemiah subsequently became the Governor of Judaea for twelve years, from the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes (444 BC) until his 32<sup>nd</sup> year (i.e., 432 BC).

NOTE: Much has been made of the date Nisan 1, 444 BC, in relation to this 'permission' to mend the walls of Jerusalem by scholars who follow Dispensationalist teaching. Thus, in a book published in 1894, written by Sir Robert Anderson, called *The Coming Prince*, he postulates that 483 years (not 490) consisted of 360-day 'prophetic years,' (i.e., 173,880 solar days), which ran from Nisan 1, 444 BC to arrive exactly on Palm Sunday in Passover/Passion week AD 32 when Jesus rode into Jerusalem, and was feted as king.

He further postulates that after the 69<sup>th</sup> week (483 years) of the prophecy was fulfilled, there is a non-specific 'gap in time' for the Church Age to occur, and therefore Daniel's prophecy remains incomplete! This contrived result has been calculated from the platform of belief constructed by Dispensationalist teaching that states a further seven-year period (i.e., 2,520 days), is yet to be fulfilled—after the Church has been raptured—while unbelieving Jews and Gentiles suffer a seven-year tribulation to complete Daniel's *seventieth week*. This premise is based on AD 32 being the year of Christ's death, while Nehemiah's

permission in 444 BC is construed as the starting point (via a supposed 360-day year), which leaves the *seventieth week* in limbo.

Contrariwise, Daniel 26a states that **after** sixty-two weeks (the last quoted number in the passage) *Messiah shall be cut off*, which logically must occur during the *seventieth sabua* of Daniel's prophecy (i.e., the original  $7 + 62 = 69 \times 7 = 483$  years), so this rather destroys Anderson's position. In addition, Julian, Gregorian, and changes by Dionysius to Rome's historical calendars mean that day-dates beyond a certain historical point cannot be 'precisely' calculated.<sup>112 113</sup> Furthermore, it is believed that during Daniel's Babylonian era their lunar calendars were intercalated with an extra month every few years to coincide with the seasons (as Israel's calendar is still regularly adjusted), and that many names for months—used in Israel's calendar today—were of Babylonian origin. Using a 360-day 'lunar' year, does not agree with Babylonian practice when Daniel wrote his book. Obviously, in Anderson's interpretation, no connection is made between two important phrases regarding the cause and consequences of Messiah's finished work: [Brackets added]

*And after the [seven weeks and] sixty-two weeks  
Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; –  
AND –*

*But in the middle of the [seventieth] week He shall  
bring an end to sacrifice and offering. (Daniel  
9:26a, 27a)*

Instead, dispensational dogma attributes the second reference to the actions of a supposed anti-Christ, who cancels the offerings in a 'rebuilt' Jewish Temple! Since Anderson's calculation only goes as far as Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem at the beginning of His Passion Week, these two verses are given no relevance as to what Jesus accomplished in the Prophecy of Seventy Weeks as if those events did not occur, and were of no

account! God's promised covenant for the Jews was fulfilled by Messiah being 'cut off' in the 'middle' of Daniel's *seventieth sabua* (in AD 30), a few days after he rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. The New Covenant in the blood of Jesus Christ is in operation today, and no other covenant needs to be made!

Historical data and New Testament internal evidence support the fact that Jesus was probably born about 6 BC, (up to two years before Herod (37-4 BC) died.<sup>114</sup> Scripture states that Jesus was about 30 years of age when he began his ministry. (Luke 3:23) We also know that Herod's renovation and expansion of the Jerusalem Temple commenced in his eighteenth year, approx. 19 BC and it had been forty-six years in the building process at the time of Jesus' first Passover in Jerusalem. (John 2:20) This calculation puts the commencement of Jesus' ministry around AD 26/27, which makes his death no later than AD 30, depending on whether you ascribe one, two, or three years to his ministry. In spite of this internal evidence, Dispensationalist teachers still adhere to the 'Church age gap theory' and, like Anderson, choose 444 BC for Artaxerxes 'so-called' command because it aligns with their missing/delayed *seventieth week* of Daniel's prophecy.

However, if Daniel's *Prophecy of Seventy Weeks* actually covers 490 uninterrupted and intercalated Babylonian/Hebrew years, then counting forward from Nehemiah's permission (given by Artaxerxes in 444 BC) for another 490 years comes to AD 46/7 during Emperor Nero's persecution of Christians. This date is more than ten years too late for the coming of the Messiah to deliver the New Covenant to the Jews, and for the Gospel to be preached to the Gentiles for the first time.

~~~~~


APPENDIX C

Calendar dates used in this booklet:

The command to restore Jerusalem as judicial capital of Judaea was made by Artaxerxes in his 7th Year in **458 BC**.

The First 69 weeks (483 years) runs from:

The Command (to restore Jerusalem), made on 1st Nisan 458 BC
Until Messiah the Prince: 7 + 62 *weeks* = 483 years...AD 26/27

The Covenant Week (7 years) runs from:

Jesus Ministry began after 7 + 62 weeks...	AD 26/27
Messiah is <i>cut off</i> , confirming the Covenant...	AD 30
The Apostles preached exclusively to the Jews after Pentecost until Stephen's Martyrdom...	AD 34

This ends the New Covenant (seventieth week) period in Daniel's prophecy, and concludes the 490 years set aside exclusively for Messiah's mission and ministry to Daniel's people of Judah, and the holy city of Jerusalem.

The Aftermath:

Following Stephen's martyrdom in AD 34 (Acts 7), the Gospel was extended to the Gentiles by Philip the Evangelist (Acts 8), and the Apostle Peter preached to Gentiles gathered in the house of Cornelius. (Acts 10)

Saul/Paul was converted on the road to Damascus	AD 34-36
Herod Agrippa I began a severe persecution in	AD 41
James was beheaded by Herod Agrippa I in Judaea in	AD 42
The Apostles left Jerusalem about	AD 42
A mixed Church was established in Antioch by	AD 45
Nero's persecution of Christians began in	AD 64
Peter was crucified by Nero about	AD 64
Paul was martyred in Rome in	AD 64

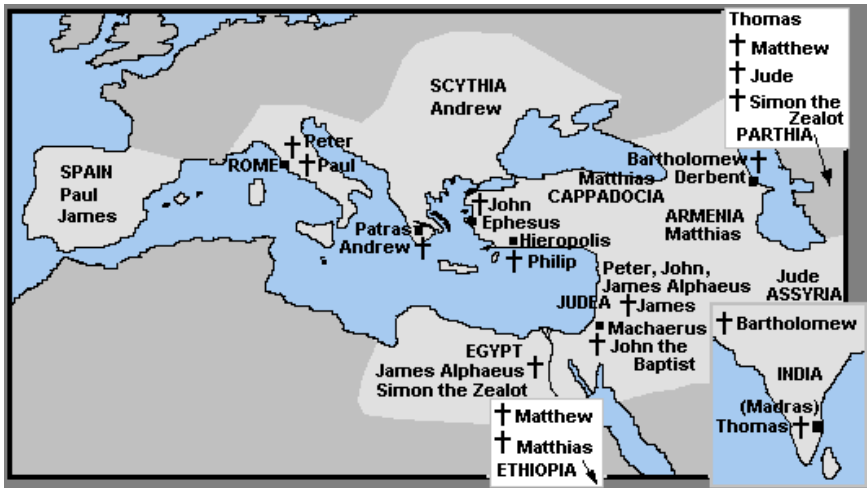
The Alternative Week (Days of vengeance) for disbelieving Jews and Jerusalem:

The First Great Jewish Revolt began in the fall of	AD 66
Vespasian's invasion of Galilee began in	AD 67
John wrote Revelation on Patmos about	AD 68
The siege of Jerusalem began on April 14,	AD 70
Jerusalem fell to the Romans August 29, (9 th Av)	AD 70
The Revolt ended in suicide at Masada in April	AD 73



Map – Traditional Locations Where the Apostles Preached and Died

Key: + - the traditional place(s) of death of the Apostles and John the Baptist
 Most of the locations where the Apostles preached and died come from various ancient traditions. Paul's travels are recorded in Acts.



