

A Letter to a Jewish Friend Who Wished to be a Rabbi

Dear -----,

I was glad to be able to meet you at ——! I wanted to see what your view was on a few subjects relating to our common *Torah, Nevi'im, and Kethuvim*. I look forward to hearing what you have to say. . . . By the way, I would not mind at all if you share this letter with others and get their opinions on these questions as well, if some of the questions are challenging or difficult to answer. . . . I can . . . be contacted at the address info on my website, <http://faithalonesaves.googlepages.com/salvation>. Anyway, to the questions! I am excited to be able to hear what you will have to say in reply.

First, I would like to find out what your view of ישעיהו (Isaiah) 52:13-53:12 is. (I will put the text in Hebrew below, naturally, but I will comment on the English translation below it—the most widespread one in English in the last 400 years, the King James Version—because it is hard to get the Hebrew to work correctly in my word processor. Of course, we know that the Hebrew the Lord gave to the prophet Isaiah is the authority. Even below, when I cut and pasted the Hebrew from my computer Bible software, you can see that it got it got a little messed up, putting the second half of the verse above the first half, etc. I'm sure you can check your copy of Isaiah.) Anyway:

הִנֵּה יִשְׁכִּיל עֲבָדֵי יְרוּם וְנִשְׂא וְגָבַהּ מְאֹד :
כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁמְמוּ עָלָיו רַבִּים כִּן-מִשְׁתַּת מְאִישׁ מִרְאֵהוּ וְחָאָרוּ מִבְּנֵי אָדָם : Is. 52:14
יִקְפְּצוּ מְלָכִים פִּיהֶם אֲפֹי אֲשֶׁר לֹא-סֵפֶר לָהֶם רְאוּ וְאֲשֶׁר לֹא-שָׁמְעוּ הִתְבוּנָנוּ :
כִּן יִהְיֶה גֹזֵיִם רַבִּים עָלָיו Is. 52:15
מִי הָאֱמִין לְשִׁמְעַתָּנוּ וְיִדְוֶעַ יִהְיֶה עַל-מִי נִגְלָתָה : Is. 53:1
לְפָנָיו וְכִשְׁרָשׁ מֵאֲרֶץ צִיָּה לֹא-תֵאָדָר לוֹ וְלֹא הִדְרָ וְנִרְאָהוּ וְלֹא-מִרְאָה וְנִחְמַמְרָהוּ :
וַיַּעַל כִּי־יִקַּח Is. 53:2
וַחֲרַל אִישִׁים אִישׁ מִכְּאֻבוֹת וַיִּדְוֶעַ חֲלִי וְכִמְסַתֵּר פָּנָיו מִמֶּנּוּ נִבְזָה וְלֹא חֲשַׁבְנָהוּ :
נִבְזָה Is. 53:3
אֲכֵן חָלִינֹה תוֹא נִשְׂא וּמִכְּאֻבֵינוּ סִבְלָם וְאַנְחָנוּ חֲשַׁבְנָהוּ נְגוּעַ מִכַּף אֱלֹהִים וּמַעֲנָה :
Is. 53:4
וְהוּא מִחֲלָל מִפְּשָׁעֵנוּ מִדָּכָא מַעֲוֹנֹתֵינוּ מוֹסֵר שְׁלוֹמֵנוּ עָלָיו וּבְחִבְרָתוֹ נִרְפָּא-לָנוּ :
Is. 53:5
כִּלְנוּ כִּצָּאן תְּעִינוּ אִישׁ לְדַרְכּוֹ פָּנֵינוּ וַיִּהְיֶה הַפְּגִיעַ בּוֹ אֶת עֵינָי כִּלְנוּ :
Is. 53:6
וְלֹא יִפְתַּח-פִּיו כִּשְׁה לַטֵּבַח יוֹבֵל וְכִרְחֵל לְפָנָי גֹּזֵיָה נְאֻלְמָה וְלֹא יִפְתַּח פִּיו :
Is. 53:7
נִגַּשׁ וְתוֹא נַעֲנֶה

וּמִמְשַׁפֵּט לְקָח וְאֶת־דִּדְרוֹ מִי יְשׁוּתָח כִּי נִגְזַל מֵאֶרֶץ חַיִּים מִפֶּשַׁע עַמִּי נִגַּע לָמוֹ :
מֵעֶצֶר Is. 53:8

וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־רָשָׁעִים קִבְרוֹ וְאֶת־עֹשֵׂי רַע בְּמִתְלוֹ עַל לֹא־חַמְסַם עָשָׂה וְלֹא מִרְמָה בִּפְיוֹ :
Is. 53:9

הַחֲלִי אִם־תִּשְׂשִׂים אֲשֶׁם נִפְשׁוֹ יִרְאֶה זָרַע יִאֲרִיךְ יָמָיו וְתִפְּזֵן יְהוָה בְּיָדוֹ יִצְלָח :
Is. 53:10

מֵעַמֵּל נִפְשׁוֹ יִרְאֶה יִשְׁבְּעַ בְּדַעְתּוֹ יִצְדִּיק צְדִיק עֲבָדָי לְרַבִּים וְעֲזֹנְתָם הוּא יִסְבֵּל :
Is. 53:11

הֵעֲרָה לַמּוֹת נִפְשׁוֹ וְאֶת־פִּשְׁעָיו נִמְנָה וְהוּא חֲטָא־רַבִּים נָשָׂא וְלִפְשָׁעִים יִפְגִּיעַ : ס
Is. 53:12 לְכוֹן אֶת־קִלְוֹ בְּרַבִּים וְאֶת־עֲצוּמִים יִחַלֵּק שָׁלַל תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר

Is. 52:13 ¶ Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

Is. 52:14 As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

Is. 52:15 So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for *that* which had not been told them shall they see; and *that* which they had not heard shall they consider.

Is. 53:1 ¶ Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

Is. 53:2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him.

Is. 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Is. 53:4 ¶ Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Is. 53:5 But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Is. 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Is. 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

Is. 53:8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

Is. 53:9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth.

Is. 53:10 ¶ Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

Is. 53:11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

Is. 53:12 Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Who is this עֶבֶד, this servant? He is going to be very greatly exalted and put in a very high place, 52:13; 53:12; it seems like he is, in the future, going to rule the world. However, there was a time when people were astonished to look at him, because he would be beaten so badly that he would not be recognized (52:14). This reminds me of how Jesus was beaten and whipped and tormented before his crucifixion (cf. Matthew 26). It seems that many nations, many Gentiles (like me!) will be “sprinkled” by his blood, Isaiah 52:13. We know that this verb, נִזָּה in the Hiphil, is the technical term used for the blood of the sacrificial offerings (see זָרַק/Leviticus 4:6, 17; 5:9—pardon me if I use the English book names, that is, “Leviticus” here—again, it is easier with my word processor which is set to write in English, not in Hebrew). So Isaiah 52:13 tells us that many Gentile nations will receive what they had not known of before, and be sprinkled by the sacrificial blood of this servant. In contrast, as the prophet Isaiah looks at his fellow Israelites, he laments that only a few of them will believe the report about the servant (53:1). In 53:2, we have imagery identifying this servant as the Messiah, for Isaiah had used the “root” image for the Messiah in Isaiah 11:1, 10. It seems to me like the prophet indicates in 53:2 that the Messiah would not have everyone recognizing and acclaiming him when he came at this first time mentioned in 52:13-53:12, but many people would see nothing special or desirable in him and reject him (as those did who did not believe the message about him, 53:1). Indeed, people in general despised and rejected him, 53:3. However, in line with the image of the Messiah sprinkling many nations with his blood, mentioned in 52:15, 53:4-6 states that he would be a substitutionary sacrifice, bearing our sins in a way similar to the way the animal sacrifices did for those that offered them (or, actually, in my view, the animal sacrifices all pointed forward to this one great sacrifice described in Isaiah 52:13-53:12, and that is why God allowed the temple to be destroyed and animal sacrifice to cease in A. D. 70 after Jesus came). This servant, the Messiah, would be struck down by God for our transgressions, when the Holy One would lay all our sins upon him. We find out in Isaiah 53:6 that we have all sinned and gone astray from God, but God would lay all our sins on the servant in this passage, the Messiah, when he would be a sacrifice for our sins. We find out in v. 7 that there would be a time when he would be oppressed and afflicted, but would remain silent. This reminds me of what happened at Jesus’ trial before his death, Mark 14:55-60 & John 19:9-10 (By the way, if you have never read an account of the Lord Jesus’ life, you can get a free New Testament at <http://faithalonesaves.googlepages.com/salvation> or by calling (510) 223-9550/8721 and asking for one):

55 And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; and found none. 56 For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together. 57 And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying, 58 We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. 59 But neither so did their witness agree together. 60 And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what *is it which* these witness against thee? . . .

