

Associates for Scriptural Knowledge • P.O. Box 25000, Portland, OR 97298-0990 USA
© ASK, April 2014 • All rights reserved • Number 4/14

Telephone: 503 292 4352

• Internet: www.askelm.com •

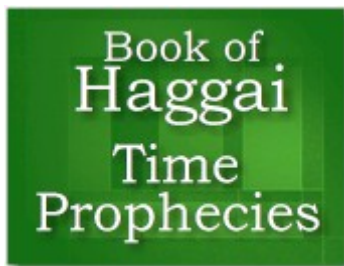
E-Mail: askoffice@askelm.com

Book of Haggai, Time Prophecies

by Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D., 1977

Transcribed and edited by David Sielaff, April 2014

The [Newsletter for April 2014](#) gives important background information to this article.¹



While examining the Book of Haggai, I want to go into an overall theme of time prophecies and the interpretation of them. **One main reason the Book of Haggai was placed in the Bible was to comment on some prophecies that God gave to Jeremiah and Isaiah, how they were to be fulfilled, and in some cases *how they were not fulfilled* as people thought they should be.** In addition, the Book of Haggai gives us some excellent principles on the interpretation of time prophecies.

How many of us have looked upon the prophecies of the Old and New Testament with such esteem that we were willing to sell our properties to go to a particular place on earth to be saved? Some have done this very thing. If we look in history we find people have often put on white robes, gone up the side of a mountain, and expected the end to come.

I do not denigrate time prophecies because the Lord Jesus Christ will come back to earth on time. He will appear in the clouds of heaven over Jerusalem. He will collect the saints around this world, and they shall come back to rule on the earth. There is also a celestial existence later. What are the time periods when these things will occur? God the Father knows. I am almost certain Christ Jesus knows at the present time. When we go into these time prophecies it is important that we look how some were fulfilled — or perhaps **not** fulfilled — as some thought in the past. This is where the books of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi come into the picture.²

Just before Christ ascended to heaven, the last thing the apostles asked was when He would restore the Kingdom to Israel. He had been with them for 2½ years, instructing them precisely on many points. They wanted to know when the prophecies of the Old Testament would be fulfilled, and when the Messiah would

¹ See the related articles "[The Book of Haggai](#)" and "[The Rebuilding of the Temple](#)," both by Dr. Martin. *DWS*

² We must be very careful trying to pick dates for the fulfillment of particular prophecies. There are always people who pick certain dates, and they will continue to do so. I have been guilty of doing the same thing. Have not all of us wanted to find out the when of things? Every one of us have been that way, but we should study the Scripture carefully so we might rightly approach (or appeal to) and interpret the time prophecies of the Bible. *ELM*

come in glory. He told them clearly: **“It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which [God] the Father has put in his own power”** (Acts 1:7).

Jesus also said in Matthew 24:36 that not even **“the angels of heaven”** knew when the Second Coming would occur. The angels have been around a long time. They were here when the foundation of the earth was established (**“morning stars,”** Job 38:4–7). They were here when Adam and Eve were on earth. They surely are able to date accurately the number of years which have taken place since those past events, yet our Lord said, not even **“the angels of heaven”** know **“that day and hour.”**

After the Babylonian captivity many of the Jews expected a number of things to occur from the prophecies of Jeremiah and Isaiah which did not happen the way they thought they might. Indeed, this disturbed them very much. Many Jews after the Babylonian captivity began to look around Judea, Jerusalem, and the surrounding region. They determined that very specific prophecies of the Old Testament (as they interpreted them) were not occurring. Just the opposite seemed to be taking place.

Haggai and other Books

The books of Haggai, along with Zechariah and somewhat the Book of Malachi, were written to show how God uses time prophecies and how we should not place too much emphasis on things which are solely in the providence of God and not in our control.

Certain prophecies given by Isaiah some 750 years before the birth of Christ concerned what would happen to the Jews and Israelites. The Jews were to be taken captive to Babylon, to be released later to return to Jerusalem. Once there, they would gather in all Israel from the nations. Judah and Israel would become great. The capital of the world would be Jerusalem and from there righteousness would expand to the entire earth. They would be in glory and ride on the high places of the earth. Isaiah also said that before those things could take place, the Israelites and the Jews would be taken into captivity. In captivity they would learn lessons of obedience to God. They would be able to return and the glories of Isaiah’s prophecies would be given to the Jews and Israelites. The problem was **when** would these events take place?

We know the northern Israelites were taken captive by the Assyrians in a series of about four captivities in the late 8th and early 7th centuries BC to areas north of Babylon. The Jews about 130 years later were taken in a series of three captivities from Jerusalem and Judea to the area of Babylon. They were in juxtaposition with one another, and they knew each other. There is no doubt both groups spoke Hebrew while the Babylonian captivity was taking place. Isaiah said that in some future time after this captivity, the Israelites could return to Jerusalem and the city would be built up. Jeremiah later gets more specific and gives time prophecies, which Isaiah did not do.

The people who lived when Haggai prophesied wondered whether the time prophecies of Jeremiah were in effect. Look at Jeremiah 29:10, a prophecy given when the Babylonian captivity was in process. The Jews were to be taken out of Judea to Babylon in stages. Jeremiah gives a time prophecy about how long it would be before they could return to Jerusalem.

Jeremiah gave his prophecy at Jerusalem to the Jewish elders while the captivity was beginning in stages, about 11 years before the Temple was destroyed. He said they would be in Babylon for 70 years and the Jews were very disturbed about his message:

“For thus says YHWH, ‘That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you and perform my good work towards you in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you,’ says YHWH, ‘thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end [a good end]. Then shall you call upon me [after the 70 years], then you will call upon me ...”

• ***Jeremiah 29:10–12***

This means, in a period of peace when no evil will be around and Israel will get God’s blessings.

“Then shall you call upon me, and you shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And you shall seek me, and find me, when you shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you,” says YHWH: ‘and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you,’ says YHWH; ‘ and I will bring you again into the place whence [from where] I caused you to be carried away captive.”