<http://www.ccel.org/bible/phillips/CN500APOSTLES%20FATE.htm>

END NOTES

¹ KJV ref. ‘aprons’ (Strong’s Hebrew word No. 2290 – belt, sash, girdle).

² KJV ref. ‘coats’ (Strong’s Hebrew word No. 3801 – garment, robe, tunic).

Reading between the lines, we can deduce that Adam and Eve’s disobedience was of such a serious nature that a mere *apron*—made of decaying fig leaves, which they constructed themselves— could not right the wrong they had committed, or hide the consequences of their sin! God’s actions resulted in an innocent animal’s ‘life’ being taken to ensure that Adam and Eve were clothed provisionally!

³ Genesis 3:17–21. There may be some hint behind these verses of the divine origin of sacrifice. Either by some direct but unrecorded command or perhaps by some divinely inspired convictions wrought within Adam... to offer the life of an animal in sacrifice.

New Bible Commentary – Editors F. Davidson, A. M. Stibbs, and E. F. Kevan. Commentary on Genesis, Page 80.

⁴ *By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks. (Hebrews 11:4)* Both categories of offerings (i.e., from the flock, and from the fruit of the ground) were included in the sacrifices at the appointed Feasts, during the Tabernacle/Temple eras. (Cf. Exodus 20:22–26; 23:14–20)

⁵ *And according to the law almost all things are purified [cleansed] with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission (forgiveness). (Hebrews 9:22)*

⁶ Possibly, Cain could have bartered his produce for a lamb from Abel’s flock to comply with God’s requirements, but if (at that time) the relationship between the brothers was already fraught, it might not have seemed a viable option to Cain, or one that he wanted to pursue in case his brother refused him, or accused him of begging.

⁷ Genesis 4:6–7

⁸ Genesis 4:10–15

⁹ For a discussion on attributing the Exodus from Egypt to 15th Century BC, and entry into the Promised Land 1407–1406 BC see:

[What Is the Correct Timeframe for the Exodus and Conquest of the Promised | ArmstrongInstitute.org](http://ArmstrongInstitute.org)

¹⁰ The Ark of the Covenant was also dangerous, and those who did not respect its power were killed by God.

[Who can touch the Ark of the Covenant? | Britannica](#)

¹¹ This pattern endured during the existence of the Temple, until—in the fullness of time—God sent His Son to offer His life to redeem His people, Galatians 4:3–7.

¹² ‘When Hoshea, the last king of Israel withheld payment of tribute from Assyria at the instance (sic) of Egypt, he was imprisoned. After a three years’ siege, Samaria, his capital was stormed in 721 BC, and became the seat of government of the Assyrian province of Samaria.’
New Bible Dictionary – London Inter-varsity Fellowship. 1962. Editors J. D. Douglas, F. F. Bruce, R. V. G. Tasker, J. I. Packer, D. J. Wiseman. — The Kingdom of Israel, p. 582.

¹³ 2 Chronicles 36:7 and Daniel 1:1–7 indicates that only ‘...*some of the articles of the house of God*’ were ‘*carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god.*’ According to 2 Kings 24:13–17, some of the golden vessels that Solomon had made for the Temple and the king’s house, were cut up into pieces.

¹⁴ There are slight discrepancies in the Biblical dating of events regarding Nebuchadnezzar’s 1st year of rule, and the exact year of Babylon’s first invasion into Judaea. The third year of Jehoiakim (2 Chronicles 36:6–8; Daniel 1:1; Jeremiah 25:1) would place it as 606 BC. Cf. also 2 Kings 24:1 Certainly, the known period for the Babylonian’s presence in Palestine falls somewhere between 606–604 BC.

Nebuchadnezzar ascended the throne on 7 September 605 BC, and it is believed King Jehoiakim and Daniel were taken to Babylon in 604 BC (2 Chron. 36:6–7). For a discussion... [1989-3-02.pdf \(andrews.edu\)](#)

¹⁵ 2 Kings 25:1–21; 2 Chronicles 36:11–21; Jeremiah 27:9–13; 52:1–30.

¹⁶ 2 Chronicles 36:7–10; 2 Kings 24:13–14. Although some of the sacred vessels taken from the Temple by the Babylonians were eventually returned to Jerusalem following the decree of Persian king, Cyrus (See Ezra 6:3–5), there is no record proving that the Ark of the Covenant was among the treasures returned. Tradition states that Jeremiah hid the Ark of the Covenant prior to the Babylonian invasion, but Christian Ethiopian priests believe the Ark is in their chapel at Aksum, supposedly gifted to Menelik I, first Emperor of Ethiopia, the son of Solomon and Makeda the Queen of Sheba. <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/people-places/ark-covenant-200712.html>

However, it is also possible that the Ark and sacred vessels/*treasures* were stolen by King Shishak of Egypt during an earlier invasion as a result of apostasy under the reign of Rehoboam, son of Solomon (cf. 1 Kings, 14:25–26; 2 Chronicles 12:1–9). On this occasion we are told that Shishak ‘*took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king’s house; he took away everything.*’

¹⁷ Jeremiah 34:8–21

¹⁸ Some scholars think the ‘seventy’ number relates to the number of Sabbaths that were not kept during a period of 490 years! Each year of servitude and exile meant the land enjoyed the missing Sabbaths. See p. 61.

However, as history has since disclosed, the period of seventy years (forecast by Jeremiah for the duration of their exile) can actually be applied to two different time-frames, while the people of Judah remained in Babylon: The first time-frame began in 606 BC, when Babylon made Judaea a vassal kingdom (2 Kings 24:1), and the first group of Jews taken were expected to suffer *seventy years of servitude* to the King of Babylon (according to Jeremiah 25:11–12); but 67 years later, in 539 BC, Cyrus made his proclamation to free them.