9 And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. 10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

In Isaiah 53:8, we find out that the Messiah will be “cut off,” that is, put to death, removed from the land of the living, for the sins of God’s people. We know that the verb “cut off” (גזר) in the Niphal is used elsewhere of people being killed (cf. תִּהְיֶה לְיָם/Psalm 88:6 (English 88:5)), and the specific statement that this servant would be “cut off” תִּהְיֶה לְיָם מִן הַאֲדָמָה, from the land of the living is very clear. When this servant is killed, he will die with the wicked, but be with the rich as well. This reminds me of how Jesus died between two wicked thieves (Luke 23:33) but was buried in the tomb of a rich man named Joseph of Arimathea (Matthew 27:57-60):

Luke 23:33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

Matthew 27:57 When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus’ disciple: 58 He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. 59* And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60* And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

We know that although the Messiah would die in this manner, he nevertheless was innocent—he had not sinned, never having any deceit in his mouth.¹ We find out in 53:10 that the Messiah would be made an offering for sin. So he is clearly going to die, from these passages—but Isaiah goes on to tell us that he will prolong his days, prosper, and see blessings on his people after his death, 53:10-11, seeing the suffering that he went through and being satisfied that he suffered it, 53:11. The only way I can see that someone can die and then prolong his days and be satisfied with the sufferings he

¹ By the way, someone told me once that this passage was not about the Messiah, but about the entire nation of Israel. I have a really hard time understanding that—all Israel went astray and sinned and then the sins of Israel were laid on someone else, Isaiah 53:4-6—but someone else *was* Israel??? And here, would Isaiah contradict what he has said in the rest of his book, where he mentions how Israel had sinned so many times (Isaiah 1:4, etc.), to here say that the nation had never had any deceit in its mouth? This view does not seem to make sense to me at all. Furthermore, to say this is not the Messiah does not even deal with the fact that the root metaphor, 53:2, mentioned in the chapter shows this is the Messiah, etc. I just can’t go through the entire passage phrase by phrase and make the text make sense if it is all about the nation of Israel, not the Messiah.

endured is if he were to rise from the dead—so it looks to me like Isaiah 53:10-11 tells us that the Messiah will rise from the dead after he is made an offering for sin. Finally, 53:12 tells us that by knowing the Messiah, by the knowledge of him, many people will be made righteous before God by the Messiah’s righteousness; the Messiah will bear their sins in his substitutionary, sacrificial death and many who come to know him will be saved, not because of their righteous acts, but because of the Messiah’s righteousness making them righteous, and the Messiah’s death paying for their sins:

בְּדַעְתּוֹ יִצְדִּיק צְדִיק עֲבָדֵי לְרַבִּים וְעֹנְתָם הוּא יִסְבֵּל:

It seems to me that our God is clear that our sins are not atoned for by our own righteous actions, but by blood washing away our sins, and that the Messiah’s blood is what does it. This is how Leviticus 17:11 seems to me to fit in; “it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul,” כִּי־הַדָּם הוּא בִּנְפֹשׁ יִכַּפֵּר, and the Messiah’s blood will sprinkle many and they will be made righteous (יִצְדִּיק) before God because of it, as Isaiah 53:10-12 tells us.

While we are certainly to strive to obey God’s Law, we cannot be saved from our sins by our obedience, because we are all sinners and fall far short of what He commands us (as even Isaiah 53:6 states). We also know that “*there is* not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not” (Ecclesiastes/ קְהֵלֶת 7:20; cf. Jeremiah 17:9, “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” Isaiah 64:6, “But we are all as an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away,” Genesis/ בְּרֵאשִׁית 6:5, “And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually,” “there is no man that sinneth not,” 1 Kings/ מְלָכִים א 8:46). Rather, just as Abraham was reckoned righteous by faith, not by works, so should we receive the righteousness of the Messiah by faith:

וְהֵאֱמַן בַּיהוָה וַיִּחְשְׁבֶהָ לּוֹ צְדָקָה: Gen. 15:6

Gen. 15:6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

I believe this idea is well stated in the New Testament book of Romans (3:28-4:8):
 Rom. 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. 29 *Is he* the God of the Jews only? *is he* not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: 30 Seeing *it is* one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. 31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law. 4:1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God. 3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. 4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. 6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7 *Saying*, Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins

are covered. 8 Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin [see Psalm 32:1-3].

