

THE SIX TIME PROPHECIES IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL

By Barry C. Hodson

www.bibletruthrestored.org

THE SIX TIME PROPHECIES IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL

As one reads through the Bible, it soon becomes evident that the purposes of God are governed by set times and seasons. They do not happen randomly by chance and coincidence. “To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven” Ecc. 3:1.

God doesn’t always reveal the specific time that His purpose involves, but sometimes He does, and this is particularly evident in the book of Daniel where 6 specific time periods are given. They are: 1260 days, 1290 days, 1335 days, 2300 days, 2520 days, 490 years. We will look at them in that order, starting with the 1260 days.

THE 1260 DAYS

This period is referred to twice in the book of Daniel. In chapter 7:25 it is referred to as “a time, and times and the dividing of time.” And in chapter 12:7 it is referred to as “a time, times and an half.” Rev. 13:5 runs parallel with these verses and informs us that the period referred to is “forty two months.” And, according to Rev. 11:2-3, 42 months in prophetic reckoning is 1260 days. So then, a “time” is 12 months or 360 days; a “times” is 24 months or 720 days, and a “dividing of time” is “an half a time” which is 6 months or 180 days, making a total of 1260 days which is 3½ years.

Now, the question is: Why is this particular time period revealed? What does it involve? Well, according to Dan. 7 it will be during this period of 3½ years that a “beast” will make war with God’s people until the coming of the “Ancient of days.”

In Bible prophecy a “beast” is usually used as a metaphor to symbolize an anti-Israel Gentile nation. (See Dan. chapter 7 and 8). And it is generally accepted that the coming of the “Ancient of days” at the end of the 1260 days, refers to the second coming of Christ, at which time the Battle of Armageddon will take place, during which he will enter into judgement with the enemy, deliver his people from the oppressor and set up his kingdom. The context of the reference to the 1260 days in Dan. 12:7 confirms this. The latter part of chapter 11 which leads into chapter 12 refers to Gentile powers coming from the north in the end time to invade Israel (referred to as “the glorious land”). The invasion results in many Jews being “overthrown.” Chapter 12 goes on to say that the invasion and occupation by the enemy will involve a period of 1260 days, and that the purpose of it is to “shatter” i.e. break the power of the nation

of Israel prior to Divine intervention. Israel's confidence and trust in her own military might and power will be shattered and she will be humbled in preparation for the coming of her Messiah, whose might and power alone can deliver her. This humbling process is the reason why invasions occurred in the past. The end time beast will not only be anti-natural Israel (the nation of Israel), but also anti-spiritual Israel (the church). The reference to the 1260 days in Rev. 13:5-6 refers to him opening his mouth in blasphemy against God and making war against the saints. He is clearly anti-God and anti-church. He is so anti-church that he destroys Rome, the power centre of the Roman Catholic church which is referred to as a "harlot" in Rev. 17. He destroys the city within an hour by fire (Rev. 17). There is only one kind of fire that could destroy a city the size of Rome within an hour, namely: nuclear!

WHO IS THE BEAST?

It is natural that this will raise the question: Who is the end time beast? A separate booklet under this title is available but brief comment should be made in relation to his identity. Fortunately Scripture provides the answer - we don't have to guess or assume. The answer is in Rev. 19:17-18 where reference is made to a call being made to the birds of prey to come to the supper provided by God, to eat the flesh of the beast and his allies who are going to be killed at the Battle of Armageddon by Christ at his coming. The marginal reference in most Bibles point out that this statement in Rev. 19:17-18 is quoting Ezk. 39:17 which refers to birds and animals eating the flesh of armies which invade the land of Israel in the latter years. The Spirit of God is telling us in this obvious parallelism of statements, that the beast and his allies being devoured by the birds in Rev. 19, are the same armies referred to in Ezk. 39.

Who then, are these armies? If we go back to Ezk. 39 we find that it is the sequel to Ezk. 38 and this gives us an important connection. Ezk. 38:2 refers to the leader of the invasion force as "Gog of the land of Magog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal." It is commonly believed that Rosh is the ancient name of Russia and that Magog, Meshech and Tubal were areas around the Black and Caspian seas, which is southern Russia today.

On this basis it is believed that the end time beast will be Russia and other Scriptures indicate that he will be accompanied and supported by anti-Israel Moslem nations. He is referred to as "The king of the north" in Dan. 11:40, and Ezk 38:15 says that he comes from the far parts of the north. "North" is to be understood in relation to the land of Israel which is always the geographical centre of Bible prophecy.

So then, to summarize: a coalition of anti-Israel armies will invade

the land of Israel in the end time and occupy it for 3½ years resulting in many Jews being overthrown, in order to shatter their power and break all confidence in the arm of the flesh, humbling them in preparation for the coming of their Messiah which will take place at the end of the 1260 days.

Ezk. 39:10, 23-24, 26 makes it clear that God allows Israel to be robbed and put to the sword due to sin and iniquity. But when the nation has been humbled and repents, she shall be restored and never made to suffer again.

Joel's prophecy also refers to a "northern army" (2:20) which invades Israel and devastates the land like plagues of unstoppable locusts, "the like of which has never been from of old, nor will ever be again through the years of all generations" (2:2). The occupation of the invading forces is referred to as "the years that the locusts have eaten." As we have seen elsewhere, 3½ years is the allotted time for the tribulation, referred to by Jesus as "great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." (Matt. 24:21). Reference is also made to it in Jer. 30:7: "Alas, for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it."

According to Joel 3:2-3 the invading nations divide up the land of Israel among themselves and scatter many of the Jews who survive the invasion, selling them as slaves to other countries. Zech. 14:2 says half of the population of the city of Jerusalem shall go forth into exile. And Ezk. 39:23-28 also refers to Jews being taken captive into the countries of their enemy as a result of the invasion by Gog and his confederates.

THE STARTING DATE OF THE 1260 DAYS

It seems clear from the prophecies concerning the 1260 days, that Jesus returns at the end of this period. So the starting date of this time period would be very significant if it was revealed, because the day of the second coming could then be calculated. The actual calendar date is not revealed and at the time of his earthly ministry Jesus said: "But of that day and that hour no man knows, no, not the angels in heaven neither the son, but only the Father." (Mk. 13:32). However, certain events have been revealed which will signal the countdown for the 1260 days, and when these events take place, those living in the end time will know the approximate time of the second coming. That is why the time period is given! For this reason the prophet Daniel was told that the prophecies would be sealed until the time of the end, and that many would investigate them, knowledge would be increased and the wise will understand (Dan. 12:4, 9-10).