The second time-frame (of exactly 70 years) began in 586 BC when the city and Solomon’s Temple were destroyed, followed by *seventy years for the desolation of Jerusalem* (Daniel 9:2), until the Second Temple was completed in 516 BC. These two scenarios overlap one another!

Cyrus, and later Persian kings, gave several opportunities for groups of captives to return to Judaea before they had served *seventy years*, so rather than apply this time period to the duration of their exile, it should probably be applied to the *desolations of Jerusalem* (caused by the absence of the Temple and its rituals) during that period. There is also a connection between Daniel’s words—referring to the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem during his era—and Jesus’ dire words of warning: ‘*Behold, your house is left unto you desolate...*’ (Matt. 23:38; Luke 13:35), regarding the future desolation of the Second Temple and Jerusalem, which would occur in AD 70.

¹⁹ Jeremiah 50 and 51 describe God’s judgment against Babylon via its sudden fall to the Medes, after Babylon had fulfilled its task of punishing Judah.

²⁰ Although much has been written about the supposedly **lost Ten Tribes of Israel** that were taken from their northern lands into Assyria, it should be remembered that Assyria itself was eventually overwhelmed and incorporated into the expanding Babylonian territory; it is therefore likely that many of the descendants of the northern ten tribes would have been living

in those same regions when the southern tribes' exiles arrived in Babylon. They did not all disappear or become lost! The captives from Judaea would have been integrated among the northern tribespeople already living there: hence, Daniel recognised in his prayer that '*the men of Judah... the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and all Israel*' were at fault, and therefore they all suffered '*shame of face*' for their sin (Daniel 9:6–9; 11–12). Daniel even harked back to their sin in the days of the Judges, before the single kingdom was established under kings Saul, David and Solomon. There is also Old Testament evidence stating that many faithful northern tribes' people had previously defected into Judaea when the single kingdom was divided (2 Chronicles 11:13–17), therefore the northern tribes' people were not all lost. In addition, there is evidence in the New Testament that devout Jews from the Twelve Tribes were either living in Jerusalem and Judaea on the Day of Pentecost, (or visiting from all around the Mediterranean) on that day when the early Church called *The Way*, was established, cf. Acts 2:5–11; Luke 2:36; James 1:1. Plus, Anna who was in the Temple at the time of Jesus' dedication was from the northern tribe of Asher.

²¹ Deuteronomy 11:29; Joshua 8:33; Judges 9:7

²² Daniel was one of three governors appointed by Darius over the 120 Satraps who ruled over the kingdom. (Daniel 6:1–3) There is an existing conical shaped monument in Susa, Iran, which is purported to be Daniel's tomb.

²³ There is some dispute over the 'person' of Darius, the Mede, who was made monarch over the realm of the Chaldeans. In Daniel 9:1 he is the son of Ahasuerus (a Mede); but some scholars believe he was either Gubaru (Cyrus' General), or Cyaxares II (son of Astyagas, and an uncle of Cyrus).

²⁴ Jeremiah 25:12 was written in 606 BC, even as Babylon was rising to power in the North. Thus Jeremiah foresaw that although Babylon would conquer Judaea and the surrounding nations, it would itself suffer in like manner.

²⁵ The text implies that the New Covenant would not be implemented until the people of Judah had been re-established in Judaea, their homeland. (Cf. Jeremiah 29:10; 31:23–28) In the context of the subject, the term '*after those days*' (Jeremiah 31:33) means **after their days of exile**.

²⁶ While in exile—because of the absence of the Temple and altar in Jerusalem—the people of Judah/Israel used the three-times-a-day opportunity (normally set aside for sacrifices and offerings) to instead, pray and study the Torah. (Cf. Daniel 6:10–13; Psalm 55:17)

²⁷ The number **seven** represents completeness/physical and spiritual perfection (as in creation, as a symbol of God's work), and it is the most sacred number for the Hebrew people.

²⁸ In the Christian calendar, Shavo'ut, is memorialised as Pentecost to mark the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples gathered in the upper room (Acts 2:1–16), as prophesied by the prophet Joel 2:28–32. On this day Israelites from all over the Roman Empire had gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Weeks/Shavo'ut. (Cf. Exodus 34 and Deuteronomy 16). The Gospel was miraculously preached and understood in their own tongue by thousands who converted to follow Jesus Christ.

²⁹ Many scholars believe that Israel's **50th year Jubilee** was the first year of the next cycle of seven *weeks* (i.e., 49 years). The Law required (when they first entered/returned to Judaea), that the years numbered 7, 14, 21, 28, 35, 42, and 49 would be set aside as a normal *week/sabua* (i.e., seventh year/*sabbath year of rest for the land*) when it was to be left fallow. Therefore, after the 49th year of rest, the next year would be the **50th year Jubilee** (being also year one of the next seven *weeks/sabua* 49 year cycle).

The passages in Leviticus and Numbers regarding the Jubilee are confusing (cf. Leviticus 25:8–22; Numbers 36:4), but the above explanation would account for year six (of the last *seven-year cycle* just prior to a Jubilee) bringing forth *produce enough for three years*. (Lev.25:21) Our understanding of this process is that the *eighth* and *ninth* years mentioned in Leviticus 25:22 are actually laid over the normal seven-year programme. Therefore, year six's harvest (just prior to Jubilee) would produce enough food for **year seven/normal sabbath rest for the land—plus year eight/Jubilee** (year one of the next cycle), until the harvest sowed in year eight produced in **year nine** (year two of the next *week/sabua* cycle). During the Sabbath/Jubilee years they could only glean what was produced by nature.

³⁰ Ezra 1:1–12; Malachi, a later prophet, confirmed that Messiah would have **His Temple** to come to when he wrote: *And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His Temple. (Malachi 3:1)*

³¹ Jesus informed His disciples that He had told them everything they needed to know about the future, during His Olivet discourse in Mark 13:23, *'But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.'* This was spoken in the context of what would happen after the tribulation when the sun, moon, stars and heavens would show disturbances. Cf. Matt. 24:29–31.

³² Daniel's **Prophecy of Seventy Weeks** is the only prophecy that provides a **timetable for the Parousia/Coming of the Jewish Messiah**, and it defines the six tasks required for the **New Covenant** to be fulfilled,

confirmed, and made operable for the people of Judah in Jerusalem. There is, therefore, an indisputable connection between these two important prophetic declarations.

³³ Ezra 1:1–4

³⁴ It means *‘To cut a covenant or make a covenant; a figure of the act of ceremonially cutting an animal into two parts, with an implication of serious consequences for not fulfilling the covenant.’*

There is no suggestion that the word ‘covenant’ relates to a peace treaty being instigated with Israel by the anti-Christ, which is then broken later on (as proposed in dispensationalist teaching)!