• **Jeremiah 29:12–14**

After the 70-year period is over, peace will emerge and all Israelites will return from the nations where they were scattered, and they will be in joy and happiness, with all their prayers answered. If you had been given a promise of that nature you would say, it will not happen in 68 years, or in 69 years, but it will happen in 70 years.

It occurred that very near the end of the 70-year period, a Persian king came on the throne named Cyrus, emperor of the Persians.³ There was a prophecy of a man named Cyrus would release the Jews from Babylonian captivity. They would go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple. This 70 year period would be over and all the blessings stated by Jeremiah (and many other prophecies) would have fulfillment, or so they thought. Go back to Isaiah where King Cyrus is mentioned:

“Then says [He, God] of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, you shall be built, and to the Temple, your foundation shall be laid.”

• **Isaiah 44:28**

Go to Chapter 45, which also refers to Cyrus. **“Thus says YHWH to his anointed ...”** Some feel this may be a typical indication of the Messiah to come in the future. While this is possible, Isaiah is specifically talking about a king named Cyrus who would allow the Jews to rebuild the Temple and the city of Jerusalem:

“Thus says YHWH to his anointed whose right hand I have held, to subdue nations before him; I will loose the loins of kings to open before him the two leaved gates [at Babylon], and the gate shall not be shut.”

• **Isaiah 45:1**

All of the prisoners of Judah and Israel in the Babylonian captivity will have a release when the brass gates are opened. King Cyrus, according to Isaiah’s prophecy, will open them. This clearly took place some 70 years after Jeremiah made his prophecy. Isaiah goes on to say in verse 2,

“I will go before you [Cyrus] and make the crooked places straight. I will break in pieces the gates of brass and cut in sunder the bars of iron [which keep the prisoners inside]. I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places that you may know that I, YHWH, have called you by your name. I am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant’s sake and Israel’s mine elect, I have even called you by your name [I surnamed you], though you have not known me.

I am YHWH, and there is none else, there is no god beside me. I girded you [Cyrus] though you knew not me, that they may know from the rising of the sun and from the west that there is none beside me. I am YHWH and there is none else. ... Drop down you heavens from above. Let the skies pour down righteousness. Let the earth open. Let them bring forth salvation and let righteousness spring up together. I YHWH have created it.”

• **Isaiah 45:2–8**

The righteousness, peace, and goodness would come to the earth with the emergence of this Cyrus at the end of a 70-year period. World history points out that this actually happened. Cyrus came on the scene. He

³ An emperor is a ruler (in ancient times a king) over many nations, peoples, kingdoms, and kings. Hence, the term describes a superlative ruler who is often referred to as a “king of kings.” *DWS*

allowed the Jews to go back to Jerusalem. They began to build the city of Jerusalem and the waste places up again. The 70 years did end.⁴ [See the biblical confirmation in Ezra 1:1–2. *DWS*]

The problem is, when you read Jeremiah carefully, it seems that universal righteousness would come in, along with what Isaiah says here, salvation, goodness, blessing, everything would come to the earth, with the expected end that the Jews wanted at the end of a 70 year period. Historically, Cyrus came, the gates of brass were opened up, the people went back to Jerusalem (not all returned), but when they got back to Jerusalem, did they receive their expected end after the 70 years concluded?

Back to the Book of Haggai

Haggai explains from God’s point of view what was going to happen, what did happen, and how we can best interpret time prophecies. Understand these points:

First, it is crucial to understand that although God gives a time prophecy, it is His prerogative to interpret His prophecy as He pleases, not the way we please.

Second, God is very open to explain His prophecies, even some which seem not to occur on time. One reason Haggai was written (along with Zechariah and somewhat the Book of Malachi) was to demonstrate why the prophecies did not occur as the Jews expected at the end of the 70 years, although Jeremiah seemed to have said they would. Why? When the openness of God is understood in these matters, you will appreciate that He is being clear in the Book of Haggai and in all His prophecies.⁵

Third, though it may seem this prophecy has failed, when Christ comes returns to earth, when God the Father is here, when all His prophecies are clearly understood the way He intended, the prophecy will not have failed at all. The problem is we fail to comprehend exactly what God sometimes means.

The Book of Haggai was written after Cyrus allowed the Jews to go back to rebuild Jerusalem. They had not yet begun to rebuild the Temple, but Haggai is prophesying along with Zechariah (his contemporary) at the time the Jews were expecting results from this 70-years prophecy, the blessings of heaven to come down with glory, goodness, righteousness, peace, and universal prosperity. Many Jews who returned to Judea from Babylon were beginning to complain, not only because of the prophecies not being fulfilled according to what they thought Jeremiah said, they were complaining because they felt God was cursing them with most every imaginable difficulty, with one exception: they were not in captivity any longer.

“In the second year of Darius the King, in the sixth month [the high summer] in the first day of the month, came the word of YHWH to Haggai the prophet, under Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Josedech the High Priest, saying,”

• ***Haggai 1:1***

The 2nd year of Darius was 18 perhaps 20 years after Cyrus allowed the Jews to go back to Judea. They looked for the blessings Jeremiah said would come after 70 years. They asked, “Where are the blessings?”

“Thus says YHWH of Hosts saying, ‘This people say the time has not come, the time that YHWH’s House should be built.’”

• ***Haggai 1:2***

⁴ See my short Commentary “[Jeremiah and 70 Years](#).” Also, read Dr. Martin’s detailed explanations of Jeremiah’s 70-years prophecy in “[Jeremiah, Part 3](#)” and “[Jeremiah, Part 4](#).” *DWS*

⁵ This might help all of us understand time prophecies for today, because the providence of God will not be overthrown. He will bring about His prophecies in the time period that He wants. Even though He has given prophecies which you feel must happen tomorrow, yesterday, or next year, He has given examples in Haggai to demonstrate Christ’s statement, **“It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has put in His own power”** (Acts 1:7). *ELM*

Cyrus told them to go down there, and from the prophecy in Isaiah 44:28, he not only told them to build again the city of Jerusalem, but they also had permission to rebuild the Temple. They were back in the land some 18 years and they had not touched one block of stone to rebuild that Temple. Haggai was concerned about this situation. They built their own houses and did some other things, but not the Temple. They were saying, “... **the time is not come, the time that YHWH’s House should be built.**” Why were they saying this?