Regarding the starting date of the 1260 days: Dan. 7:21-25 implies that it commences when the beast starts to make war against God's people. This would put the starting date at the beginning of the invasion of

Israel. As we have seen, Dan. 11:40 seems to confirm this, for it says that it will be at the time of the end that the power from the north will invade Israel. It is not difficult to read this to mean that the period designated “the time of the end” commences when the invasion takes place i.e. the invasion inaugurates the time of the end - the time of trouble such as has never been and never will be again.

However, Dan. 12:11 is even more specific concerning the starting time of the 1260 days. It reads: “And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1290 days.” Verse 12 goes on to say: “Blessed is he who waits and comes to the 1335 days.”

So then, Dan. 12:7 refers to the 1260 days; v11 refers to the 1290 days; and v12 refers to 1335 days. The starting date of the 1290 and 1335 days is the same, namely: when the daily sacrifice is taken away and the abomination of desolation is set up. In view of the fact that the 1260 days is clearly part of the developing sequence of these time periods, can there be any doubt that it shares the same starting date?

THE DAILY SACRIFICE

The “daily sacrifice” refers to animal sacrifices (lambs) that were offered each day by Israel’s priests upon the altar at Jerusalem on the temple mount in the precincts of the temple. One lamb was offered every morning and evening (Ex. 29:38-42). Israel’s law required this to be a continuing ritual that should never cease, so the priests would never voluntarily stop doing it themselves. For the daily sacrifice to be “taken away” would require force by someone who had no respect for Israel’s religion or God and His laws - someone who would change and overturn God’s appointments without fear.

As a result of the Babylonian invasion, the daily sacrifice was taken away in 587 B.C. for 70 years and it was stopped in 167 B.C. for 3½ years as a result of the invasion by Antiochus Epiphanes, the Greek ruler of Syria. (Josephus book one, chapter one, verse one of the section dealing with the wars of the Jews). The Romans stopped the daily sacrifice when they sacked Jerusalem and destroyed the temple in A.D. 70, and it has so far ceased for around 1950 years. But the fact that Jesus did not return 1260 days after these events, indicates that none of them were the fulfilment of the 1260 days prophecy. And the fact that the Jews were exiled from their land by the Romans, and did not return and become a nation again until the twentieth century, is evidence that the 1260 days prophecy could not be fulfilled during that long period of nearly 20 centuries. And in spite of having returned, the Jewish temple has not been rebuilt and the daily sacrifice has not been reinstated yet. This means that

up to our present time (2017) the starting date for the 1260 days prophecy has not occurred and is impossible of fulfilment, making it impossible for the 1260 days to run its course. No wonder that all the projected dates for the return of Christ in the past have failed!

If the end time countdown of the 1260 days starts when the daily sacrifice is stopped, one does not need to be a rocket scientist to realize that the daily sacrifice will have to start again. And this obviously must happen before the invasion of Israel takes place.

So the implications of the 1260 days prophecy are:

1. The Jews had to return to their land prior to the return of Jesus.
2. They had to become a free independant nation. Ezk. 37:21-22.
3. They will incur antagonism and hatred from other nations resulting in an invasion.
4. They had to re-possess Jerusalem and make it their capital city as in Biblical times.
5. They had to reclaim Mt Moriah, the temple mount in Jerusalem, and rebuild the Jewish temple.
6. Jewish priests will have to be known, recognized and acknowleged.
7. An altar will have to be erected, upon which the daily sacrifice will be offered.

In spite of people in past centuries claiming that the Jews would never return to their land again, and never become a nation or repossess Jerusalem again, time has proved them to be wrong. And in spite of people claiming today that the Jews will never rebuild their temple and reinstate the daily sacrifice, time will also prove them wrong, for the sure Word of prophecy declares that such events must take place as a prelude or precursor to the second coming of Christ.

We are not told how long the sacrifices will continue from the time they are reinstated, but it is clear that the enemy will invade, stop the sacrifices and terminate the priests' ministry for 3½ years and desecrate the temple as was done by Antiochus Epiphanes, who entered the temple and erected a pagan idol there, which was an abomination to God. Antiochus was a foreshadow of end time events!

History will repeat itself! Israel's past was a precursor or preview of the future. When the temple is built, the prophetic time clock will have done a complete revolution. The nation of Israel will be in much the same position that it was during New Testament times prior to the Roman invasion in 70 A.D. That is why Matt. 24 has a dual application.

SCRIPTURES RELATING TO END TIME TEMPLE AND SACRIFICES

There are a number of Scriptures which relate to an end time Jewish temple, priests and sacrifices. To start with, we read in 2 Thes. 2 that one of the last signs of Christ's return will be a man of sin who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. Being a "man of sin" he is the full embodiment and sum total of sin - sin in its fullest manifestation. Sin will reach its crescendo in this man. He repudiates religion. He is clearly anti-theistic (an atheist). His demand to be worshipped is mentioned in the book of Revelation where reference is made to people being compelled to worship the beast, who blasphemes God. The man of sin is clearly the end time beast, whose anti-God philosophy and policy, and anti-Christian demands cause many Christians to fall away from their faith as predicted in 2 Thes. 2:1-4.

Dan. 7 says he has a big mouth - "a mouth speaking great things ... He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear down the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws, and they shall be given into his hand for a time, and times and the dividing of time. But the judgement shall sit ..."

Dan. 11:36 says he "shall do as he pleases and shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods." Then, in verse 45 we read that as a result of invading Israel, he will plant himself on the holy mountain, i.e. Mt Moriah, the temple mount, but shall come to his end with no one to help him. The following verses inform us that this is the time when there will be a time of trouble such as never was, and divine intervention takes place to bring it to an end.

The apostle Paul probably had in mind this prophecy about the enemy planting himself on the holy temple mount, when he referred to the man of sin sitting in the temple of God, listing it as one of the last signs of the second coming. He went on to say in 2 Thes. 2 that it would be at that time that Jesus would destroy the enemy with the brightness of his coming.

The "temple of God" in which the man of sin sits is clearly a Jewish temple on Mount Moriah, the temple mount at Jerusalem. This is the only physical temple referred to in Scripture as the temple of God.