³⁵ Isaiah’s four recognised Servant Song Passages are: Isaiah 42:1–4; 49:1–6; 50:4–7; and 52:13–53:12. They were written about 740 BC, a century before Cyrus, the king of Persia, conquered Babylon. Although Judaism rejects the application of these ‘servant’ passages to Jesus Christ, and (instead) applies them to Israel, the New Testament clearly directs Isaiah’s words at the ministry of Jesus in Matthew 12:15–21. Jesus Himself claimed He was the anointed One described in Isaiah 61:1–2a, when He quoted Isaiah in Luke 4:16–19 at the beginning of His ministry. The passages relating to Isaiah’s ‘Servant’ certainly describe sufferings similar to those Jesus endured during His arraignment, trial, and crucifixion.

³⁶ The death of Jesus Christ as the sacrificial Lamb of God meant that He was the substitute sacrifice for the whole House of Israel (as well as the Gentile nations who were included in the New Covenant). This makes the New Covenant operational and available for all who believe Jesus Christ was Messiah/the Son of God, and accept Him as their Saviour.

³⁷ Christians celebrate the New Covenant via Holy Communion.

³⁸ In the early Church Christianity was sometimes called ‘The Way.’ See Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:22.

³⁹ *And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate. (Daniel 9:27b)*

Some commentators believe the *one who makes desolate* was the Roman General Titus, who supervised the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple.

⁴⁰ The physicist/mathematician, Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727), had interesting theories about Daniel’s prophecy, and his material has been translated and made publicly available at the Newton Project:
<http://w.w.w.newtonproject.ox.ac.uk/view/texts/normalized/THEM00204>

Interestingly, Newton applied the first seven *weeks* to the Second Coming of Messiah; thus, he anticipated a second rebuilding of Jerusalem in *troublesome times*, forty-nine years before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. (However, this calculation does not fit the two major Jewish historical events in the 20th and 21st Centuries: when Israel became a nation again, i.e., $1948 + 49 = 1997$; or when the Temple Mount in Jerusalem was reclaimed by Israel in $1967 + 49 = 2016$!)

Newton also took the command made by Artaxerxes in his 7th year as the starting point for Daniel's prophecy to rebuild Jerusalem, but he based his calculations on Olympian Periods.

N.B. Intensive efforts by many scholars to translate BC into accurate AD years usually allows for anomalies of + or – one or two years: depending on the calendar used, whether the non-year 0 was allowed for, and which month in the year the counting started from. Major changes were made to the Roman calendar by Julius Caesar in 46–45 BC and Pope Gregory in AD 1582, which brought us to our present annual/solar calendar of 364.25 days, which adds an extra day in Leap years.

An interesting investigation into the similarities of the lunar calendars used by the Babylonians and Israelites during that period (when a thirteenth month was inserted every two or three years to coincide with the seasons) can be found at <https://www.5loaves2fishes.net/artaxerxes-decree>. This site also uses Artaxerxes 7th year command (458/57 BC) as the starting point for the prophecy.

⁴¹ There is no known historical reason for the first period of seven weeks to be described separately from the following sixty-two weeks of the prophecy, other than the end of seven *weeks* (49 years) would mark the first **Jubilee** of their return. (Jubilee was to be celebrated only when they were in possession of their own land). The (basic) Second Temple would have been rebuilt by then, which would allow them to celebrate the Jubilee! Perhaps this emphasis on the first seven *weeks* Jubilee was deliberate, to remind them that their former failure to observe the Jubilee year, the release of Hebrew slaves, and resting the land in the Sabbath years, were the principal reasons for their exile in Babylon in the first place! They should not make the same mistake twice, especially as the first part of the prophecy was framed in a (forty-nine) Jubilee year segment, and the rest of the prophecy in multiple Sabbath (seven-year) segments!

Additionally, if the phrase even in troublesome times, only refers to the first seven weeks/forty-nine year period during their transition back to Judaea, then this is what could be expected for the aged Judaeans exiles (some of whom had experienced fifty-eight years of captivity), who travelled with

their younger Babylon-born relatives to a land that had no functioning infrastructure or local governance; largely because of the Babylonian army's devastatingly repetitive invasions. Thus, when almost 50,000 Jews returned to Judaea with their possessions under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua in 539 BC (Ezra 2:64–65), the neighbouring people-groups living in Samaria complained, and reported their (supposedly unauthorised) building endeavours to the Persian rulers (Ezra 4:1–24), which caused the work on the temple to cease. During this *troublesome time* period (16 years after their return), the elderly prophet Haggai delivered four exhortations in 520/21 BC urging them to stop pouring their effort and wealth into their own houses, and instead put God first by completing His temple! The break in the Temple work continued until king Darius' instigated a search through the Persian archives stored at Media, and uncovered the irrevocable decree made by Cyrus, which Darius then endorsed. (Ezra 6:1–12) The Temple was finally finished (after twenty-three years of work and stoppages) in 516 BC, **seventy years** after Solomon's Temple was destroyed in 586 BC. Subsequent to Darius' endorsement of Cyrus' decree, the taxes due to be paid by the Samaritan complainants to Persia, were henceforth to be given to Zerubbabel and company for their rebuilding needs; and in addition, the troublesome neighbours were to provide the priests with the materials and animals they needed for the daily sacrifices!

⁴² The Second Temple era lasted for 585 years (from 516 BC until AD 70). Beginning in 20/19 BC, Herod massively extended and beautified the temple complex. Work had been ongoing for 46 years at the time of Christ (i.e., AD 26/27). (John 2:20)

⁴³ [Nehemiah Has Jerusalem Walls Rebuilt \(bereanbibleheritage.org\)](http://bereanbibleheritage.org)

⁴⁴ There is considerable dissension about who the Darius mentioned by Daniel in chapter 6:1 really was—whether Darius the Mede, Darius I (Darius the Great), or some other ruler appointed to rule the province of Judaea. Others believe he was Gubaru (Cyrus' General), or Cyaxares II Son of Astyages, who was an uncle of Cyrus. In any case, we know that the rebuilt Temple was finished in 516 BC, twenty three years after the decree made by Cyrus in 539 BC.

⁴⁵ It is generally accepted that Ezra and Nehemiah were contemporaries. Nehemiah became the Governor of Judaea from 445–433 BC, and again during a later period. It is possible that Ezra was born in 480 BC, therefore he was only a young man in his early twenties when he took up the challenge offered to him by Artaxerxes I in 458 BC.

‘The delegated authority over the Jews of the satrapy (administrative area) “beyond the river” (Avarnahara), or west of the Euphrates River, was

entrusted to Ezra; for a Jew to disobey the Law he brought was to disobey “the law of the king.” [Ezra | Hebrew religious leader | Britannica](#)

⁴⁶ ‘The book [of Malachi] belongs to the first half of the 5th century BCE, for it clearly presupposes the reconstructed Temple (dedicated in 516 BCE) but does not reflect the reconstitution of the religious community that took place under Nehemiah and Ezra about 450 BCE.’