Finally, Isaiah 53:12 tells us that the Messiah will return after he rises from the dead to rule, and in the meantime he will intercede for those who have been saved by his death, just like the High Priest would intercede for Israel, as recorded in the *Torah*. Of course, the Hiphil of פגע can mean a variety of things, but it is used of intercession when employed with a preposition, as it is in Isaiah 53:12, in Jeremiah 36:25 (cf. Isaiah 59:16, etc.), and we know that the Messiah will be a priest (Psalm 110:4).

Thus, it appears to me that the prophet Isaiah tells us that the Messiah would die as a sacrifice for our sins, rise again, and come a second time, and describes various details of what would happen to the Messiah that fit in with what happened to Jesus. I would very much like to find out how I am off if I am not interpreting the passage correctly, and how my study of it is inaccurate, if it is so.

Similarly, I have noticed that Micah 5:1 (English 5:2) states:

וְאַתָּה בְּיַת-לְחֶם אֶפְרַתָּה צָעִיר לְהַיּוֹת
בְּאַלְפֵי יְהוּדָה מִמֶּנָּה לִּי יֵצֵא לְהַיּוֹת מוֹשֵׁל בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וּמוֹצְאֹתָיו מִקֶּדֶם מִימֵי עוֹלָם:
But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting.

Does this not state that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem, and that he has existed from “everlasting,” from “days of eternity”²

² It is true that מְעוֹלָם is not restricted to a designation of absolute eternity (cf. Joshua 24:2, etc.), but is often used in this sense in Scripture: “Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel for ever and ever (מִן-הָעוֹלָם וְעַד הָעוֹלָם). And all the people said, Amen, and praised the LORD” (1 Chronicles 16:36); “Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed *be* thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever (מִן-הָעוֹלָם וְעַד-הָעוֹלָם)” (1 Chronicles 29:10); “Then the Levites, Jeshua, and Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, *and* Pethahiah, said, Stand up *and* bless the LORD your God for ever and ever (מִן-הָעוֹלָם וְעַד-הָעוֹלָם): and blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise” (Nehemiah 9:5); “thou, O LORD, *art* our father, our redeemer; thy name *is* from everlasting (מִן-הָעוֹלָם)” (Isaiah 63:16); “I cause you to dwell . . . in the land . . . for ever and ever (לְמִן-עוֹלָם וְעַד-עוֹלָם)” (Jeremiah 7:7—this includes eternity on the new earth, Revelation 21:1); “Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they *have been* ever of old (כִּי מִן-הָקִדְמָה הָמְנָה) (Psalm 25:6); “Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting (מִן-הָעוֹלָם וְעַד הָעוֹלָם)” (Psalm 41:13); “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting (מִן-הָעוֹלָם וְעַד-הָעוֹלָם), thou *art* God” (Psalm 90:2); “Thy throne *is* established of old: thou *art* from everlasting (מִן-הָעוֹלָם)” (Psalm 93:2); “But the mercy of the LORD *is* from everlasting to everlasting (מִן-הָעוֹלָם וְעַד-הָעוֹלָם) upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children” (Psalm 103:17); “Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting (מִן-הָעוֹלָם וְעַד הָעוֹלָם): and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD” (Psalm 106:48).

Indeed, it seems to me that Micah 5:2 is not alone in stating that the Messiah, born in Bethlehem, was uncreated and existed in eternity past when only God was around. It seems to me that within the unity of the one and only God, we yet have statements that establish a kind of personal distinction in Him. We know beyond any question that there is only one God, as the *Shema* tells us. Yet God Himself is the speaker in Zechariah 12:4-10, and in Zechariah 12:10 He states:

וְשִׁפְכֹתַי עַל-בֵּית דָּוִד וְעַל יוֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם רְחֵם חֵן וְתַחֲנוּנִים וְהִבִּישׁוּ
 Zech. 12:10 אֵלַי אֶת אֲשֶׁר-דָּקְרוּ וְסָפְדוּ עָלָיו כְּמִסְפֵּד עַל-הַיְחִיד וְהִמְרָ עָלָיו כְּהִמְרָ עַל-הַבְּכוֹר:
 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only *son*, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn.

Why is it that God is speaking, but He can say that Israel pierced Him? Did God ever take a body that can be looked upon and pierced?