It should be self evident that an anti-God man of sin would not be invited by the Jews to sit in the temple and neither would he do it with their consent. It would be a deliberate, blasphemous and offensive act, designed to mock God and desecrate the temple. It would be an abomination to God. Force will clearly be required to enter the temple and sit in it. And it will need more than one man to do it. A very powerful army or invasion force will be required to conquer Israel and occupy the land in order that the prophecy be fulfilled. As we have seen, various

prophecies teach this.

Some verses in Malachi's prophecy are relevant. For example, Mal. 4:1: "For, behold, the day comes that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble, and the day that comes shall burn them up ..." Also 3:1-3: "... and the Lord whom you seek shall suddenly come to His temple ... but who can survive the day of His coming ... for he is like a refiner's fire and like strong soap. And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and He shall purify the sons of Levi and refine them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness."

Reference in these verses to a temple and Levites (Jewish priests) at the time of the coming of Jesus implies the existence of a temple and priests at that time, as required by the 1260 days prophecy. It also reveals that the priests and their offerings will fall short of the level of righteousness required by the Lord, resulting in a purging process.

IRENÆUS

It is interesting to note that Irenaeus, a second century theologian who came immediately after the time of the apostles, understood "the temple of God" in 2 Thes. 2 to be at Jerusalem at the second coming. In Irenaeus' day, the temple had been destroyed by the Romans, but he expected it to be rebuilt. This is what he wrote: "And when this antichrist shall have devastated all things in the world, he will reign for three years and six months, and sit in the temple at Jerusalem; and then the Lord will come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him, into the lake of fire, but bringing in for the righteous the times of the kingdom."

NOT ONE STONE LEFT UPON ANOTHER

Some have objected to the rebuilding of a Jewish temple prior to the second coming on the basis of a statement made by Jesus, that not one stone of it would be left upon another that would not be thrown down (Matt. 24:1-2). This statement has caused some to conclude that the Jewish temple in Jesus' day built by Herod, was going to be completely destroyed by the Romans, not leaving one stone upon another, and would not be rebuilt.

But this is not necessarily the case. Even if Herod's temple was totally demolished in 70 A.D. not leaving one stone upon another, there is nothing in what Jesus said that suggests another temple could not be built at a later date. The same applies to the city of Jerusalem. Jesus is recorded in Lk. 19:41-44 as saying the city would be levelled to the ground, not leaving one stone upon another. But that did not mean the city could never

be rebuilt again. It has been rebuilt a number of times.

It should also be pointed out that there were two aspects to the temple. There was the temple proper - the inner central building consisting of a holy and most holy room. But in addition to this, there were massive enclosure walls that surrounded the inner sanctuary on all four sides, which contained many elaborate building complexes, consisting of hallways, priests' quarters, royal stoa, store rooms etc. And a careful study of the word "temple" reveals that it is not only used in relation to the inner sanctuary, but also to the whole complex of walls surrounding it.

There are actually two different Greek words translated "temple" in the New Testament. One of them is "heiron" and generally refers to the entire precincts of the temple. The other word is "naos" which generally denotes the inner sacred sanctuary, i.e. the temple proper. Significantly enough, the word "temple" in Matt. 24:1 in relation to which Jesus said one stone would not be left upon another, is "heiron" which usually refers to the entire precincts. This is why Matt. 24:1 does not merely refer to "the temple" but "the buildings of the temple."

Now, if Jesus only had in mind the central sanctuary when he said not one stone would be left upon another, then his prediction has been fulfilled because not a trace of that building remains today (above ground level). But his prediction encompassed the whole surrounding complex and it has not been fulfilled because there are over 10,000 Herodian and pre-Herodian stones still in place on top of each other in the four walls surrounding the temple mount. This indicates that the temple prophecy of one stone not being left upon another has not been fulfilled. There is no reason therefore why a Jewish temple cannot stand again before Christ's return. The partial destruction in 70 A.D. by the Romans was a token fulfillment - a type of a greater fulfillment to come. If the man of sin doesn't throw down every stone, the great earthquake that occurs at Christ's return will!

In his prophecy recorded in Matt. 24, Jesus does not only refer to the temple in verses 1-2. He also refers to it in v15 as "the holy place." He said: "When you therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand (stationed) in the holy place ..." In addition to Dan. 11:45 and 2 Thes. 2:4 we have in Matt. 24:15 a third reference to the enemy occupying the holy temple mount. According to Daniel's prophecy, this occupation of the enemy occurs at a time of trouble such as never was, and the statement of Jesus about the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place also occurs in the context of "great tribulation such as was not ..." v21. And, as already pointed out; the setting up of the abomination of desolation along with the taking away of the daily sacrifice is when the 1260, 1290 and 1335 days commence.

Jesus' reference to the enemy stationing himself in the holy place in

the context of end time events, indicates that he believed a Jewish temple would exist at that time, and that it would be among the last signs to occur of his second coming. Paul confirmed this in 2 Thes. 2.

THE TEMPLE IN JOEL'S PROPHECY

There are only three chapters in Joel's prophecy and a careful study of them reveals that they can all be related to the end time. The prophecy relates to a "northern army" (2:20) which invades the land of Israel like unstoppable plagues of locusts, devastating the land due to unacceptable attitudes of the people. This northern army equates with "the king of the north" in Dan. 11:40 - and Gog's army from "the north parts" in Ezk. 38 which invades Israel in "the latter days."

Joel 2:28-32 also refers to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit "before the great and terrible day of the Lord come." What happened on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts Ch. 2, was a precursive fulfilment of this.

However, in relation to our present subject, of particular interest is the reference in Joel's prophecy to an altar, temple and Jewish priests existing in the land of Israel, at the time of the northern invasion, which are all pre-conditions for the second coming (See Joel 1:9, 13, 16). Chapter 1:9 refers to offerings being "cut off," which calls to mind reference to the daily sacrifice being taken away in Daniel's prophecy.

Joel 3:5 refers to the invading forces taking God's silver and gold and carrying it away into their temples. (The Hebrew word translated "temples" means large public buildings such as palaces or temples). What else could God's silver and gold be than that which belonged to his temple? It is not difficult to imagine the anti-Israel Moslem allies of Gog stripping the Jewish temple of all of its valuable contents and transferring it to their Mosques as trophies of conquest.

REVELATION 11:1-2

Finally, there is one more significant passage of Scripture which refers to the end time 1260 days in connection with a temple and altar, and it is in Rev. 11:1-2: "And there was given to me a reed like a rod: and the angel stood saying, rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar and those who worship therein. But the court which is outside the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given to the Gentiles: and the holy city they shall tread under foot 42 months."