[The Book of Malachi | Summary & Facts Britannica](#)

⁴⁷ Thus, by dating the ‘Command’ from 458 BC, and adding seven, plus sixty two *weeks* of years (i.e., 483 years), we come to AD 26/27 when John the Baptist boldly proclaimed that Jesus was the Lamb of God. Jesus (who was six months younger than his cousin John) began His ministry at about 30 years of age, Luke 3:23. Furthermore, Luke 3:1 states that John the Baptist’s ministry began when Tiberius Caesar was in his fifteenth year.

Tiberius’ reign actually began in AD 12 when he was made co-emperor for two years with Augustus Caesar his step-father, who died in AD 14. ‘Thus, according to Suetonius, these ceremonies and the declaration of his "co-Princeps" took place in the year 12 AD, after Tiberius' return from Germania.’ Refer <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiberius#Heir-to-Augustus>

Since we know that Tiberius Caesar was made co-emperor in AD 12, we should add fifteen years to that date for John the Baptists’ ministry = AD 27.

The total seventy *weeks* (490 year period) for Daniel’s *people* and for their *holy city* in relation to the *New Covenant* started in 458 BC; Jesus began His ministry in AD 27; Messiah was ‘cut off’ (crucified) to confirm the *Covenant in the middle of the [final] week/sabua*, i.e., AD 30. During the remainder of the *[final] week/sabua* (of the 490 year period), the Gospel was preached exclusively to the Jews in Jerusalem on Pentecost and during the following 3–4 years. The whole 490 year period ended in AD 34, on the day Stephen preached to the Sanhedrin (Jewish leadership) before he was stoned to death. Because of the intense persecution that followed, the disciples were scattered abroad, and the Gospel was afterward preached to the Gentiles, from Spain to India and all around the Mediterranean (Cf. Acts 8:1–4).

⁴⁸ The phrase ‘*cut off*’ is Strong’s Hebrew word No. 3772 ‘*karat*’ and this implies the ‘cutting of the sacrificial animal’ to confirm a covenant. Jesus’ death made the covenant operable! Hebrews 9:15–16 argues that a testament (covenant or will) cannot be made operative without the death of the testator (the one who initiated it).

⁴⁹ Following His baptism and temptation, Jesus began the timetable to confirm the *covenant with many for one week* as the *anointed One*, when He

announced the *acceptable year of the Lord* (Luke 4:18–19), referring to the tenure of his earthly ministry, which possibly included a Sabbatical and/or Jubilee year (as some scholars have calculated). Other scholars think He made this announcement on the Day of Atonement, 29th October in AD 27 (i.e., Yom Kippur, 10 Tishrei, Hebrew year 3788).
<http://www.cgsf.org/dbeattie/calendar/?roman=27>

⁵⁰ The Hebrew word for ‘covenant’ is Strong’s word No. 1285 *‘brit’* translated as ‘covenant, treaty, compact, agreement; an association between two parties with various responsibilities, benefits, and penalties.’ The phrase ‘to cut a covenant’ means to ‘make a covenant’ and figures the act of ceremonially cutting an animal into two parts, with an implication of serious consequences for not fulfilling the covenant. This aspect of the ‘cutting a covenant’ is found in the phrase in Daniel 9:26 ‘*And after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.*’

The covenant mentioned in Daniel 9:27 is not a ‘peace agreement’ or a ‘treaty’ between Israel and a purported ‘anti-Christ’ as proposed in Dispensationalist eschatology!

⁵¹ *Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.’ (Mark 1:15)*

‘I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.’ (Luke 9:4)

‘If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.’ (Luke 19:42–44)

⁵² It could be noted here, regarding Jesus’ time of birth, that because this prophecy was written by Daniel (while living in Babylon, under Persian rulers), that its details may have also been known by the Magi (wise men from the east, i.e., from Persia). The Magi had a much better understanding of the imminent birth of a new Jewish king, than the Jews did at that time (Matt. 2:1–12). Jesus’ birth occurred prior to Herod’s death in 4 BC, so by the age of twelve He was already learning about his destiny via the scriptures. (Luke 2:49)

⁵³ Cf. Matthew 10:6 and 15:24, with Daniel 9:11, 20, 24a, 27a.

⁵⁴ **Jacob (Israel)** was the ancestral father of twelve sons and their descendants, who were released from slavery in Egypt, and led by Moses towards the Promised Land of Canaan; they were better known as the Twelve Tribes of Israel or Children of Israel. Thus, the reference to **Jacob** is inclusive of **both houses of Israel**, i.e., the ten Northern Tribes taken into exile by Assyria, and the two Southern Tribes taken by Babylon.

⁵⁵ *'I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah...'* (Jeremiah 31:31) It is notable that on several occasions Jeremiah refers to both houses of Jacob. (Jeremiah 30:3; 31:7, 27, 31; 32:30; 33:7; 50:19; 50:33 and 51:5). This would suggest that the House of Israel, exiled into Assyria in 721 BC, was not 'as lost' at the time of this prophecy in 597 BC, as modern scholars believe. Jeremiah clearly included both houses of Jacob in his prophetic statements regarding their restoration.

Certainly, if the Babylonian Empire 'swallowed up/conquered' the Assyrian territories during its expansion, then the 10 Northern Tribes living there would also have come under Babylonian control. It is highly likely, when Persia freed the foreign nationals who had been taken into captivity by Babylon, that many northern Israelite (exiles) were also emancipated and allowed to return to their homeland. The New Testament refers to people from all Twelve Tribes living in the Middle East during the 1st Century, e.g., Anna – Luke 2:36; and cf. Matt 19:28; James 1:1. Old Testament prophecies also indicate that Ephraim and Joseph (the people from the Northern Tribes) will have a part to play in the end-times. cf. Ezekiel 37:11–22; 48:1–8; Isaiah 11:10–13; Zechariah 9:9–13, 16; 10:6–8.

⁵⁶ The **anointing** can only be conferred on a **person**; thus, Jesus quoted Isaiah 61:1 at the beginning of His earthly ministry: '**The Spirit of the Lord god is upon me... The LORD has anointed me...**' (i.e., applying it to Himself). A limited degree of that anointing was glimpsed at His Baptism (Matt. 3:16–17), and on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mark 9:2–3), while His eternal glory (anointing) is portrayed in Revelation 1:13–16; 19:11–16.

Also, cf. John 20:17, Where Jesus said to Mary, '*Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father.*' It is believed that this conversation took place immediately after His resurrection before Jesus had presented Himself as the **Most Holy anointed One**, to His Father/God in the heavenly sanctuary.

