**From Hugh Kitson’s book: ‘Jerusalem, The Covenant City’**

Appendix A.

NOTES ON THE PROPHECY OF THE ‘SEVENTY WEEKS’ By Herman Goldwag

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

“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

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

“And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.” (Daniel 9:24-27 KJV)

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

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

These four prophetic verses so perfectly fit the events known to us about Christ’s first advent, that taking the first part of verse 27 out of context and applying it to Antichrist, is like taking the heart out of this outstanding prophecy.  As far as I can see, the seventy-week period was fulfilled in one uninterrupted sequence.  The Hebrew text and the historical events conclusively support this.  However, if this part of verse 27 is mistakenly interpreted (partly due to the translators’ failing to follow closely the Hebrew text) as referring to other than Christ, this remarkable prophecy is infinitely diminished.  I have concentrated on these four verses without being diverted by eschatology.  I leave it to you to prayerfully assess my findings.  My translation of the Hebrew text of Daniel 9: 24-27 is as follows:

24.            Seventy weeks have been decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to restrain1 the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to atone2 for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal3 vision and prophet, and to anoint Holy of Holies.4

25.            Know, therefore, and understand, that from the emergence of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem until5 Messiah6 Ruler7 (shall be) seven weeks8 and sixty-two weeks, and she will be restored and rebuilt, street and moat, but in troubled times.9

26.            And after the sixty and two weeks10 shall Messiah be cut off, and he is not,11 and the city and the sanctuary will be destroyed by nation of the future ruler, and its end12 shall come with flood-like devastation,13 and until the end of war, desolations are determined.

27.            And (he) shall mightily strengthen14 covenant for many15 one week,16 and in the midst of this week (he) shall terminate sacrifice and offering,17 and abominations on wing shall cause desolation,18 until total extermination be decreed on desolator.

Notes:

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

2. Lechaper in Hebrew: ‘to atone’ - King James Version (KJV) “to make reconciliation” is incorrect.

3. Lachtom in Hebrew: to sign, to seal, to stamp, etc – KJV “to seal up” is misleading.

4. Most Holy

5. Ad in Hebrew: “until” – KJV “unto” is inexact.

6. Mashiach in Hebrew: “Messiah” or “Christ” (Christos in Greek) – both mean ‘Anointed One’.

7. Nagid in Hebrew: ‘ruler’ or ‘leader’.

8. The seven weeks (49 years) mentioned most likely refers to the time of rebuilding the city and the Temple after the return from Babylon.

9. Opposition of the local people to the rebuilding of the city and the Temple mentioned in the records of Ezra and Nehemiah.

10. Actually, after sixty-nine weeks (483 years), after adding the previous seven weeks mentioned in verse 25

11.           Ve ein lo in Hebrew: literally ‘and he does not have’, but here rendered ‘he is not’, as Hebrew commentaries confirm (KJV “but not for himself” is misleading).

12. Vekitzo in Hebrew: ‘and his end’ – refers to “the nation” – am in Hebrew (masculine).

13. This could refer to the desolation of the Roman Empire by the barbarians

14. Vehigbir in Hebrew: “And (he) shall mightily strengthen” –(KJV “And he shall confirm” is not precise).

15. Larabim in Hebrew: ‘for many’ or ‘to many’ (mistakenly translated “with many” in KJV)

16.           The KJV reads: “for one week” but there is no “for” in the Hebrew text.  The “one week” should be understood as meaning during the week. Hebrew Bible commentaries confirm this.  It is obvious this is the last (70th) week.

17. Zevah umincha in Hebrew: ‘sacrifice and offering’ – refers to the Old Testament sacrificial system in its entirety.

18. Desecration of the Temple by the Roman army after the siege of Jerusalem (Josephus The Wars 6.6.1).

This prophecy of seventy weeks indicates not only the precise time of Christ’s first coming but also His ministry, the establishment of the New Covenant, His crucifixion and the anointing of the Most Holy.  The seventy weeks of 490 days actually refer to 490 years.  Each day of the week stands for one year (Ezekiel 4:6).  Hebrew scholars support the view that it refers to ‘weeks of years’.