This prophecy not only refers to the holy city of Jerusalem existing in the end time but also a temple, altar and worshippers. Reference to the

“court of the Gentiles” indicates that it is a Jewish temple and altar and Jewish worshippers who worship there. The “court of the Gentiles” was a design feature of Jewish temples. Reference also to the holy city Jerusalem in connection with the temple, also indicates that it is a Jewish temple at Jerusalem.

The measuring rod given to John was not for measuring lengths in cubits for the purpose of building up a structure. No! It was for measuring the length of time during which the city, temple, altar and Jewish people will be trodden down, and it was 42 months. Elsewhere the “rod” is a symbol of chastisement and discipline.

This 42 months is a measured period of chastisement upon the Jewish nation, during which there shall be divine wrath upon them due to their moral and spiritual degeneration referred to in verse 8 where the city of Jerusalem is likened to Sodom and Egypt. Sodom was known for gross immorality such as homosexuality, and the Israeli government has legalised homosexuality, and there is widespread immorality, atheism and agnosticism in the land.

The court of the Gentiles, which is outside the temple, represents the Gentiles, i.e. non Jews. This court was not measured because the Gentiles were not going to be “trodden down” during this period. They were in fact, going to do the treading down.

”Tread under foot” is a significant description. It is beasts which trample underfoot, and within a few verses, reference is made to the beast (verse 7). This same beast relates to the period signified by the “feet” of the metallic image in Dan. 2, the prototype of which is referred to as a beast (he goat) in Dan. 8:10 who stamps with his feet.

REVELATION 11:2 IS A REVELATION OF LUKE 21:24

To those who compare Scripture with Scripture in order to let it interpret itself, there can be no doubt that in Rev. 11:2, Jesus is quoting a statement he made in a prophecy recorded in Lk. 21:24.

Lk. 21:24 reads: “Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

Rev. 11:2 tells us that the “holy city” (Jerusalem) shall be “trodden under foot by the Gentiles 42 months.”

These are obviously parallel statements and are practically identical in the Greek. Both teach that Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles. The only difference is that Lk. 21:24 does not give a specific time period during which the treading down takes place, but Rev. 11:2 does.

Lk. 21:24 says the period would be “until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled,” whereas Rev. 11:2 says it would be “42 months,” which was

originally expressed as “a time, times and half a time” in Daniel’s day.

Herein lies the revelation, demonstrating the true nature of the book which has appropriately been entitled “Revelation.” Jesus reveals here that “the times of the Gentiles” he has in mind is the short 3½ years end time period which leads up to his second coming. There have been a number of “times of the Gentiles” of different durations during Israel’s long history, during which Gentiles have conquered and occupied Israel, but the final climactic one will be 1260 days. And it is clear that there will be a Jewish temple and altar at Jerusalem at that time.

It is also noteworthy that Rev. 11:3 goes on to say that it will be during this 1260 days period that God will “give power” to His two witnesses enabling them to prophesy. Reference in the following verses to the mouth of these witnesses having power to command fire to consume their enemies, to cause rain to cease and turn water into blood and smite the earth with plagues, indicates that these men will be of the same spirit and calibre as Moses and Elijah who also performed such wonders by the power of God. “Elijah” means the power of God and interestingly enough, the period during which he caused the rain to be withheld was 3½ years (Jam. 5:17). The last verses in the last book in the Old Testament predicted that Elijah the prophet would be sent to Israel before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord to prepare their hearts. The prophet Joel, whose name is Elijah in reverse and means the same, actually enacted the end time Elijah ministry, calling for repentance and reform. He also prophesied that there would be an outpouring of the power of God before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.

THE FEASIBILITY OF A TEMPLE

We have seen that the building of a Jewish temple, setting up an altar and reinstatement of the daily sacrifice form an integral part of end time prophecy. All of Daniel’s end time prophecies depend on these events. Such prophecies obviously required the Jews to return to their land, become a nation again, repossess Jerusalem, build a temple, set up an altar and recommence offering up the daily sacrifice.

But, due to the fact that the Jews remained in exile for centuries with no sign of returning to their land, and their land ended up becoming part of the powerful Ottoman Turkish empire, many concluded the prophecies were being wrongly interpreted and this resulted in spiritualizing them all away.

However, as the saying goes: “The mills of God grind slowly but very surely.” During the second world war the Turks were driven out of Palestine, resulting in Britain being given a mandate over the land which led to the establishment of a Jewish homeland.

Initially there was not a great influx of Jews to the land. Many, especially in Europe were in business and affluent, and were not willing to leave their businesses and comfortable houses and access to schools, universities, hospitals etc. in exchange for a land that had been abused and neglected for centuries and lacked all modern conveniences. But the holocaust of the second world war changed that resulting in an influx of Jews returning to their land.

In 1948 they were declared to be a free independent nation, but Jordan occupied Jerusalem and other parts of the land. In spite of Bible prophecy clearly teaching that Israel would occupy Jerusalem in the end time, many couldn't see that it could happen and said it was impossible. But in the miracle six day war in June 1967, against overwhelming odds stacked against her, Israel repulsed the coalition of invading forces and re-occupied Jerusalem and the temple mount and attained more territory.

So then, most of the major events required to take place before a Jewish temple could be built have taken place. Who could possibly doubt that a temple will be built?! So strong is the sense of rebuilding, that historian Israel Eldad, as quoted in Time magazine said: "We are at the stage where David was when he liberated Jerusalem. From that time until the construction of the temple by Solomon, only one generation passed. So will it be with us."

Today the religious Jews are constantly pushing for the building of a temple and will not rest until it is built. It has been claimed that stones for the structure have already been cut, shaped and stockpiled, along with bronze pillars, enabling it to be erected very quickly once the way is made open. Temple vessels, instruments, furniture and priestly garments have also been made and are on display in Jerusalem. A report in the scientific magazine "Nature," claimed to have discovered a genetic marker which identifies Jewish priests - the Cohanim - and distinguishes them from other Jews. There will therefore be no problem finding Levites to minister as priests in the Jewish temple when it is built.

Piece by piece, the jigsaw of end time prophecy is fitting into place in preparation for the building of a Jewish temple, the return of Christ and the battle of Armageddon, and the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. Major obstacles stand in the way for the rebuild, but no more major than the obstacles that stood in the way of the Jews returning to their land and re-occupying Jerusalem.