Having done that, He was able to reappear to His disciples multiple times in His resurrection body (during the forty days before His ascension), when they were allowed to touch Him, e.g., Thomas in John 20:24–30.

⁵⁷ See also Isaiah 49:6–7; 61:8 referring to the future covenant and the work of the ‘Servant’ of God.

⁵⁸ *New Bible Commentary* – Editors F. Davidson, A. M. Stibbs, and E. F. Kevan. Commentary on Isaiah, Page 604.

⁵⁹ This title ‘The Son of Man’ was used regularly by Jesus when referring to Himself, and since there are thirty references to His use of this name in Matthew alone, plus more in the other Gospels, it would have to be regarded as Jesus’ preferred nom-de-plume for what He achieved via His act of salvation and redemption on mankind’s behalf. The name is also specific to Daniel 7:13 as a messianic title, and Jesus used ‘The Son of Man’ particularly when referring to His Second Coming in glory. He may also have chosen to use this name for ‘security reasons’ rather than claim He was the Son of God! Hence there is a balance between His humanity and divinity.

⁶⁰ The final week in Daniel’s Prophecy of Seventy Weeks should not be applied to some so-called ‘seven-year peace-treaty or covenant’ that is supposed to be made in the end time between Israel and a rumoured/imagined Antichrist (better spelled, anti-Christ, for its true meaning). Daniel’s prophecy concerns the Messiah, his work of salvation, and the repercussions for Israel after they rejected the Gospel message.

There is no evidence or reference in scripture that suggests that ‘Antichrist’ is an actual eschatological person! There are false Christs: Matt. 24:5, 23–24, 26; Mark 13:6, 21–22; Luke 21:8; and there is a ‘man of lawlessness’ or ‘lawless one’ in 2 Thess.2:3–12; but in 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; and 2 John 7, this word ‘Antichrist’ is used with reference to a rumour that such a person will appear! The context is that anti-Christ is an attitude of mind, i.e., ‘against Christ, or opposed to God’ or someone who ‘denies Christ,’ so John concludes that ‘many antichrists have come’ i.e., ‘He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son’ and that ‘deceivers are antichrists.’

⁶¹ The Covenant (for forgiveness of sin) had been promised exclusively via Daniel ‘for your people and for your holy city’ i.e., to the ‘lost sheep of the house of Israel (Cf. Daniel 9:24a with Matthew 10:5–7; 15:24) so for the duration of that ‘week’ (i.e., the seven year period, AD 27–34), God kept His promise to the Jewish nation. The message of salvation (ex. Isaiah 61:1–2a repeated in Luke 4:18–19) was presented by Jesus, during His ministry period on earth, and preached exclusively to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judaea by His disciples (after His death and resurrection), and via the Holy Spirit on and after the Day of Pentecost, until Stephen’s martyrdom.

⁶² For the repercussions due to befall the people of Judah, for their transgression in not keeping the Levitical covenant (Leviticus 1) during the Mosaic Law period, see Jeremiah 34:17–22.

⁶³ Cf. Luke 23:4, 14–15, 22, and John 18:38; 19:4, 6, re ‘find no fault in Him,’ and Matthew 27:25 re ‘His blood be on us, and on our children’ and John 11:49–52; 18:14 re ‘it was expedient that one man should die for the people.’ The requirement to identify with the ‘sacrifice’ is explained by Jesus as: ‘Whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God.’ Luke 12:8.

⁶⁴ The question of who is the principal subject in this prophecy, is a controversy caused by the *floating* pronouns used and underlined below. The pronouns have been much disputed by Dispensationalist vs Messianic scholars, i.e., *And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary... then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.* (Daniel 26b,27a) Dispensationalist scholars believe these underlined phrases refer to the person they call anti-Christ and that he is the principal subject!

Messianic scholars believe the whole prophecy focuses on the Messiah and His mission, (*And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off... Dan. 9:26a*), and that the floating or non-specific pronouns used afterward—underlined above—refer to the people (the Jews) and the prince who is to come (their Messiah) who was previously referred to as Messiah the Prince in the same prophecy in Daniel 9:25! (In both references the word used for Prince [Strong’s Hebrew word No. 5057 *nagid*] is translated as ruler (18 times) and prince (8 times.) The specific and undivided 490 years (*seventy weeks*) period, climaxed in the final New Covenant week (AD 27–34), which was wholly fulfilled and completed by Jesus and His disciples for the Jews and Jerusalem (Dan. 9:24a). Thus, the historical dates used in this examination of the prophecy—while they cannot be calculated beyond 1–2 years + or – with certainty—begin with Ezra’s restoration of Jerusalem as the legal/civil capital of Judaea, as commanded by Artaxerxes in 458/57 BC, and they end 490 years later when the seventieth week was completed in AD 34 after Stephen had preached the Gospel of Christ to the Jewish leadership, followed by his death on the same day, at their hands. For Messianic scholars, this prophecy is all about the Messiah, what he came to accomplish, and the repercussions arising from the Jews’ response to His ministry and work. These repercussions would flow on into the future for Jerusalem and its people, until the consummation of the Gospel age. Note: I have not found any Dispensationalist interpretations that give recognition to the exclusive nature of the New Covenant that Jesus facilitat-

ed for the people of Judah (i.e., the Jews), and specifically for Jerusalem in Jesus' day, or the fact that it was preached ONLY to the Jews, the lost sheep of the house of Israel, by Jesus and His disciples during the stipulated, and totally fulfilled *seventieth week*, between AD 27–34, which concluded the 490 solar years (i.e., 365.25 days per year) prophecy.

⁶⁵ Dispensationalist teaching states that (in this verse) the 'he' is Antichrist, and the 'covenant' is his so-called end time 'peace-treaty' with Israel that allows the Jews to rebuild a Temple in Jerusalem; which 'treaty' will be broken in the middle of a future seven-year tribulation for the Jews, after the Church has been raptured to heaven. Contrariwise, the Messianic view of this prophecy asserts that the pronouns used (i.e., until Messiah the Prince; Messiah shall be cut off; the prince who is to come; he shall confirm a covenant; he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering), all refer to Messiah, and what He achieved through his substitutionary sacrifice, resurrection, and ascension to heaven.

⁶⁶ To support dispensationalist teaching regarding a so-called Antichrist's covenant with Israel, the final week (7 years) has been separated from the previous 483 years of time earmarked for the prophecy to be fulfilled, and scholars have moved the final week to entail an imaginary super-tribulation period of trouble in the end time for the Jews in Israel.

⁶⁷ *New Bible Commentary* – Editors F. Davidson, A. M. Stibbs, and E. F. Kevan. Commentary on Romans, Page 957.

⁶⁸ In accordance with instructions in Leviticus: *Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month: on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land. And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family. (Leviticus 25:9–10)*

In this connection, Isaiah 61:1–2 closely describes what was supposed to happen in a Jubilee Year, i.e., *Preach the gospel to the poor, heal the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, restore sight to the blind, and set at liberty those who are oppressed.* The Jubilee Year was a year of freedom from normal functions, which was to be dedicated to the Lord; He would bless the land beforehand so it would provide for them for two or three years while it lay fallow.