It has to be emphasised that the 69 weeks (483 years) bring us, not to the birth of Jesus, but to His appearance as Messiah, which means ‘anointed one’. This happened immediately after His baptism in the River Jordan, when He was anointed by the Holy Spirit coming from heaven and alighting upon Him in the form of a dove.  The voice of God proclaimed “This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:16, Acts 10: 37,38).   Only there did He become Messiah, the anointed one.

Although there is an interpretation suggesting that when it says “unto Messiah the Prince…” in verse 25 it refers to the later ministry of Christ close to His crucifixion, I can see no good reason for it, nor scriptural support for it.  The prophecy clearly states that with the termination of 69 weeks, we come to Messiah (the anointed one), the Prince, having been born of the royal family and destined to be ruler and king. (Isaiah 9:7).  This prophecy obviously brings us to Messiah, the Prince’s appearance on the world scene, and not to His crucifixion three-and-a-half years later, otherwise it would have sufficed to mention Him only once, stating:  “…from the emergence of the word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah Ruler’s cutting off…”

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

As the crucifixion took place at Passover, around April, it means that Christ began His three-and-a-half year ministry in October 29 AD, the year that John the Baptist began his ministry.  It therfore follows that Christ was crucified in April 33 AD.

We know that the “emergence of the word” to rebuild Jerusalem was granted to Nehemiah (Nehemiah chapter 2) in the twentieth year of the rule of Artaxerxes, which was 454 BC.  Counting the prophesied 483 years (69 weeks) from this date, we come to the anointing of Jesus in October 29 AD.  Then the prophecy: “…until Messiah the Ruler…” was fulfilled.

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

In verse 26 it reads: “And after the sixty and two weeks10 shall Messiah be cut off…”.  It is clear from this statement that the crucifixion of Christ took place in the 70th week.  “And after…” (ve’acharei) does not necessarily mean immediately after, as confirmed by other mentions of this word in Scripture.  When it says “And after…”, it is obvious that some years could have passed, and that is what actually happened.  As we know, the crucifixion of Christ (in the middle of the 70th week) took place three-and-a-half years after His anointing and becoming Messiah the Ruler.

Clear confirmation of this comes in verse 27 where it reads: “and in the midst of this week” (at the end of three-and-a-half years of the 70th week) “he shall terminate sacrifice and offering”.  As we know, this was accomplished when Christ offered Hi precious life-blood on the cross as a paschal lamb and, in so doing, terminated the annual sacrifices and offering forever.

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

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

It is noteworthy that the verb in this form – vehigbir – appears only once in the Bible, in this very verse.  The KJV translates “Vehigbir brit larabim…” as “And he shall confirm the covenant with many…”.  Although ‘confirm’ is synonymous with ‘strengthen’, the marginal reference is mistaken in stating that ‘confirm the covenant’ means ‘make a firm covenant’, which is the generally accepted rendering.  ‘Vehigbir brit’ clearly refers to strengthening an existing covenant.

A further mistake in the KJV reads: “And he shall confirm the covenant with many…” when the Hebrew text actually says “for many”, which Christ actually declared at the Last Supper: “For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28 – New King James Version).  There is a very great difference in making a worldly covenant with individuals or nations and a voluntary covenant for many, which Christ did.  We can fully comprehend the significance of that small word “for” when we realise that Christ shed His precious blood for many (Matthew 20:28 and Mark 14:24).

“And (he) shall mightily strengthen covenant for many one week…”.  In the first half of the week (three-and-a-half years), Jesus Christ was laying the foundation of the New Covenant, teaching His disciples, showing in every way that He was the promised Messiah, by powerful words such as were never spoken before (John 7:46, Matthew 13:54), performing miracles, raising the dead and even calming the storm.  All these things greatly strengthened them.  By the time of the Last Supper they wholeheartedly accepted the New Covenant made for them by their Messiah (Matthew 26:28).  Furthermore, after His crucifixion, He mightily strengthened the New Covenant confirmed by Him at the Last Supper – by His resurrection, His appearances to His disciples and by sending the Holy Spirit to anoint them at Pentecost.  This was essential bearing in mind that the apostles were in disarray after His crucifixion.  “…smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered…” (Zechariah 13:7).