In view of God's ability to rapidly change world events and turn them around, as in the first and second world wars and the six day war in June 1967, Israel could have her own temple any time soon. And no one knowing God's power and control of circumstances would dispute this.

If it involves the removal of the Moslem Mosque of Omar which sits on the temple site, it may cause international outrage and result in Israel

losing many friends. It would certainly infuriate the Moslem world and result in them declaring a holy war. But when these things come to pass, the people of God will certainly know that they are living at the time of the last lap of human history, which will usher in the blessed hope of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in great power and glory.

The words that Jesus spoke during his ministry on earth are very applicable to our generation: “Blessed are the eyes that see the things you see: For I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which you see and have not seen them, and to hear those things which you hear and have not heard them” (Lk. 10:23-24).

TWO DIFFERENT PERIODS OF 1260 DAYS

Before moving on from the 1260 days prophecy, it should be pointed out that there are in fact two separate and distinct periods of 1260 days that will occur in the end time. One of them, as we have seen, is the last 3½ years that leads up to the second coming, during which the beast will be in power. The other 3½ year period occurs prior to this, during which a “dragon” will exercise power over Israel. Reference is made to this in Rev. 12 where a woman with a crown of 12 stars symbolizes Israel, and an enemy symbolized by a dragon (crocodile) is depicted attacking her and threatening her existence for 1260 days.

In Bible symbology a dragon is used to signify Egypt (Ezk. 29:3). But the dragon in Rev. 12 is not alone. He is depicted with 10 horns which represent 10 confederate powers or nations who support him in his attack against Israel. In view of the fact that Egypt is a Moslem nation, those confederate with her will probably be anti-Israel Moslem nations.

But at the end of the 1260 days that they have power over Israel, Michael the angel intervenes and casts them out. The fact that Michael is an angel specifically appointed by God to watch over Israel (Dan. 12:1), indicates that the woman with 12 stars who Michael defends, is Israel.

It is possible that as a result of the Moslem threat being removed, that Israel will enter into the period of rest and peace described in Ezk. 38:11 which occurs prior to Gog’s invasion. And it may be that the Jewish temple will be built during that period, making the Moslem world angry especially if it involves the removal of their mosque.

According to Rev. 12, the dragon will be angry at being defeated and cast out by Michael. So, according to Rev. 13, the dragon gives his power to the beast i.e. he transfers his allegiance to the beast (Gog), and supports him because he is also anti-Israel and intends to invade and destroy Israel. For this reason, the beast is depicted with the 10 horns. They are the horns of the dragon transferred to the beast, for if the beast already had 10 horns of his own and the 10 horns of the dragon were transferred to him, he

would have 20 horns not 10.

That these 10 horns probably represent confederate Moslem nations, is indicated by the fact that Moslem nations such as Iran, Turkey, Libya and Ethiopia are mentioned in Ezk. 38:5-6 as confederates of Gog who support his invasion of Israel. And as we have seen, their invasion of Israel will be the second and final 1260 days of enemy occupation of Israel prior to the return of Jesus and the battle of Armageddon.

According to Rev. 17:11 the end time beast will be the 8th i.e. he will be the 8th major power to rule over Israel. The 8 powers can be listed as follows:

1. Egypt.
2. Assyria.
3. Babylon.
4. Persia.
5. Greece.
6. Rome.
7. The dragon (a Moslem confederacy led by Egypt).
8. The beast (Gog and his confederates).

Incidentally, although the dragon is the 7th “beast,” he is not referred to as a “beast” because he exists contemporary with the 8th and final beast and it would be misleading and confusing to refer to them both by the same title. The two end time invasions of Israel by the dragon and the beast call to mind the two invasions of Israel in the past by the Assyrians and Babylonians. The Assyrians were cast out as a result of intervention by an angel (probably Michael) who slew 185,000 in one night!

THE 1290 DAYS

It seems to be clear that the 1260 days in Dan. 12 commences with the king of the north invading Israel and taking away the daily sacrifice, and ends with the second coming of Jesus. It should be evident therefore that the 1290 and 1335 days, which come after the 1260 days, must involve events which take place after the second coming. Because these events are not specifically mentioned in the actual verses which refer to the 1290 and 1335 days, we have to go to other verses for information. We call this “comparing Scripture with Scripture,” referred to in 1 Cor. 2:13 as “comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”

The question that gave birth to the 1260, 1290 and 1335 days was: “How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?” Dan. 12:6. The word “wonders” means amazing, astonishing, astounding things, and relates to events referred to in the preceding verses. These events involve the invasion and occupation of Israel; the tribulation period; the divine intervention and destruction of the enemy and deliverance of Israel; the second coming, resurrection, judgement and inheritance of the kingdom of

God i.e. the inauguration of Christ's millennial reign.

So the question: "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" is a question as to how long will it be from the time the enemy invades Israel, to the time when inheritance in the kingdom takes place?

Three major sequences of events are involved:

1. The invasion and occupation of Israel.
2. The second coming, resurrection and judgement.
3. The setting up and establishing of the kingdom.

It is possible that the three time periods relate to these three major stages or series of events.

Matt. 23:29-31 says: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days (i.e. at the end of the 1260 days), shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light (not told for how long) and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the son of man (the "sign" could be the city of God descending, the brightness of which will be accentuated by the darkness into which the earth has been plunged): And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and shall gather together his elect from the four corners of the earth."

A series of quite dramatic events will clearly take place at the return of Christ. The earth will be plunged into darkness for an unknown period of time, causing men's hearts to fail them for fear. The "elect" i.e. those selected or chosen for eternal life, will be gathered up by the angels, which will involve the resurrection of those who had died (1 Thes. 4:13-18). Those who are gathered up by the angels will quite likely be taken into the city of God as it descends to the earth to meet and be united with Jesus, the bridegroom; and the marriage supper could take place there and then. This means they have been judged to be faithful and approved.

"Judgement" means a ruling or decision. Their judgement will be: "Well done you good and faithful servant ...". The angels who gather them up to meet the Lord will probably pronounce that judgement. If they have confessed their sins on a daily basis and are cleansed of all sin and forgiven, they will not need to be interrogated and cross examined as at a court trial in order to find reasons to accuse and condemn them. "There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1). Jn. 5:24 says they "shall not come into condemnation, but pass from death into life."