⁶⁹ Jesus told His disciples: *Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans, But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Matt. 10:5b–6)*

Jesus answered, *I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* (Matt. 15:24)

Today salvation has come to this house, because he also [Zachaeus] is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. (Luke 19:9–10)

Thus, we have a three-fold endorsement that the salvation of the Jews was Messiah's sole priority during his time on earth! As promised, Messiah had come to *finish the transgression* of Judah (i.e., redeem them by paying the price for their sin), and restore them to fellowship with God. His disciples would therefore have to preach to the Jews in Jerusalem first.

However, after His resurrection Jesus widened his instructions to include the Gentile nations: *Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.* (Luke 24:46–47)

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

⁷⁰ Some scholars believe that Psalm 102:1–11 previews what the Jewish people eventually suffered during the Holocaust (1941–1945) near the end of their international exile (1948).

⁷¹ The unbelief of that generation is also noted in Matt. 13:58 and 17:20; Mark 6:6 and 16:14.

⁷² It should be noted that this future 'acclamation' for Messiah (when He returns in the end times), will have to be a (genuine and repentant) repeat of what the Jewish crowds enthusiastically cried out, when the One they hoped would be their Messiah and King entered Jerusalem at the beginning of His passion week, (cf. Luke 19:38, John 12:13, excerpt from Psalm 118:26). 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.'

⁷³ The destruction of the Holy Temple and the city's infrastructure in AD 70 eventually confirmed that this was so.

⁷⁴ *The Secrets of Golgotha* by Dr. E. L. Martin – ASK Publications, Alhambra Ca. 1988, Pages 86–87.

⁷⁵ The Apostle Paul was converted after Stephen's martyrdom, and Paul suffered his first arrest and imprisonment in AD 57. (Acts 21:32–24:27)

⁷⁶ *The Secrets of Golgotha* by Dr. E. L. Martin – ASK Publications, Alhambra Ca. 1988, Pages 19–24.

⁷⁷ Joshua 8:30–35 records that after the Israelites entered the land, he separated the people into two groups, half to stand by Mt. Gerazim, (Mount of blessing), and half by Mt. Ebal (Mount of cursing). He erected an altar on Mt. Ebal, (according to Moses’ commandment in Deuteronomy 11:29) and, in front of the Levites who bore the Ark of the Covenant, he read to all the men, women, and children assembled there ...*all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law.* Perhaps by building the altar on Mt. Ebal—and by offering sacrifices there—it was hoped that *the seven times curse* and its repercussions described in Leviticus 26:14–39 would be annulled?

A later story in Judges 9:7–57 tells how Jotham, youngest son of Jerubbaal, appealed to God and the people for justice for the murder of his father and family before Mt. Gerazim, (Mount of blessing). Although it took some time, justice was eventually dealt to Abimelech for the wickedness he had done.

⁷⁸ Fifty years after Jerusalem was destroyed, Hadrian (Roman Emperor, AD 117–138) resolved to stamp the Jews and their religion out of existence. He sold all Jewish prisoners into slavery, forbade the teaching of the Torah, renamed the province Syria Palaestina, and changed Jerusalem’s name to Aelia Capitolina... Synagogues were replaced with Roman temples. More painful was his edict barring Jews from so much as looking upon their fallen capital. Many prominent rabbis violated this edict and martyred themselves in the process. Hadrian’s efforts had a lasting effect: the Jews would not regain control of their ancestral homeland for over 1,800 years.
What was Hadrian’s relationship with his Jewish subjects? | Britannica

⁷⁹ <https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/gessius-florusdeg>

⁸⁰ <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-great-revolt-66-70-ce>
Cf. also <https://www.ancient.eu/article/823/the-great-jewish-revolt-of-66-ce/>

⁸¹ [The Destruction of the Second Temple \(jewishhistory.org\)](http://www.jewishhistory.org/the-destruction-of-the-second-temple/)

⁸² [First Jewish Revolt | History & Facts | Britannica](http://www.britannica.com/event/Siege-of-Jerusalem-70)

⁸³

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/maps/primary/josephussack.html>

⁸⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/event/Siege-of-Jerusalem-70>

⁸⁵ [www.Historynet.com](http://www.historynet.com)

⁸⁶ [Siege of Jerusalem | Facts & Summary | Britannica](#)

⁸⁷ <http://www.templemount.org/TMTRS.html>

⁸⁸ First Jewish-Roman War – www.historynet.com

⁸⁹ It should be noted that the present-day Muslim/Islamic ‘Dome of the Rock’ that was completed around AD 691, which was supposedly built on the purported Temple site, was actually erected on top of the ruined foundations from an earlier Byzantine Church, sited on the Roman Garrison platform. *The Temples Jerusalem Forgot* by Dr. E. L. Martin—ASK Publications, Alhambra Ca. 1994.

The true Biblical location for the Holy Temple was on the Ophel mound, just to the north of the original Mt.Zion, on the southeast ridge, over the area of the Gihon Spring.(Cf. 1 Kings 1:33–45; 2 Chron. 27:3; 32:5, 30; 33:14) <https://www.askelm.com/TempBook/Temples000.pdf>

⁹⁰ It is widely accepted that the remainder of this prophecy, i.e., Daniel 11:36–45 may refer to a future King of the North (of a similar nature to Antiochus), who invades the Glorious Land (Israel) and surrounding countries in the end time, and he dies there after a great battle with an opposing force.

⁹¹ [Antiochus IV Epiphanes - New World Encyclopedia](#)

⁹² Extracted from the New Bible Dictionary about the Maccabees: The original abomination was perpetrated by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a Seleucid Green ruler (175–164 BC), described as “mad, bad, and dangerous” who in 169 BC (Cf. Daniel 8:11 and 11:31–33), visited Jerusalem and insisted on entering the Holy of Holies, from whence he carried off some of the gold and silver vessels. Pressure from [Greek] Egypt caused him to try to Hellenize the Judeans. He subsequently stopped the Temple sacrifices and erected a Greek altar on the site of the old one on 25 December 167 BC. He then instituted a religious persecution disallowing Sabbath-keeping and circumcision, while subjecting the law-loving Jews to every degradation and brutality.

In retaliation for those events the Jewish populace were roused by the Hasmonean family (Grk. Maccabees), led by Judas ben Mattathias and his five sons, John, Simon, Judas, Eleazar and Jonathan, who conducted a prolonged guerrilla war from the mountains until they won a victory three years later.

Distracted by a larger war with the Parthians, the Greeks had no option but to make peace with Judas and withdrew the abominable decrees in 165 BC, after which the Temple was cleansed and the worship of God was restored. (This great victory is still celebrated in the Jewish festival Hanukah.) Sub-

sequently, by 104 BC, the Jewish realm was at its greatest extent since the time of Solomon.