“…and in the midst of this week (he) shall terminate sacrifice and offering…”.  Thus, by His crucifixion as a paschal lamb making atonement for sin for ever, the sacrifice and offering was terminated.  The everlasting righteousness (justification from sin) was laid down – as mentioned in Daniel 9:24.  Thence, the animal sacrifices and offering for sin were no longer valid.  The KJV incorrectly reads in verse 27: “…and he shall make it desolate…”, thus making it appear to refer to the one who strengthens the covenant.  In the Hebrew text there is no ‘he’, so the one who strengthens the covenant has no connection with the destruction which follows.

Knowing that (1) Christ’s ministry lasted three-and-a-half years, (2) that He established the New Covenant and (3) He terminated the sacrifice and offering by His death on the cross, who can doubt that this was a fulfilment of the prophecy in verse 27 which clearly mentions these three events?

It is noticeable that verse 27 is, in a way, a repeat of verse 26 but with additional details.  Verse 26 speaks about the crucifixion of Christ (in the middle of the 70th week), and the subsequent destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.  Verse 27 speaks about the establishment of the New Covenant and the termination of the sacrifice and offering after the crucifixion, mentioned in verse 26, and it repeats the calamity also mentioned in verse 26 which was to follow.  Verse 27 also mentions Christ’s ministry before the crucifixion and the mighty strengthening of the New Covenant after His resurrection, which took place during the 70th week.

The prophecy of the 70 weeks speaks only about the people of Israel:  “Seventy weeks have been decreed upon thy people…”.  When we come to the crucifixion in the middle of the 70th week there is three-and-a-half years (half a week) of the 70 weeks remaining.  During this period the preaching of the gospel was exclusive to the Jews.  After the 70th week the gospel was opened up to all nations, starting with Cornelius.  As the Holy of Holies refers to a place, what could better fit the reality of it than the temple made up of living stones, the twelve apostles and the first disciples?  (1 Peter 2: 5,9).  Weren’t they the most Holy amongst the whole nation of Israel, having direct fellowship with the Son of God?  In direct fulfilment of the last part of verse 24: “… and to anoint the Holy of Holies”, the Holy Spirit fell upon the whole body of believers at Pentecost (Acts 2).

The exact timing of Christ’s coming; His mighty ministry to establish the New Covenant;  His sending of the Holy Spirit to empower the believers and restrain transgression;  His sealing up of sins and bringing in everlasting righteousness by His atonement for iniquity, in offering Himself as the Paschal Lamb;  His fulfilling in Himself many prophecies concerning Him, even to His death on the cross, thereby putting a seal (guarantee) of the fulfilment of all vision and prophecy, and the anointing of the Holy Holies were all accomplished in His first Advent.

The foregoing therefore demonstrates how the whole of the 70-week period was fulfilled in one unbroken sequence.  The mistaken interpretation of verse 27 – due in part to mistranslation of the original Hebrew text – greatly diminishes the truth of this remarkable prophecy.

This prophecy revealed by God to Daniel is so outstanding in its inclusion of all the main events concerning the Messiah that it is unsurpassed by any other prophecy concerning Jesus Christ.

“Daniel’s 70 Weeks Prophecy” by Herman Goldwag is obtainable from H. Goldwag, P.O. Box 97, Cheltenham GL53 0YY, England.

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

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

1.           In Daniel 9:24, starting from the yod in “iyr” (city), counting every 79th letter three times right to left (the Hebrew way), with the last letter ayin in “ve’ad” (and until) in verse 26.

2.           In Daniel 9:25, starting from the yod in “shishim” (sixty), counting every 61st letter three times right to left, with the last letter ayin in “ve’ad” (and until) in verse 27. A third encoding was found by Yacov Rambsel, mentioned in his book “Yeshua”:

3.       In Daniel 9:26, starting from the yod in “ve’ah’iyr” (and the city), counting every 26th letter three times from left to right, with the last letter ayin in “ve’shavuim” (and weeks) in verse 25.

I believe that that these encoded mentions of Yeshua in the Hebrew Scriptures are very significant as they occur in Daniel’s 70 Weeks prophecy, and especially as Yeshua is embedded in verse 27 which mainly refers to Christ, and not to Antichrist as many mistakenly interpret it. Herman Goldwag