Others however who have lived according to the flesh and not the Spirit, who are referred to as goats not sheep, will not be gathered up by the angels - a separation will occur. They will be left upon the earth, and will experience the horrific judgements that will be poured out upon the

world.

Rev. 16 informs us that at the return of Christ, the battle of Armageddon will take place at which the beast and his allies will be defeated and destroyed. At that time an earthquake of unprecedented magnitude will convulse the whole earth, causing all the cities in all nations to collapse. Islands will disappear (sink into the ocean) and mountains will be levelled. Plagues will be poured out along with torrential rain, massive hailstones, fire and brimstone (Ezk. 38. Zech. 14).

Ps. 149:5-9 declares that the saints will be involved in the execution of vengeance upon the nations and punishments upon the peoples, binding rulers with chains. Even surviving Jews in Israel will be involved in the battle against the enemy (Zech. 14:14).

How long all these events will take and how long the earth will be left in its desolated state before the city of God descends to its resting place and Jesus sets up the throne of David to rule and reign, we are not told. God's judgements upon Egypt, which were a type of His end time judgements, didn't happen in one day!

Dan. 7:9-10 tells us that when the Ancient of days comes: "Thrones were placed, and the Ancient of days did sit ... a fiery stream issued and came forth before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgement was set, and the books were opened."

A judgement scene is clearly presented to us in these verses. It is a scene of Jesus sitting in judgement assisted by his millions of angelic attendants, judging millions of people who are standing to give account of themselves, many of whom will have been resurrected from the dead.

The fact that reference is made to a fiery stream issuing forth from the Lord's presence as he sits in judgement, suggests that those being judged are those who are destined for destruction (the goats). The beast is subjected to the same judgement for Dan. 7:11 goes on to say that he is given to the burning flame (lake of fire: Rev. 19:20) and destroyed. We are not told how long these processes of judgement will take, but they could fit into the 30 days between the 1260 and 1290 days.

Another event that will take place after Christ's return is referred to in Zech. 12. This chapter reveals that when Jesus destroys the invading forces at the battle of Armageddon, the Jewish remnant in the land will see the holes in his hands and feet made by the nails that nailed him to the cross. They will then realize that their Messiah who has come and delivered them is indeed Jesus whose crucifixion they instigated causing him to be "pierced" by the Romans, and they shall mourn for him with a profound mourning. All Jewish families will go aside to weep as one would weep at the death of an only child.

This also could take place during the 30 days between the 1260 and

1290 days. This then, brings us to the third prophetic time period in Dan. 12, namely:

THE 1335 DAYS

If Jesus returns on the 1260th day, and the resurrection, rapture, battle of Armageddon, judgement and other events mentioned are completed by the 1290th day; what takes place during the next 45 days (1½ months) leading up to the 1335th day? Dan. 12:12 says: “Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the 1335 days.”

The word “blessed” means happy or happiness. It could be translated: “O how happy is he who waits and comes to the 1335 days.” Would not the establishment of God’s kingdom on earth be an appropriate event to describe such happiness? In the words of Jesus recorded in Matt. 5:1-12: “Blessed (how happy) are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven ... Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth ... Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God ... Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

“Blessed is that servant” (who watches and waits for Jesus to come and is ready for him, and is made ruler over all his goods) (Matt. 24:42-47). “Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 25:34). “Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God” (Lk. 14:15). “Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection ... they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years” (Rev. 20:6).

In all of these statements where Jesus says “blessed,” he is referring to the time when the kingdom of God is established and the righteous inherit it as co-rulers with him. Significantly enough, the verse that follows the statement in Dan. 12:12 about those who wait and come to the 1335 days being “blessed,” says Daniel will stand in his lot at that time. This indicates that the saints will enter their inheritance and be established in their allotted place of rule in the kingdom on the 1335th day. If so, the 1335th day could be the official commencement of the millennium. This would suggest that the 45 days between the 1290 and 1335 days could be taken up with establishing divine authority and rule in all the communities around the world.

As Jesus taught and promised: his faithful followers will have authority to rule over all the cities (communities) of the world (Lk. 19:11-19). It will take time to achieve this. Dan. 7:26 says: “... they shall take away his (the beast’s world wide) dominion, to consume and destroy it unto (until) the end.” Those words: “until the end” indicate a period during which dominion over the nations is taken away from the beast’s world wide empire. Cp “unto the end” in Dan. 9:26 which refers to a

period of time needed by the Romans to subjugate the Jews.

That a period of time will be required to bring all nations into subjection to Christ's rule, is also indicated in Dan. 2 by the stone growing into a great mountain and filling the earth. It did not immediately become a great mountain and fill the earth. The transition from human government to divine will not happen overnight. It is a process, not an event. But the second coming itself is an event not a process.

According to Isa. 60:12 and Zech. 14:17-19 some nations may resist the divine rule that is being imposed upon them and refuse to comply, resulting in rain being withheld causing famine and plagues poured forth. Such events involve time.

Jews in exile around the world and particularly north of the land of Israel will all make an exodus back to their land by land and sea (Isa. 11:60. 66:19-20. Jer. 16:14-16. 23:7-8. Ezk. 20:33-34. Zech. 2:6). This also will involve time. The bones of Gog's invading armies have to be buried and will take 7 months (Ezk. 39). These and other events could take place during the period between the 1290th and 1335th day.

THE 2300 DAYS

The 2300 days prophetic time period is recorded in Dan. 8:14. It says: "Unto 2300 days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." But to appreciate the significance of this statement, we need to consider the preceding and succeeding verses. In verses 1-3 Daniel tells us he had a vision of a ram with 2 horns pushing westward, northward and southward, and it became very great. And verse 20 informs us that the ram with its 2 horns represented the Medo-Persian power.

Daniel then saw a he goat come from the west with great speed and force who smote the ram and cast him to the ground. This he goat had a notable horn (v5-7) and v21 informs us that the goat represented the king of Grecia, and the horn signified the first notable king. History records that this was Alexander the Great.

Daniel then saw the great horn of the goat broken, and 4 horns came up in its place towards the 4 points of the compass. Verse 22 informs us that these 4 horns represented 4 kingdoms that would develop out of Alexander's empire after his death. History confirms this prophecy telling us that as a result of Alexander's death, 4 of his generals divided his kingdom between them. And because Bible prophecy has Israel as its geographical centre, Daniel's prophecies are only concerned with the Greek kingdoms that came in contact with, and affected Israel. One of the generals was Seleucus Nicator and he occupied the countries north of Israel, i.e. Syria etc; and another general, Ptolemy Soter, occupied the countries south, i.e. Egypt etc. For this reason, only these two divisions

come within the scope of Bible prophecy.