Or note in Isaiah 50:1-6 that God is again speaking (see v. 1), but in v. 2 He says that He will come to Israel, and in v. 3-4 God says that the Lord God, אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה gives Him things, and then in v. 6 God says:

גִּוִי נָתַתִּי לַמַּכִּים וּלְחִנֵּי לַמְרַטִּים פָּנַי לֹא הִסְתַּרְתִּי מִכַּלְמוֹת וְרֹק:
 Is. 50:6

Is. 50:6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

Did God ever have a back, cheeks, and a beard that was plucked off and spat upon? This reminds me of Isaiah 52:13-53:12, which we looked at before, and of Matthew 26:67-68:

67* Then did they spit in [Jesus'] face, and buffeted him; and others smote *him* with the palms of their hands, 68 Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?

One who reads the *Torah* and the Prophets and Writings will notice that while there is obviously one and only one God, yet there is someone called the Messenger of the LORD (מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה) who is also called God! Note in Genesis/בראשית 16:7-10, Hagar sees this Messenger (sometimes translated *angel*, as the word *angel* means *messenger*) of the LORD, and concludes that she has seen God because she has seen this Messenger (16:13). Note that the LORD was in the burning bush when He spoke to Moshe/Moses, but it was the מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה in the bush (רֹאלֶה /Exodus 3:2-15). Jacob, after wrestled with the Messenger appearing like a man, said, “I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved” (Genesis 32:30). Note how in Genesis 18-19, three “men” came to Abraham, but they were two angels and then the Lord Himself, who Abraham talks with face to face. While the LORD is in heaven, He also was talking with Abraham in a separate personal distinction (Genesis 19:24). In Joshua 5:13-6:2, Joshua sees a “man,” who he then realizes is the Captain the LORD’s armies, but then this Man identifies Himself as the LORD Himself in Joshua 5:15 (cf. Exodus 3:5), and when the

Man speaks it is the LORD Himself speaking (Joshua 6:2ff.). It seems to me like within the one and only God we have three distinctions, so that the Lord can be speaking, as in Isaiah 48:1-16, but say that the Lord and His Spirit have sent Him:

קָרְבוּ אֵלַי שְׁמְעוּ-זֹאת לֹא מֵרֵאשִׁית Is. 48:16

בְּפִתְחֵי דְבָרַי מֵעַתָּה הִיְתָה שֵׁם אֲנִי וְעַתָּה אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה שְׁלַחְנִי וְרוּחִי : פ

16 Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there *am* I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me.

Do we have, within the unity of the one and only God, personal distinctions? I believe that when the New Testament states that “there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word [Son], and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one” and speaks of “the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” as the one God (1 John 5:7; Matthew 28:19), it is not teaching anything new, but something that already had a basis in the revelation given to Moshe/Moses and the prophets. This is why the one God can call Himself a “we/us” (Genesis 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; etc.). I have heard people say that this is just God speaking to the angels—but in Genesis 1:26 it is Him as the Creator, He who makes man, who says “us.” The angels did not create us—God alone did this, and we are in the image of God, not of the angels (Genesis 1:27; 9:6). What would be your view of these passages about personal distinctions within the one and only God?

I don't want to overwhelm you with questions, so I'll ask only one more. (I really like, though, talking about and discussing the Word of God! What better thing could we do? We are to talk of the Word in our house, when we lie down, when we rise up, etc. because we love Him, רַב־רִים /Deuteronomy 6:4-7). In studying the book of דְּנִיאֵל /Daniel, I came across this prophecy in chapters 9:24-27, which seem to me to indicate the exact year, and even the exact month and day, when the Messiah would come (pardon the order of the Hebrew on my word processor—it got reversed, etc. and I'm not sure how to easily fix it):

[וּ] [לְ] [הַתָּמָר] [חֲטָאוֹת] [חֲטָאוֹת] וְלִכְפֹּר עֲוֹן וְלִהְבִּיא צַדִּיק עַל־מִיּוֹם וְלַחֲתוֹם תְּנוּן Dan. 9:24
שְׁבַע־עָשָׂר שָׁבָעִים נְחָתֶדָּ עַל־עֲמֻדָּה וְעַל־עִיר קִדְשֶׁךָ לְכֹלֵל הַפֶּשַׁע וְלַחֲתוֹם
וְנִבְיָא וְלַמְשַׁח קִדְשֶׁךָ קִדְשִׁים :

שְׁבַע־עָשָׂר שָׁבָעִים וְשִׁבְעֵוָלִים שְׁשָׁנִים וּשְׁנָיִם תְּשׁוּב וְנִבְנְתָה רְחוּב וְחָרוּץ וּבְצֹק הַעֲתָוִים :
Dan. 9:25 וְתִדְרַע וְתִשְׁכַּל מִן־מִצָּא דְבָר לְהַשִּׁיב וְלִבְנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם עַד־מְשִׁיחַ נְגִיד