“Then came the word of YHWH by Haggai the prophet saying, ‘Is it time for you, O you, to dwell in your ceiled houses’ [well roofed houses] and this house [the Temple] lie waste? Now therefore, thus says YHWH of Hosts, ‘Consider your ways! Consider your ways!’”

• *Haggai 1:3–5*

This is stated twice [the second time in verse 7]. I underscored the word “your” here. **“Consider your ways!”** The word “your” shows where the problem was. True, the 70 years ended. Eighteen years they had been in the land. They were saying it was not time to build YHWH’s House. They had their houses, but it was not time to build YHWH’s House. So God says, **“Consider your ways!”**

“You have sown much, and bring in little. You eat, but you have not enough. You drink, but you are not filled with drink. You clothe you, but there is none warm. And he that earns wages, earns wages, but to put them in a bag with holes.”

• *Haggai 1:6*

This was the condition of these Jews for an 18-year period. Imagine, what would you have thought if you had the prophecies of Jeremiah and Isaiah and others in your midst, particularly Jeremiah where he says, after a 70-year period you will have an expected end. You will have beauty. You will have peace. All the captives come back to Jerusalem. Everything will be beautiful and wonderful. For the last 18 years, they were in great difficulty. They were griping to God about it. Some might say, why not? God says here are the 70 years; we are not getting these good things. God says through His prophet Haggai, **“Consider your ways.”** I think the reason they did not start the Temple was because they felt, why should they build the House to God when He was not fulfilling His promises? To be blunt, it came down to that question.

God’s Openness

God was very open through His prophets in this matter. He made it clear that 70 years later things would happen, but He also made it quite clear in Haggai that the promises were not happening. What is going on? Is God not keeping His word?

“Thus says YHWH of Hosts, ‘Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, bring wood, build the House [God’s House], and I will take pleasure in it and I will be glorified,’ says YHWH. ‘You look for much and lo, it came to little ...’”

• *Haggai 1:7–9*

What would you have looked for after 70 years, if it said all the blessings were going to come? **“You look for much”** but what happened? God’s prophet comes and says plainly and clearly:

“... it came to little. And when you brought it home, I did blows on it [like a blasting mildew. I cursed you.] Why, says YHWH of Hosts? [Here is the answer:] Because of mine house that is waste. And you run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land ...”

• *Haggai 1:9–11*

The Middle East and Palestine have long been subjected to droughts from time to time. In this period of 18 years, instead of having much as they expected, they were in drought conditions. It was very, very difficult. The people were griping. I suppose some would say they had a right to.

“... I call for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground brings forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labor of the hands.”

• *Haggai 1:11*

They said it was not time to build the House of YHWH; they were not going to build the House to God when He seemed not to fulfill His prophecies. God said He was doing this so they must consider their ways, put first things first. He caused these droughts and the difficulty,

“Then Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel and Joshua, the son of Josedech, the High Priest, and all the remnant of the people obeyed the voice of YHWH their God and the words of Haggai the Prophet, as YHWH their God had sent him. And the people did fear before YHWH. Then spoke Haggai, YHWH’s messenger, in YHWH’s message unto the people saying, ‘I am with you, says YHWH. And YHWH stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel and also of Joshua the High Priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people, and they came and did work in the House of YHWH of Hosts their God in the four and twentieth day of the sixth month in the second year of Darius the King.”

• *Haggai 1:12–15*

After 18 years they began to build YHWH’s House.

“In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month [about a month later] came the word of YHWH by the prophet Haggai saying, ‘Speak now to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah and Joshua the High Priest, and to the rest of the people saying, ‘Who is left among you that saw this house in its first glory, and how do you see it now? Is it not in your eyes in comparison as of nothing?’”

• *Haggai 2:1–3*

They began to build the house, they had the foundation already established (or were doing it), and it had a much smaller dimension than the one in the time of Solomon.⁶ So God asked the question, comparing the former House to this one.

“Now be strong O Zerubbabel, says YHWH, and be strong O Joshua, the high priest, be strong all the people of the land, says YHWH, and work. For I am with you says YHWH of Hosts, according to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. So my spirit remains among you. Fear you not. For thus says YHWH of Hosts, ‘Yet once, it is a little while and I will shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says YHWH of Hosts.”

• *Haggai 2:4–7*

This was what they expected after the 70 years of captivity. They thought they would have such blessings during this period and they would of course begin to build the Temple which all the nations of the world would come and worship at God’s Temple. But God says, if you will start building, then the time will come again, in **“a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea and the dry land, and the nations”** will come up. Now verse 8:

“‘The silver is mine, the gold is mine,’ says YHWH of Hosts, ‘The glory of this latter House shall be greater than of the former,’ says YHWH of Hosts. ‘And in this place I will give peace,’ says YHWH of Hosts.”

• *Haggai 2:8–9*

⁶ Solomon’s Temple was not very large, but this one, built after the Babylonian captivity, was smaller, even insignificant. After all, there was less wealth than in the time of Solomon, so they built the Temple much smaller. *ELM* Dr. Martin is referring to the size of the outer sanctuary. The Holy Place and Holy of Holies were the same size as in Solomon’s Temple. *DWS*

How will this little House being built be of greater worth than the former one built by King Solomon? The former House was destroyed by the Babylonians on the 10th of Ab in the year 587 BC. Some 88 years later they began to build this smaller House. But God promises that this House, though it will be small, will have even greater glory than the one built by Solomon. This House did not have the gold or silver or the precious stones of the former. Yet God says this House will have a greater glory than the former one.