With this in mind we go back to Dan. 8:9-12, which says that out of one of these dynasties “came forth a little horn, which grew great, toward the south ... toward the pleasant land (Israel) ... it cast down some of the stars (Israelites) to the ground and stamped on them ... and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the sanctuary (temple) was cast down ...”

The fact that this “little horn” grew great towards the south, towards the land of Israel, indicates he comes from the north of Israel and must belong to the kingdom of Seleucus. Who then was the Greek king from this kingdom who invaded Israel, cast down Israelites, took away the daily sacrifice and desecrated the temple? History clearly testifies that there was only one man in history from this Greek kingdom who fulfilled this, namely: Antiochus Epiphanes, a descendant of Seleucus, who ruled from 175 to 164 B.C.

Josephus and the book of Maccabees present a vivid account of how Antiochus invaded the city of Jerusalem and arrogantly entered the temple and took away the altar which caused the daily sacrifice to be taken away. He also took away the Menorah and all the holy utensils and committed murder and spoke with great arrogance. He was an extremely evil and vile man. He returned two years later with a large force and fell upon the city, plundering it and burning it with fire, and defiled the temple causing it to become “desolate as a desert.”

Now the question is asked in Dan. 8:13: “How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary (temple) and the host (Israel) to be trodden underfoot?” It is an enquiry into the period during which the daily sacrifice would be taken away and the temple and people trodden under foot.

The reply to the question was: “ ... Unto 2300 days; and then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” So then, Daniel was informed that at the end of a 2300 day period, the temple would be cleansed and restored. So the question is: Do the historical records say anything about this? Indeed they do! This is how the historical record reads:

“Then said Judas and his brothers (the Maccabeans), behold, our enemies are crushed, let us go up to cleanse the sanctuary and dedicate it! So all the army assembled and they went up to Mount Zion. And they saw the sanctuary desolate, the altar profaned, and the gates burned. In the courts they saw bushes sprung up as in a thicket. They also saw the chambers of the priests in ruins ... Judas chose blameless priests devoted to the law, and they cleansed the sanctuary and removed the defiled stones to an unclean place ... Then they took unhewn stones as the law directs, and built a new altar like the former one. They also rebuilt the sanctuary

and the interior of the temple and consecrated the courts ... Early in the morning on the 25th day of the 9th month, which is the month Chislev (December), in the 148th year (164 B.C), they rose and offered sacrifices as the law directs.”

Now the natural question to ask is: Did the cleansing of the sanctuary take place at the end of a particular 2300 day period? i.e. 6 years and 140 days (on the basis of a 360 day year).

Well, if the cleansing of the sanctuary by the Maccabees on the 25th December 164 B.C. was the fulfilment, the starting date must have been 2300 days prior to the 25th December 164 B.C. This would take us back to the 5th August 170 B.C. Did anything happen around this period of 170 B.C. that could be regarded as the starting date for the 2300 days?

According to Dan. 8:13 one of four things was required to be the starting point:

1. The taking away of the daily sacrifice.
2. The setting up of the transgression of desolation.
3. The casting down of the sanctuary.
4. The treading down of the Jewish army and people.

Unfortunately it is difficult to determine the exact date to the month and day when Antiochus began to attack and kill the Jews, but it is evident in the historical records that it started some years before he stopped the daily sacrifice and set up the desolating sacrilege. It appears to have been in the year 170 B.C. that Antiochus started to afflict the holy people, which is the year the starting date of the 2300 days would have to commence in order for it to culminate at the cleansing and dedication of the sanctuary on the 25th December 164 B.C.

Although an historical fulfilment of the 2300 days can be applied to the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, it is not difficult to see him as a prototype or forerunner of the end time man of sin, alias the beast, who, like Antiochus, is also referred to initially as a “little horn” in Dan. 7. The little horn of Dan. 8 (Antiochus) is an historical enactment of the future prophetic little horn of Dan. 7 who becomes the end time beast. The similarities are such that some have failed to make a distinction between them and regard them as one and the same power, namely, the end time beast. Although they are not the same power, it can be seen that the end time beast will be a revival of the historical king of the north, Antiochus Epiphanes, on a much larger scale.

Now, if the little horn in Dan. 8 was a prototype of the little horn in Dan. 7, it is possible that the prophecy of 2300 days could have an end time application. If so, it would not be surprising if it had the same starting date as the 1260, 1290 and 1335 days. If so, 2300 days extends 965 days (2 years 8 months and 5 days) beyond the last time period mentioned in Dan. 12, namely: the 1335 days.

The question is: Do the Scriptures mention anything that will take place after the return of Christ and the establishment of his kingdom that could compare with the rebuilding of a Jewish temple? They certainly do! A number of Scriptures teach that a temple will be built at Jerusalem to which the mortal population from all nations will come to worship the Lord during the millennium. See Isa. 2:2-3. Zech. 14:16

The size and shape of this temple is given in detail in the last 9 chapters of the book of Ezekiel. It will be around 1500m (1 mile) square. Isa. 60:10 and Zech 6:15 reveal that the nations will send materials and workmen to build the temple. And it could very well be that it will be built and ready for service on the 2300th day after the taking away of the daily sacrifice. As in the case of Solomon's temple, which was built after Solomon ascended his throne, and commenced his peaceful reign, so the millennial temple will be built after Jesus establishes his reign of righteousness and peace.

THE 2520 DAYS

The 5th prophetic time period mentioned in the book of Daniel is recorded in chapter 4. This chapter says that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had a vision of a large tree which grew high into the sky. In the vision the king saw an angel cut the tree down, but left the stump and roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and brass. The angel then gave a decree saying: "Let him be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth. Let his heart be changed from man's and let a beast's heart be given to him, and let 7 times pass over him."

The purpose behind this was: "That the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever He will, and sets up over it the basest of men."

Daniel interpreted the dream for the king. He informed him that the tree represented the king himself who had grown strong and become proud and arrogant. The cutting down of the tree and leaving the stump and its roots in the earth till 7 times passed over it, signified that the king would fall from his position of power, would be driven away from men, his dwelling would be with the beasts of the field, he would eat grass as an ox, and be wet with the dew of heaven till 7 times passed over him, "till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomsoever He will."