וְהַקִּדְשֶׁךָ וְלִישָׁחִית עִם נְגִיד הַבָּא וְקִצְוֹ בְשִׁטְרָךָ וְעַל קֶץ מִלְחָמָה נִחְרָצָת שְׁמִמּוֹת :
Dan. 9:26 וְאַחֲרָי הַשְּׁבַעִים שְׁשָׁנִים וּשְׁנָיִם יִפְרַת מְשִׁיחַ וְאִין לֹא וְהָעִיר

יִנְבַח וּמְנַחָה וְעַל כְּנָר שְׁקוּצִים מְשֻׁלָּם וְעַד־כְּלָה וְנִחְרָצָה תִתֶדָּ עַל־שָׁמַם : פ
Dan. 9:27 וְהַגְּבִיר בְּרִית לְרַבִּים שְׁבוּעַ אַחַד וְחֲצֵי הַשְּׁבוּעַ יִשְׁפִּית

24 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. 25 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. 26 And after threescore [score=20; “threescore” = 60] 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. 27* 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.

I believe that the English translation I have copied from the traditional English Bible is accurate. I have talked about this with someone before who said it was not, and I have dealt with various arguments that it is not accurate. I have cut and pasted below what the objections were that the person who I discussed this passage with before made to the translation above in the King James Version (KJV). The discussion is in smaller print and in smaller margins so that, if you don't have the same objections that this person had, you can skip it and get to the analysis of the meaning of the passage below it.

1.) Is the KJV correct in translating “seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks,” or is it really “seven weeks; and for sixty two weeks...”?

a.) To divide the weeks changes the Hebrew. To say “and *for* sixty two weeks” is to add to Scripture. The word “for” is not there. The only thing dividing the seven weeks and the sixty two weeks is ׀, meaning “and.”

b.) One might object that one needs to add the word “for” and divide the two sets of weeks, although the word is not there, because the *athnach*, a disjunctive Hebrew accent (of which there are a variety in every verse in the Bible) is under the word “weeks” in “seven weeks.” However, this does not follow:

I.) Ancient translations, such as the LXX (Greek Old Testament; translated before Jesus Christ's day), as well as Theodotion, the Syriac, and the Vulgate all make the sixty nine weeks continuous. So does the King James Bible, as well as versions such as the Douay, American Standard, Berkeley, Jerusalem Bible, New American Standard, etc. To assert that people before Christ's day in the LXX mistranslated this verse to make it a prophecy of Him is ridiculous. To assert that the body of ancient versions and modern Bible versions all mess it up is an amazing assertion of universal mistranslation among those who disagree with each other on all kinds of theological issues and certainly did not get together to form some sort of conspiracy to mistranslate this verse. The minority of modern versions that mistranslate the verse and make the seven weeks noncontinuous with the sixty two weeks generally do so because they want to destroy this prophecy of Jesus Christ, not because of the necessities of Hebrew grammar, which, as we saw in a., does not support this distinction.

II.) An *atnach* is sometimes places where one would not normally expect it. “In cases of *specification*, we often find the proper logical or syntactical division— particularly the latter— neglected, and the main musical pause introduced *between the details or particulars given*.”

Distinctness of enunciation, and emphasis (where necessary), were thus secured. the pause was introduced where it seemed likely to be most effective. Thus the *logical* division is disregarded... *Syntactical* clauses are treated in the same way, and subject, object, & c. are cut in two— or members that belong together, separated— by the dichotomy. (A logical pause may occur in the verse or not).² A number of instances of this can be adduced. for example, Numbers 28:19: “And ye shall offer a burnt-offering unto the LORD, two young bullocks and one ram (*athnach*), and seven he-lambs of the first year; they shall be unto you without blemish.” Also cf. Gen 7:13, 25:20, Ex 35:23, Lev 16:2, Is 49:21, 66:19. To try to use the *atnach* in Daniel 9:25 to change what the actual Hebrew text says is unjustified. cf. also *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, ed. E. Kautzch, trans. Cowley, 2nd. ed, Oxford, 1910), pg. 58, footnote #2: “At the same time it must not be forgotten that the value of the accent as a mark of punctuation is always relative; thus, e. g., *athnach* as regards the logical structure of the sentence may at one time indicate a very important break (as in Gen 1:4); at another, one which is almost imperceptible (as in Gen 1:1).” Note that in Genesis 1:1 the *athnach* is under *Eloheim* (God), and does not even receive a comma in the English text!