The Coming of the Messiah

The answer is clear. Someone will come to this House and be part of it, someone not identified with the House of Solomon. This person is none other than Christ Jesus Himself coming to this Temple, and appearing in it. The prophecies of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi have many messianic tones about the Messiah to come, the one who will build all these things up. They thought that after 70 years the time of the Messiah would come. God showed through Haggai that He will indeed come. He also showed through Zechariah that He will come. He shall stir up all nations and they will come to the Holy Temple one of these days and worship when the Messiah is there. The time periods for doing this are in the hands of the Father and not in the hands of man. Even when you think God has given a prophecy of 70 years and after, He **must** have the Messiah, He **must** have the Temple, He **must** have everything in blessing; God does not have to do as you think He should, if He does not want to do so.⁷

When I read the Old Testament prophecies, I would have believed the same thing. We all would have. What did our Lord consistently tell His apostles, even when time prophecies appeared to come into effect? He said, **“It is not for you to know the times or the season which the Father has put in His own power”** (Acts 1:7). It seems some of the time prophecies of the Old and even of the New Testament have failed repeatedly, but they have not. They are all in the providence of God.⁸ He postponed things dealing with the First Coming and the Second Coming. This is what Haggai brings out here,

“The glory of this latter House shall be greater than of the former,’ says YHWH of Hosts. ‘And in this place I will give peace,’ says YHWH of Hosts.”

• **Haggai 2:9**

When will that time come? Christ said the Father takes care of the time periods.

Verse 10, **“And in the four and twentieth day in the ninth month. ...”** This comes near to our December, about the 24th day, in the winter:

“In the four and twentieth day in the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of YHWH to Haggai the prophet saying, ‘Thus says YHWH of Hosts, Ask now the priests concerning the Law saying, if one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment and with his skirt do touch bread or pottage or wine or oil or any meat, shall it be holy?’ And the priest answered and said, ‘No.’”

• **Haggai 2:10–12**

In Leviticus 6:27 it indicates that if you hold the holy flesh, a sacrifice, in your arms, the garment touching the sacrifice becomes holy. However, take away the holy flesh and you just have the garment

⁷ The Jews even made a great mistake when they saw Christ Jesus come on earth. They saw Him born of Mary, saw Him grow up, and saw Him preach for 2½ years. They asked, “who are you, the prophet?” Are you the Christ? Are you Elijah, or who?” Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah. Do you know what He did? It was something totally unexpected. He died on a tree of crucifixion. He did not get on His white horse and conquer the Romans. He did not do it when they thought He should. He did not do it at the apparent time of Daniel’s ninth chapter, which speaks about a 490-year period from the time of Cyrus giving a command to rebuild Jerusalem, down to the coming of Messiah. The Messiah came, but they expected Him to take over the world at the time. *ELM* See my articles [“Christ and Messiah”](#) and [“The Gospel of Messiah.”](#) *DWS*

⁸ We should not depend upon time prophecies because we do not know all of the factors involved. Who would have said, **“Consider your ways”** after 70 years? I would have thought they would have had blessings whether the Jews had been in glory or not, whether they had considered their ways or not. But God said, this will occur and He is postponing it. *ELM*

which came into contact with the holy flesh. You cannot take that garment and touch some other garment. The first garment does not make the second garment holy. Only the holy flesh of the sacrifice can give holiness to the garment that it contacts. Take the garment away from the flesh and the garment itself does not remain holy.⁹ The holiness comes from the flesh itself, from the sacrifice in the Temple. This is why He gives this illustration. You must have the Temple, the altar, and the sacrifices, or nothing will be holy. Haggai clarifies:

“If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, then shall it be unclean?’ and the priest answered and said, ‘It shall be unclean’.”

• **Haggai 2:13**

This was true. In the time of Christ, they had all the sepulchers whitewashed so at night a person would not touch one by mistake. If they touched a sepulcher they would be unclean for seven days:

“Then answered Haggai, ‘So is this people, and so is this nation before me, says YHWH, and so is every work of their hands. And that which they offer.’”

• **Haggai 2:14**

They built an altar but not the Temple. They said: “We don’t need the holy flesh because we are holy. We do not need to come in contact with the holy flesh, which is why we do not have to build the Temple.” God said it was like touching dead men’s bones because you are unclean. The whole nation is unclean.

“And now I pray you consider that from this day upward and from before a stone was laid upon the stone in the Temple of YHWH [the foundation], since those days were when one came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten, when one came to a press vat for to draw out 50 vessels out of the press, there were but twenty [in 18 years of drought], I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail and with all the labors of your hands, yet you turn not to me,’ says YHWH.

‘Consider now from this day upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month [near December] even from the day that the foundation of YHWH’s Temple was laid, consider it, is the seed yet in the barn? Yea, as yet the vine and the fig tree and the pomegranate hath not brought forth [not for 18 years], but from this day will I bless you.’”

• **Haggai 2:15–19**

From now on I will bless you, but He does say, **“Consider your ways.”**

“And again the word of YHWH came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month saying, ‘Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying I will shake the heavens and the earth.’”

• **Haggai 2:20–21**

This will occur in the future. They thought it would be immediately at the end of the 70 years. But,

“‘I will shake the heavens and the earth. I will overthrow the thrones of kingdoms. I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen. I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them. And the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother. In that day,’ says YHWH of Hosts, ‘I will take you, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel,’ says YHWH, ‘and I will make you as a signet [a seal] for I have chosen you,’ says YHWH of Hosts.”

• **Haggai 2:21–23**

⁹ In the time of the apostle Paul, people took things, aprons and pieces of his garments away from him, and they were made whole [from disease or ailment]. Special miracles occurred at that time. But notice, these garments were not anointed with oil. Many thought if you take a piece of garment and place it on something holy, then take that piece and place it on something else, then something else, then all the pieces are holy. This scripture shows this is not the case. *ELM*

This ends the Book of Haggai. From this day forward, from the 9th month, the 24th day of the month you will start receiving blessings.