The leaving of the stump of the tree and its roots signified that the king's kingdom would be sure to him. Verse 28 says: "All this came upon Nebuchadnezzar." Verse 33 also says: "The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: He was driven from men and did eat grass

as oxen and his body was wet with the dew of heaven until his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws."

It is generally believed that Nebuchadnezzar was inflicted with a form of madness known as lycanthropy which causes a person to imagine he is a beast, during which he exhibits depraved appetites, change of voice etc.

When the allotted period of 7 times had run its course, the king's reason returned to him along with his kingdom.

The account in Dan. 4 specifically states that the 7 times was fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar. It was a personal prophecy relating to him. The period referred to as "7 times" is generally understood to be 7 years which would be more than long enough for his hair to grow like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.

However, in spite of it being stated in Dan. 4 that this prophecy was fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar, some have given it a long term application. They regard the "7 times" as a reference to Jesus' prophecy concerning "the times of the Gentiles" (Lk. 21:24) during which Jerusalem would be trodden down by the Gentiles, at the end of which the second coming would take place. They regard the 7 times in Dan. 4 as 7 years and then apply a day for a year principle which turns the 7 years (2520 days) into 2520 years.

This application of the 7 times initially used the period of Nebuchadnezzar's reign as the starting date for the 2520 years, and arrived at the 1914-17 era of the first world war, which resulted in the Turks being driven out of Palestine and the Balfour Declaration paving the way for Palestine to become a Jewish homeland. But significant as such events were, Jesus did not return then, indicating that it was an incorrect application.

As a result of the failure of this application, the starting date got shifted forward, and when that failed it got shifted forward again and again, resulting in a succession of fulfilment dates such as 1933, 1948, 1958, 1967, 1981, 2000 etc.

Many also turned the 1260, 1290, 1335 and 2300 days into years and gave them long term applications, resulting in fulfilment dates stretching from 1868 to 2000 A.D. etc. As each fulfilment date failed, the starting date got shifted forward to create a later fulfilment date. And the further these starting dates were extended, the further they moved away from the clearly revealed starting date which is the taking away of the daily sacrifice, and so the more irrelevant the applications became.

Some of those starting and finishing dates have coincided with significant events in history, and herein lies a deception. When a date is fixed for the fulfilment of a certain time prophecy, and the actual event required by the prophecy fails to take place, but some other significant

event occurs instead, unwillingness to admit the interpretation was wrong, can result in making too much of the event, and a non acceptance that significant as it may be, it has not met the requirement of the prophecy.

Converting the days into years and giving long range applications have all run out and clearly failed to fulfil the prophecies. We have reached the stage where insistence on treating the days as years requires selecting new and later starting dates, that are totally unrelated and irrelevant to the context of the prophecies. The long term application is clearly wrong and has been a distraction from the true times of the Gentiles which is a “time, times and half a time,” and starts when the daily sacrifice is taken away in the time of the end when Israel is invaded by the northern army.

The fallacy of changing the days into years in Daniel’s prophecies, along with more details concerning the time prophecies and the end time temple, are available in a 125 page book entitled “The End Time Jewish Temple in Bible Prophecy” by the same author.

THE 490 YEARS PROPHECY

We now come to the 6th and final prophetic time period in the book of Daniel. It is recorded in chapter 9:24-27. This is how it reads:

“Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your (Daniel’s) people (the Jews) and your holy city (Jerusalem) to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up the prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy. Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (the city) until the anointed one, the ruler comes, (i.e. “Messiah the Prince” A.V.) there will be seven ‘sevens’, and sixty two ‘sevens.’ It will be built with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty two ‘sevens,’ the anointed one will be cut off and will have no one (i.e. no human to save him). The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary (temple). The end will come like a flood. War will continue to the end, and desolations have been decreed. He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven,’ but in the middle of that ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering ...” (New International Version. Brackets by the author).

This is quite an amazing prophecy because it predicted the time in history when the Messiah would be formally and officially revealed. Daniel was told that from the time that a decree was given to restore and rebuild the city of Jerusalem, to the coming of the Messiah, there would be “seven sevens and sixty two sevens” i.e. sixty nine sevens (heptads) i.e. sixty nine seven year periods which is 483 years.

The decree to rebuild the city of Jerusalem is referred to in Neh. 2. It

was issued by the Persian king Artaxerxes in the 20th year of his reign, which according to secular historians, was around 445 B.C. Now, 483 years, on the basis of each year being 360 days, would be 476 years on the basis of a solar year being 365¼ days, on which secular encyclopaedias base their dates. 476 years from 445 B.C. takes us to around 30 A.D. when Jesus was, as we read in Lk. 3:23 “about 30 years of age.”

The New Testament gospel records inform us that it was about this time in the life of Jesus that he publicly and officially became the Messiah as a result of being anointed with the power of God at his baptism in the river Jordan (Lk. 3:21-23). The Jews, who were familiar with the 69 heptad prophecy in Dan. 9, knew the time had come for it to be fulfilled, and were therefore “in expectation” of it as we read in Lk. 3:15.

According to Dan. 9:26-27: after the 69th heptad, i.e. after Jesus became Messiah, which was the beginning of the 70th heptad, he was going to be “cut off” (killed) in the middle of that last 7 year period. This means his ministry as Messiah would only be for about 3½ years. And v27 says he would confirm the covenant (i.e. the new covenant) during the last 7 years, i.e. during his 3½ years ministry and for 3½ years after his death and resurrection. After his resurrection, by his Spirit in his apostles, he re-affirmed the new covenant (the gospel) exclusively to the Jews at first and after that due to Jewish opposition he turned his attention to the Gentiles! Ultimately “the people of the ruler” (Caesar’s army) came and destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple, resulting in desolation.

It is clear from this prophecy in Dan. 9 that Messiah’s coming was predetermined - “foreordained” (1 Pet. 1:20). A date had been set in heaven for this event, and nothing could prevent, postpone or prolong it. And the same applies to the second coming!

What other religious leader, be it Mohammed, Confucius, Buddha etc, could point to writings written hundreds of years before they were born, which predicted their coming and the time in history of their arrival? Which of them had their lineage, place of birth, circumstances of birth, details of ministry, death and resurrection etc. mapped out? None of them! Jesus is unique and exclusive. Why? Because he alone is the son of God and saviour of the world!