c.) It makes no sense to divide the seven weeks and the sixty two weeks. This would mean that it took 434 years to build the “street... and the wall,” (9:25) which does not fit history at all and demolishes the context.

d.) It is clear that the Messiah comes after the sixty and two weeks from v. 26, so v. 25 means that it is the same period.

e.) The city and the sanctuary were destroyed in the generation when the Jesus the Messiah was cut off, but not for Himself, but there is nothing otherwise that even comes close to making sense of this if you divide the seven from the sixty two weeks.

f.) The first seven weeks, or 49 years, are probably either set apart because it actually took that long to restore Jerusalem from being a ruin to a thriving city (which would justify the mention of rebuilding the “street” alongside the wall; the word “street” has special reference to breadth, and so a wide street, marketplace, or other place of similar concourse would be in view, implying a restoration of the city to her former state— or, perhaps, prophetic revelation ceased at the end of the first seven weeks with the completion of the book of Malachi. The former position seems to be better in the context.

g.) It is very difficult to make the text mean anything at all if you divide the seven weeks and the sixty two weeks. The only reason you would do this is if you desperately want to avoid concluding that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah of Israel, and don’t plan to let Hebrew grammar or the plain meaning of the context stop you.

2.) Two anointed ones, or One who is the Messiah the Prince?

a.) Since the seven weeks and the sixty two weeks form one period, not two, the possibility that the Messiah/Anointed One of v. 25 and the Messiah/Anointed One of v. 26 are different is eliminated.

b.) It is plain in context that the Anointed One/Messiah of v. 25 and of v. 26 is the same person. To make this anything else makes no sense at all, charges Daniel with error, and smashes history. The only reason one would cut the verses in pieces like this is if he desperately wishes to avoid the conclusion that Jesus is the Messiah. Attempts to interpret the whole text which try to make the Anointed One/Messiah of v. 25 different from the One of v. 26 fail miserably.

c.) Why “the Messiah the Prince” is a better translation than “an anointed one, a prince.”

I.) The word “Messiah” means “anointed one.” The Messiah is simply a very special Anointed One, whom the others who bore this title were types of. The priests were “anointed” because they foreshadowed Jesus Christ, the Anointed One or Messiah; David also typified Him, as did Solomon, etc. 1 Sam 2:10, 35, Ps 2:2, etc. also refer to Jesus Christ as the Anointed or the Messiah. In 1 Sam 2:10, His exaltation is the song of Hannah (for He was the object of her saving faith); in 2:35, if the priest are to “walk before mine anointed for ever,” more than simply the kingly line of Israel must be in view; and in Psalm 2, the Anointed One must be the Messiah, and not just king David, because all the unconverted and wicked men and their kings do not take counsel against king David, nor are they under his “bands” and “cords” (v. 1-3), but the wicked and their kings are certainly all against the Lord and His Messiah, and they are under His “bands” and “cords.” King David did not ask for or get “the uttermost parts of the earth” for his possession

(v. 8), but the Messiah, the Son of God in Psalm 2 (cf. Dan 3:25), will. Nor did David break with a rod of iron and dash in pieces like a potter's vessel nations that he never conquered at the uttermost parts of the earth (v. 9). Nor is it true that all the kings of the earth needed to tremble before David, and "Kiss the Son, let He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little." (v. 12). Most of the kings of the earth had no idea who David was; what was he to the king of China, or even of Babylon, or Egypt, etc.? They certainly did not need to worry that they would perish if they kindled his wrath but a little. But all the kings of the earth do need to fear the Son of God, the Messiah. Furthermore, "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (v. 12) is ridiculous if it were to refer to David; the Bible consistently says that we should not trust in fallible men, but in the Lord our God. How could all be blessed by trusting in David? This would contradict the rest of the Bible. However, both the Old and New Testaments teach salvation by trusting in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, the Messiah. All who trust in Him are blessed, for they are saved by faith alone, not by works, just as Abraham was saved by faith alone (Gen 15:6), not by works. So it is clear that the Anointed in Scripture can refer to the Great Anointed One, the Messiah. That it does so in Dan 9:25-26 is clear from the associated word "Prince." This refers to Christ, the son of David, in Is 55:4 (KJV "leader") as well. Daniel 9:25 is the only place where the words "Anointed One/Messiah" and "Prince/Ruler" are found together and used of the same individual. This is not any old anointed one; it is the Messiah, the Prince.