Something will happen to Zerubbabel. He will be a signet in YHWH's hand. He will overthrow the chariots. He will take down the horses and their riders. He will bring peace into the world. He will overthrow all the kingdoms of the world, and establish the peace which God said He would do at the end of the 70 years. **The time when this will finally occur is given in the Book of Zechariah.**

When a person looks at the prophecies in this period just after the period of the Babylonian captivity, they are typical of what will occur at the end of the age just prior to the Messianic overture here on this earth. While the Jews expected at the end of the 70-year period a complete overthrow of the Gentile world, the setting up of Messiah, the Temple being built, and Jerusalem becoming the capital of the world, God said to them **“Consider your ways.”** For 18 years the Jews went through hardships because they felt only glory and blessings should come upon them.

Zechariah said virtually the same thing as Haggai. He showed that during this 18-year period, they indeed had great difficulties. The two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, were sent in combination to show the Jews that what they expected at the end of the 70 years (the time prophecies dealing with these particular days) would not happen, but certain things needed to occur before the prophesied events occur.

In the Book of Revelation, we find two witnesses coming on the scene at the end of the age. They are called the **“two Olive Trees”** (Revelation 11:1–14) or the **“sons of oil”** (in Hebrew, Zechariah 4:3–14). The two witnesses associated with Christ's Second Coming are typical of Joshua the High Priest, and Zerubbabel, governor of the land at the time first mentioned in the Book of Haggai. The two witnesses are also very closely identified — in type — with Moses and Elijah.¹⁰

When God deals with end-time affairs, prophecies, and miracles, He usually goes with dualities:

- We have John the Baptist and Christ.
- At the end of the age we will have the two witnesses.
- We will have the Beast and the False Prophet, in a negative way.
- We have Haggai and Zechariah, two prophets supporting one another.
- In the time of the Exodus we have Moses and Aaron supporting each other.
- We have Joshua the High Priest and Zerubbabel, the king, a son of David, involved in a return to the Land of Israel.

All these are instances of duality. We have duality again at the end of this period when the Jews expected the Messianic age to come.

Later, from the prophecies of Daniel and the 70 weeks prophecy, you must go some 490 years from the going forth of the command to rebuild Jerusalem. Everyone expected then that the Christ would emerge. He did emerge then, but they expected He would come on His white horse, rout the Romans, the Parthians and the whole world out of the Holy Land, and establish universal salvation and the messianic prophecies. At that time He did not do it, not the way people expected. Almost every one of the prophecies (whether the 70 years or the 70 weeks of years equaling 490 years) they mixed it up. Who acknowledged the mix-ups? The prophets of God — clearly and openly in the Bible.¹¹

Too many have felt the prophets would never admit these prophecies were not taking place the way people thought they should. We would think, if God says a 70-year period will occur, then exactly at the end of the 70-year period we can demand God do exactly what we think He should do. Or, when the end of a 490-year period occurs, we believe we can demand God should do exactly what we think He should do. But

¹⁰ See Dr. Martin's articles [“The Two Witnesses – Who Are They?”](#) and [“The Elijah to Come.”](#) DWS

¹¹ See Dr. Martin's article [“The Expectation of Christ's Second Coming in Apostolic Times.”](#) DWS

God takes demands from no one. How can we resolve the 70 years, the 490 years, and other time prophecies which seem not to have occurred? God controls time; He deals with chronology. He knows exactly what He is doing. The times and seasons are in the Father's control, no matter how good events appear to us.

Looking at the prophecies of Haggai and soon Zechariah, the prophets themselves admitted that things were put off, because the Jews needed to **"Consider their ways."** God is in control. When Christ Jesus came as a babe and died on the tree of crucifixion, He did not do what many thought He should do. Yet everything fits into the Father's plan precisely, all these things are under His control. How will He work all these prophecies out? He will work them out exactly as He wants to, in His own good time. Zechariah said the same thing.

Look at the dual prophecy of Zechariah. Haggai and Zechariah were two prophets on the scene at the same time, dealing with the same problems, the droughts, the crop difficulties, the Jews going contrary to the way of God, and the people were complaining because the prophecies were not happening as they expected. So God sent both prophets, like two witnesses, to show the reasons that evil things were happening to the people. These two prophets are typical of the two witnesses at the end of the age, as Zerubbabel and Joshua the High Priest are also typical of those two witnesses.

Take these prophecies about the 9th month and the 24th day of the month, **"from this day I will bless you,"** put them into a proper chronological scheme which God can show us, and at the end of the age all of these things will fit precisely — this prophecy, the 490 years or the 70 weeks prophecy, everything will fit.

Zechariah himself comes on the scene.

"In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of YHWH to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying ..."

• *Zechariah 1:1*

The 8th month, 2nd year of Darius. Recall that the first prophecy of Haggai was given in the 2nd year of Darius, 6th month (Haggai 1:1). Therefore, this prophecy of Zechariah was given two months later, but still before the foundation of the Temple had been made.

"Then the angel of YHWH answered and said, 'O YHWH of Hosts, how long will you NOT have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against whom you have had indignation these three score and ten years [70 years].'"

• *Zechariah 1:12*

Here again is a reference back to the 70-year period of Jeremiah. Jeremiah said clearly that at the end of 70 years Jerusalem would have mercy given to it and the blessings of God would come. The nations would come with their accolades to Jerusalem. The messianic age would emerge on the earth. At least it looked like it would be so according to Jeremiah's prophecy.

What does this angel say, coming to Zechariah the prophet? It says, **"How long?"** Notice the words, **"How long will you not have mercy on Jerusalem."** This was what the Jews were saying. We have been back in the land for 18 years. We have drought. We have mildew. We have plague. Our cattle are not producing. Even the men are not producing children. We have difficulties all around, and you want us to build YHWH's House? They were saying it is not time to build YHWH's House but Haggai said NOW is the time to build YHWH's House, **"Consider your ways."** But we are plagued and we should not be plagued.