However, during the next four decades, although bouts of jealousy and periods of intrigue among the succeeding rulers of Judaea and surrounding areas were followed by times of peace and prosperity, eventually the strength of the Jewish state was eroded away. This allowed the conquest of Palestine by Pompey of Rome in 63 BC, when all of Judaea fell under the yoke of the heathen once more. This eventually led to the Roman Senate appointing Herod the Great, King of the Jews who ruled over Judaea from 37 BC until 3 BC.

New Bible Dictionary – London Inter-varsity Fellowship. 1962. Editors J. D. Douglas, F. F. Bruce, R. V. G. Tasker, J. I. Packer, D. J. Wiseman.

⁹³ *Antiquities of the Jews (XII.5.4)*.

⁹⁴ In Daniel 8:14 the length of time that the Temple would suffer the absence of the daily sacrifices and the presence of the transgression of desolation, is given as 2,300 days, but two words are used here, (Strong’s Hebrew words No. 1242 + 6153— **Boqer** and **Ereb**) meaning evening and morning, so the actual time period is 1,150, 24-hour days = 3.14 solar years. Elsewhere in Daniel the word used for day is (Strong’s Hebrew word No. 3117 **Yom**), meaning a 24-hour day.

⁹⁵ During several millennia BC, Judaea and Jerusalem suffered invasions by Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Macedonian, Egyptian, Seleucid/Grecian, and Roman armies! There were many more to come AD, led by Byzantine Emperors, Muslim Caliphs, Catholic Crusaders, and Ottoman armies that were driven out by the British during WWI.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_Jerusalem#Hellenistic_period

⁹⁶ The interpolation of the words (let the reader understand) is an indication that the Roman siege of Jerusalem had not yet happened. It is believed that Mark’s Gospel was written for Gentiles, between AD 40–75, with some favouring AD 50–55 as a position midway between extremes. The principal source of this Gospel is the preaching and teaching of Peter. *New Bible Commentary* – London Inter-varsity Fellowship, 1961. Editors F. Davidson, A. M. Stibbs, and E. F. Kevan. Commentary on Mark, Page 806.

Scholars believe that Mark was the first written record of the Gospel, and that its substance was widely used in Matthew’s record that—in its present form—existed in the second half of the first century. Matthew was specifically written for Hebrew Christians living in Palestine who constituted the earliest Christian communities. However, the Gospel of Matthew was eventually placed first among the four because it forms a connecting link with the Old Testament.

New Bible Commentary – London Inter-varsity Fellowship, 1961. Editors F. Davidson, A. M. Stibbs, and E. F. Kevan. Commentary on Matthew, Page 771.

⁹⁷ <https://www.cambridge.org/roman-sacrifice>

⁹⁸ Quote from Wikipedia: The religious ceremony marking the start of a new month was held on the Mount of Olives in the days of the Second Temple. After the destruction of the Second Temple, Jews celebrated the festival of Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles/Feast of Ingathering) on the Mount of Olives. They made pilgrimages to the Mount of Olives because it was 80 meters higher than the Temple Mount and offered a panoramic view of the Temple site. It became a traditional place for lamenting the Temple’s destruction, on Tisha B’ Av.’ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives

⁹⁹ <https://www.bible-history.com/archaeology/rome/2-roman-eagle-bb.html>

¹⁰⁰ [Legio X Fretensis - Wikipedia](#)

¹⁰¹ This site may have been understood by Jesus’ disciples to be the Holy Place, where many incidents occurred during the Ministry of Jesus; it was from there that He ascended into heaven, and it is to the Mount of Olives that He is expected to return. See quote from Wikipedia... ‘From Biblical times until the present, Jews have been buried on the Mount of Olives. The necropolis on the southern ridge, the location of the modern village of Silwan, was the burial place of Jerusalem’s most important citizens in the period of the Biblical kings. The Mount of Olives has been a ‘site’ of Christian worship since ancient times and is today a major site of pilgrimage for Catholics, the Eastern Orthodox, and Protestants. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives

¹⁰² https://www.land-of-the-bible.com/Aelia_Capitolina

¹⁰³ ‘The Bar Kochba Revolt (132–136 CE) was the third and final war between the Jewish people and the Roman Empire... In its initial stages, the revolt was surprisingly successful and may have resulted in the destruction of an entire Roman legion. It is possible that the rebels regained control of the city of Jerusalem, and they must have held large portions of ancient Judea. The Romans, however, regrouped and adopted a scorched-earth strategy that ultimately extirpated the rebels and laid waste to the country. The war shattered Judean society and led to far-reaching demographic and political changes, with the majority of the Jewish population of the province killed, enslaved, or exiled, and their national hopes definitively crushed. The Jewish people would not regain their political independence until the Zionist era and the establishment of

the State of Israel in 1948 CE...

From the little that can be gleaned, a general picture of Bar Kochba emerges of a charismatic, physically courageous, somewhat brutal, and at times tyrannical leader who led his followers and perhaps himself to believe that he was a messianic king born to free his people. His failure to do precisely this led to horrendous consequences for the Jews and his later excoriation as a false messiah.' [https://www.worldhistory.org/The Bar-Kochba Revolt](https://www.worldhistory.org/The_Bar-Kochba_Revolt)

¹⁰⁴ First Jewish-Roman War – www.Historynet.com

¹⁰⁵ <https://neohistoricism.net/2020/06/16/patriarch-sophronius-of-jerusalem-on-the-abomination-of-desolation/>

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.thetower.org/article/remembering-hadrian-destroyer-of-the-jews/>

¹⁰⁷ *New Bible Dictionary* – London Inter-varsity Fellowship. 1962. Editors J. D. Douglas, F. F. Bruce, R. V. G. Tasker, J. I. Packer, D. J. Wiseman. — COVENANT – p. 265

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid* – The Abrahamic Covenant p. 265

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid* – The Mosaic Covenant p. 266

¹¹⁰ *Ibid* – The Davidic Covenant p. 266

¹¹¹ Note: there is no year zero! 1 BC/AD 1 are the same year in chronological calculations dividing the two eras.

¹¹² <https://www.ancient.eu/article/1041/the-origin-and-history-of-the-bcece-dating-system/>

¹¹³ Possibly the most accurate dating of Jesus' birth has been calculated using planetarium evidence, as presented in *The Star that Astonished the World* by Dr. E. L. Martin – Academy for Scriptural; 2 edition (August 1, 1991). An audio of the book can be located at <http://www.askelm.com/star/index.asp>

¹¹⁴ [Herod - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)

For a comprehensive argument about dating Herod's rule, see: [The First Year of Herod the Great's Reign - Associates for Biblical Research \(biblearchaeology.org\)](#)