All this is in Scripture. God is not hiding it. Some would say, if a prophecy is not being "fulfilled," the best thing to do is hide it under the rug. Zechariah and Haggai are not hiding anything. The angel puts in the mouth of Zechariah, **"How long?"** This is a good question. All of us, including me, are saying to this very day, **"How long?"** The apostles said just before Jesus went back to heaven, when will you **"restore again the Kingdom to Israel?"** (Acts 1:6). They meant, **"How long?"** We have all said the same thing. If you knew exactly about the 70 years, the 490 years, and everything perfectly, you would not have to ask **"How long?"** You would know. But here the angel is asking:

“O YHWH of Hosts, how long will you NOT have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah against which you have had indignation these threescore and ten years.”

• *Zechariah 1:12*

God never did show the mercy to Jerusalem that He said He would give through the words of Jeremiah in all the ages, from that time to our present. This is a fact. Jeremiah said Jerusalem would be top of the world, when you read all the prophecies. The Messiah would be here, everything would be prosperous, and the Temple built. Zechariah asks, **“How long?”**

“And YHWH answered the angel that talked with me with good words and comfortable words, So the angel that communed with me said unto me, ‘Cry you saying, Thus says YHWH of Hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.’”

• *Zechariah 1:13–14*

No doubt the Jews could have said, well, it does not look like he is very jealous with us now. But He says **“I am jealous ... with a great jealousy.”**

“I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease, for I was but a little displeased and they helped forward the affliction [these evil nations around]. ‘Therefore,’ thus says YHWH, ‘I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies. My house shall be built in it,’ says YHWH of Hosts, ‘and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.’”

• *Zechariah 1:15–16*

This means a measuring line, a plumbline, for the building up of the houses of Jerusalem to make it the top capital city of the world. Yes, that time is coming.

“Cry you yet saying, thus says YHWH of Hosts, ‘My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad and YHWH shall comfort Zion and shall yet [in the future] choose Jerusalem.’”

• *Zechariah 1:17*

Note the wording here. He did not say he has chosen Jerusalem, or that He is bringing prosperity. He says he will do so at some time in the future. Even the angel asked, **“How long?”** Zechariah was saying, “How long?” And the children of Judah were saying **“How long?”** No answer was given, to **“How long?”** was, but it will come.

Zechariah then goes into several prophecies here, about the condition of the city of Jerusalem, about the nations, and about them being at peace, and he shows the condition of Jerusalem. God Himself admits that their present condition was not as expected from Jeremiah, at the end of the 70 years. In fact, what about Joshua the High Priest, the top man in religious government, who supervised the rebuilding of the Temple, who was able to go in there into the Holiest of Holies on the Day of Atonement? Look at this Zechariah 3:1,

“He showed me Joshua the High Priest standing before the angel of YHWH and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. YHWH said unto Satan, ‘YHWH rebuke you, O Satan, even YHWH that has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?’”

• *Zechariah 3:1–2*

Look at the condition of Joshua who represented the whole nation of Israel, Judah, and the Temple. **“Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and stood before the angel”** (Zechariah 3:3). A priest should not be in filthy garments, but this condition shows the situation after the 70 years, during this 18 year period (the entire period when Zechariah was prophesying) Joshua the High Priest was typically in filthy garments. Of course, he was in clean garments when he went into the Temple, but in symbol he was not. He represented the people who were unclean.

“And he [YHWH, through the angel] answered and spoke unto him who stood afar off saying, ‘Take away the filthy garments from him.’ And unto him [Joshua] he said, ‘Behold I have

caused my iniquity to pass from you, and I will clothe you with a change of garment.”

• **Zechariah 3:4**

God will give him clean garments. **“And the angel of YHWH stood by”** as a witness to all this (Zechariah 3:5). Then begins discussion about the “branch” who will come:

“Hear now, O Joshua the High Priest, you and your fellows [fellow priests] that sit before you, for they are men wondered at [as signs at the time]. Behold, I will bring forth my servant, the Branch. For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua [the building-stone of the Temple] upon one stone shall be seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave the engraving thereof, says YHWH of Hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.”

• **Zechariah 3:8–9**

Who will bring the iniquity to the end? It says in verse 8, **“I will bring forth my servant, the Branch.”**

An individual will come who is called **“the Branch,”** the *nexar* in Hebrew, the one from “Nazareth,” the Son of God. He does not say it right here, but a branch has to come first, before Joshua, or Israel, can have the iniquity taken off, and the filthy garments taken away. Some day it will happen.

Chapter 3 deals with Joshua. What about Zerubbabel, who represented the Davidic Kingdom? Recall that after the Babylonian captivity there was no Davidic Kingdom. It ended when the last Judean king was taken captive and killed by King Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC. Yet prophecies say there will come a future kingdom with a king who shall come out of David (called in Isaiah **“the Branch,”** Isaiah 4:2, 25:5, 60:21) who will rule the world. In this Joshua portion of Zechariah chapter 3, the filthy garments will be taken away when God **“will bring forth my servant the Branch.”** Then the Temple will be built up and all the glories of God will come which have been prophesied, but **“the branch”** must come first.

Chapter 4 is about Zerubbabel, a descendant of the ancient Judean Kings, a scion of David. Since he lived in a period of time when the Persians controlled the government, Zerubbabel was not looked on as a king, but as Haggai says, he was a governor. Zerubbabel had Davidic blood in him. If a kingdom were available, Zerubbabel would have been king over all the land, with Joshua the High Priest as his associate. These two individuals in Zechariah 4:12–14 are called **“the sons of oil”** (Hebrew, verse 14) who will be typical of the two witnesses who will come prior to the Second Coming of Christ. After the two witnesses, the Branch will come. What about this Zerubbabel in Zechariah 4:1?

“And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of sleep, And said unto me, ‘What see you?’ And I said, ‘I have looked, and behold a candlestick [a lampstand] all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof. And two olive trees by it, one on upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof.”

• **Zechariah 4:1–3**

These two olive trees represent Zerubbabel and Joshua.

“Then he [the angel] answered and spoke unto me, saying, ‘This is the word of YHWH unto Zerubbabel saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says YHWH of Hosts. Who are you, O great mountai? before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain.’”

• **Zechariah 4:6–7**

This mountain, this great obstacle, will be put down as a level plain with no barrier before Zerubbabel. This means the prophesied Zerubbabel will be powerful and great. It will not be by the might of Zerubbabel, it will be done by the might and power of YHWH:

“... by my spirit, says YHWH of Hosts. Who are you, O great mountain before Zerubbabel? You shall become a plain. And he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shouting [the corner-stone and headstone of the Temple] crying, ‘Grace, Grace unto it.’ Moreover, the word of YHWH came unto me saying, ‘The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house [talked

of by Haggai and Zechariah, YHWH's House]. **Yes, he has laid the foundation of this House. His hands shall also finish it** [by putting the headstone/cornerstone on top of the Temple].”

• **Zechariah 4:7–9**

In Christ's time some 400 years after this prophecy, our Lord said the headstone had been rejected by the Jews and still had not been put on the top of the Temple even in His day. It will be placed there in the future. Do you know who will place it, according to this prophecy? It will be Zerubbabel, a Son of David. Do you know what happened to Zerubbabel along with Joshua? True, they laid the foundation of the Temple at the exact time God said, they built the walls to it, and they put in the furniture. They had this small insignificant Temple in operation back in their time. They finally got it going. However, the headstone of the Temple was never put in place, even to our present day.

We find a prophecy in Psalm 118 about the headstone, and Christ Jesus referred to it. Zerubbabel not only was to lay the foundation of the Temple, he was to place the headstone of the Temple in existence when Jeremiah's prophecies about glory and goodness and the messianic age would occur. Since Zerubbabel died without having done it, he must be resurrected from the dead some time in the future. As you read the prophecies here, you would think they took place in the days of Zerubbabel by himself, but they did not take place. And our Lord Himself said in His day, **“The stone of the corner”** has still not been placed. It will come in the future. It will come when a servant comes forth called **“my servant, the Branch”** of the tribe of David, who will do all of these accomplishments dealing with the Temple at the end of the age.¹²

Everyone may have thought this insignificant Temple was being talked about. But when you put all the prophecies of Haggai, Zechariah, along with Malachi together (and Malachi says an Elijah must come first to prepare the way for this Branch to come), two witnesses are coming who are very similar to Zerubbabel and Joshua. They will come at the end of the age. These are **“the Sons of Oil,”** still future, **“When my servant the Branch”** (Zechariah 3:8) will come. And someone will be resurrected apparently to help build the Temple and to put the headstone on it to finish it. I do not know how all this will be done, but it says:

“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and you shall know that YHWH of hosts has sent me unto you. For who has despised the day of small things [the making of the small and insignificant Temple]? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven [the seven spirits of God, Revelation 1:4, 3:1, 4:5, 5:6]; they are the eyes of YHWH, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

Then answered I, and said unto him, ‘What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof?’ And I answered again, and said unto him, ‘What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves?’ And he answered me and said, ‘Know you not what these be?’ And I [Zechariah] said, ‘No, my lord.’ Then said he, ‘These are the two anointed ones [“two sons of oil,” Hebrew], that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.’”

• **Zechariah 4:9–14**

As I mentioned before, these are identified with the two witnesses at the end of the age (Revelation 11:1–14). Clearly, the chronology looks to be disturbed. Let us not pay attention to the chronology. This is what I am trying to show, what Christ was trying to show, and what the apostles were trying to show. This is why Christ said to the apostles, **“It is not for you to know the times or the seasons”** (Acts 1:7), even when you think you do.

In Zechariah we find the closing chapters 12, 13, and 14, which describe events at the end of the age and connect with this benchmark period here back after the 70 years captivity. This is the benchmark, but the fulfillment of most of these things will be according to the New Testament at the end of the age.

¹² Read about the cornerstone and Christ's fulfillment in Psalm 118:22; Isaiah 28:16; Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; Ephesians 2:20; and 1 Peter 2:6–7. *DWS*

In Zechariah chapter 12 the true restoration of Judah and Jerusalem are brought to bear. We will find all sorts of things happening at the end of the age. Jerusalem will be a burdensome stone to all people (verse 3). All people of earth will be gathered against it. However, there will be a house of David in existence at the end of the age (verse 7). This house of David (verse 10) **“will mourn for him whom they have pierced.”** I think we all know the person who was pierced.

“In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, ... And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, ... the family of the house of Nathan apart ...; the family of the house of Levi apart ...; the family of Shimei apart ... [and all the families apart]. In that day there shall be a fountain opened unto the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.”

• ***Zechariah 12:11–13:1***

This is the time when Joshua will have his filthy garments taken away. There will be clean linen given to him and to others. The wounds of Israel will be healed. Then come to chapter 14,

“Behold the day of YHWH comes and your spoils shall be divided in the midst of you. And I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle. And the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravaged, half the city shall go forth into captivity and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall YHWH go forth and fight against those nations as when He fought in the Day of Battle.”

• ***Zechariah 14:1–3***

The Day of Battle is recorded in 1 Samuel 13:22–14:13 when God gave victory to Israel united under King Saul. There will come another time at the end of the age when Israel will become the top nation on earth under Messiah. Someone will come to fight against the nations as he fought in the Day of Battle, when Israel became a nation of the ancient times. So then, they will become a powerful nation at the end of the age in this Day of Battle. Who would lead this battle?

“And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west. There shall be a very great valley and half the mountain shall remove toward the north and half of it toward the South.”

• ***Zechariah 14:4***

This has not happened yet, but it will occur at the Second Coming of our Lord. Who is being talked of here? **“My servant, the Branch,”** the one who will cause Zerubbabel to come forth, one of the house of David, to put final touches onto the Holy Temple which will exist at the end of the age. Mountains will flee from each other, the valleys will rise and the land will become level. Then it says in verse 6,

“It shall come to pass in that day that the light shall be clear nor dark, It shall be as one day which will be known of YHWH, not day or night, but it shall come to pass that at eventime it shall be light. It shall be in that day that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem.”

• ***Zechariah 14:6–8***

Our Lord referred to this in the Gospel of John (John 4:10–11, 7:38). They

“... shall go out from Jerusalem, half of them toward the former sea, half of them toward the hinder sea [the Mediterranean]. In summer and in winter shall it be. And YHWH shall be King over all the earth in that day. And in that day shall there be one YHWH and His name One. All the land shall be turned as a plain [without mountains] from Gibah [7 miles north of Jerusalem] to Rimmon [south about 40 miles,], and it [Jerusalem] shall be lifted up to be like on a new mountain [a new Mount Zion] and inhabited in her place [in her usual place] from Benjamin’s Gate unto the place of the first gate, under the Corner Gate and from the Tower of Hananeel under the King’s winepress.”

• ***Zechariah 14:8–10***

In other words, a new Jerusalem will come on the scene. The whole area around Jerusalem will become a level plain, but a new mountain will appear. On this new Mt. Zion will be Jerusalem and within it will be the Branch who will reign there — the Messiah, the Son of David. Read the last parts of Zechariah how, if people will not obey God at that time, there will be great difficulties on the land.

These verses speak of the time expected to occur at the end of the 70 years of Jeremiah. Haggai and Zechariah show it will be much farther in the future. Our Lord said, **“even the angels do not know the time”** (Matthew 24:36). The angel said in Zechariah 1:12 **“How long?”** Zechariah answered, **“How long?”** The apostles were asking **“How long?”** You are probably asking **“How long?”** We are all asking, **“How long?”**

Even though we have time prophecies which seem so specific, so precise, our Lord still says you do not **“know the times or the seasons, which the Father has placed in his own power”** (Acts 1:7). But sometime in the future — I do not know when it will be — **“My servant”** as Zechariah called **“the Branch”** will come. The last stone will be put upon the Holy Temple and Jerusalem will be the top of the world in that day. The 70 years of the prophecy of Jeremiah and Isaiah will have complete fulfillment exactly as God said. In His providence and in his understanding God will show us what He meant by these time prophecies. It seems we are getting very close to the end. Remember what God said to the Jews when they felt events were not happening as they thought they should be? God in Haggai said to them, **“Consider your ways.”**

Postscript

It is important to mention one major factor of prophetic interpretation in determining time prophecies of the Bible. The 70 years prophecy given in Jeremiah 29:10 and following verses did not come to pass as the Jews expected. This is clear. God is not trying to cover things up. The Jews thought certain things should occur. However, God gave information prior to the Jews going back to Jerusalem and Judea, that events would not occur as they expected. Even Daniel, who lived during the Babylonian captivity, understood some of these points. Near the end of the 70 years captivity Daniel himself recalled the prophecy given by Jeremiah some years before. He mentions it in Daniel chapter 9.

“In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of YHWH came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he [YHWH] would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.”

• *Daniel 9:1–2*

This is a clear reference by Daniel (before Cyrus permitted the Jews to return to Jerusalem) to the prophecy given by Jeremiah concerning the 70 years.

“And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: And I prayed unto YHWH my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;”

• *Daniel 9:3–4*

Daniel says that he knows this period is about to end. Daniel was saying, help clean us to prepare for the end of the 70 years so we can return to Jerusalem, build it again and the cities of Judah will flourish as Jeremiah said would occur. Read the entire 9th chapter of the Book of Daniel.

When Daniel referred to end of the 70 years, God sent the angel Gabriel to Daniel:

“Yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man [*ish*, not *adam*] Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation [about 3 p.m. in the afternoon]. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, ‘O Daniel, I am now come forth to give you skill and understanding.’”

• *Daniel 9:21–22*

What Daniel needed, we need today. God heard Daniel's reference to the 70 years prophecy. Daniel wanted the people to prepare for it and the glories to come afterward. Gabriel says, Daniel, I will tell you something you did not know before.

"I am now come forth to give you skill and understanding. At the beginning of your supplications the commandment came forth [says Gabriel], and I am come to show you; for you are greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision."

• *Daniel 9:22–23*

From verse 24 to verse 27, Gabriel does not give Daniel the prophecy of the 70 years which God gave to Jeremiah, but now he tells of 70 weeks of years, or a 490-year period that would replace the 70 years. This 490-year period was to occur before the universal world kingdom of the Messiah would come in, before Jerusalem would be the capital of the whole world, before universal righteousness and goodness and blessing would come in. The angel Gabriel tells Daniel that, though I said 70 years, it is being changed to 70 weeks of years, 490 years. Daniel in turn gave it to the Jews before they returned to Jerusalem. Therefore, they knew a longer period than the 70 years was to occur:

"Seventy weeks are determined upon your people and upon your 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 [the Holy of Holies]. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince [or the anointed one] shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks."

• *Daniel 9:24–25*

He goes on with one more week, which he divides in half — 3½ years on one side, 3½ years on the other. At the end of the whole 70 weeks period of 490 years, which was to start with the going forth of the commandment to restore Jerusalem, then the universal period of righteousness, Jerusalem exalted, and Israel riding on the high places of the earth, all would take place.

There was one problem. Though it says, "from the going forth of the commandment" to rebuild Jerusalem and 490 years would take place, the angel does not tell Daniel which "commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" controlled the prophecy. The Jews made many mistakes on that point. God's prophecies have not failed. He has not told us which command! Some feel this prophecy of the 70 weeks will be fulfilled sometime in their future. No one knows all factors involved regarding Daniel chapter 9. But God showed through Gabriel that the 70 years of Jeremiah were to be replaced by the 70 weeks (490 years) of Daniel. God has completely and thoroughly covered Himself in all of these matters.

The Jews in the time of Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, had this prophecy of Daniel given some 20 to 22 years before Judah's return, which told them, do not pay attention to the time periods. There will come a time in the future when all these things will take place. God's prophecies will be fulfilled exactly as He wants. We ourselves, and even angels, do not understand the truth.

When you find time prophecies being brought up by individuals today or in the future, have fun, but be careful because even the angels are saying, "How long?" If they do not know, I am surprised some of us think that we do.

Ernest L. Martin, 1997
David Sielaff, April 2014