II.) *"the Messiah, the Prince"* is a better translation than *"an anointed one, a prince."* Hebrew does not have a definite and an indefinite article; it simply has an article, ה. The use of this article usually means nouns are definite, and מְשִׁיחַ נָּוֶר does indeed not have this article. However, to say that this means that the two words are indefinite does not follow. If it is adding words to say "the" Messiah, "the" Prince, it is also adding words to say "an" Anointed One, "a" Prince, for Hebrew has no indefinite article to correspond to the words "a/an," and so such a word is not found in the text. The lack of the *he* does not necessarily mean that the words are indefinite. And, since a noun without an article "is definite if it is definite in itself, [like]... a title... [or] a common noun that has acquired the value of a proper noun," (pg. 187-188, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar*, C. van der Merwe, J. Naude, & J. Kroeze, Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), the requirements of grammar make the translation *"the Messiah the Prince"* far superior to *"an anointed one a prince"* here. It is both a title, and the word *mashiach* is a common noun that acquires the value of a proper noun. Compare "Omri, the captain of the host" (1 Kings 16:16), where neither "captain" nor "host" have a *he* to indicate they are definite (Heb מְשָׁרְתָיִם - עֹמְרִי), but their status as titles makes them so. cf. 1 Sam 2:8, "the world," for an instance of a common noun made definite because of its acquisition of proper noun value, despite the lack of a ה. To say that the KJV is in error in its translation here is either to indicate a lack of understanding of Biblical Hebrew or intentional dishonesty with the text by one who refuses to accept that the Messiah the Prince is Jesus of Nazareth.

—who are "the people of the prince that shall come?" The people are the Romans, the 4th empire of Daniel 2 + 7, and the prince the coming Antichrist. The "prince that shall come" of v. 26 is the one who confirms the covenant in v. 27. It is not Jesus Christ, and cannot be any other good man, because his people destroy Jerusalem and the sanctuary. It is not Christ because he never "confirmed" an already-existing covenant, never broke such a covenant, and while His death did render animal sacrifices inoperative it did not cause them to cease immediately; men continued to sacrifice until the City was destroyed in A. D. 70. The one in view in v. 27 causes the sacrifices to cease in the midst of the 70th week. The person in view in Daniel 9:27 correlates very well with the wicked person of Dan 7:25, who there "changes times and laws" for "a time and times and the dividing of time," that is, for a year, two years, and half a year, or 3 1/2 years, exactly the same length of time as the one in Dan 9:27 changes times and laws by causing the sacrifice and oblation to cease; half of a "week" of seven years is also 3 1/2 years. Notice also Dan 12:7, which also describes the second half of Daniel's 70th week as "a time, times, and an half," and indicates that this time period will be associated with a bodily resurrection (Dan 12:2)— which is certainly still future!

-It is necessary that a gap exists between the end of the 69th week and the commencement of the 70th week both because the city and sanctuary are destroyed after the 69th week, but are around again in the 70th week (v. 27), because there is a huge amount of information between the last mention of the 69th week and the first mention of the 70th week, and because an examination of v. 24, which states what will happen at the end of the 70 weeks, is clearly yet future. Jews and Jerusalem still sin, so the transgression is not yet finished; permanent reconciliation for iniquity has not yet happened; sins are not brought to an end; it is obvious that the world is not ruled by an everlasting righteousness; all vision and prophecy in Daniel (and elsewhere) has not yet been “sealed up” or fulfilled (cf. Dan 12:4, 9, only other appearances of סֵתַר in Daniel, transl. “seal” and “sealed”), and the Most Holy Place in the Temple is certainly not anointed (since there is no temple yet at all, nor will the Shekinah glory enter there again until the Messiah’s Millennial kingdom; cf. Ezek 43:1-4, chaps. 40-48). Also, the Messiah is cut off “after” the sixty ninth week, not “during” the seventieth week. This provides even more proof that there is a gap.

ADDENDUM: DEFENCE OF “NOT FOR HIMSELF” IN Daniel 9:26.

Hebrew לָּאִיָּוֵל appears in 21 places in the OT. Similar uses include De 12:12, 14:27, 29. All OT appearances: Ex 22:2,3 Le 11:10,12 Nu 27:4,8-10 35:27 De 12:12 14:10,27,29 25:5 Jud 11:34 Ec 4:8 Isa 8:20 55:1 Jer 49:1 Ho 8:7 Am 3:4, Jer 50:32 (with לָּ). Clear evidence that לָּ can mean “for himself”: see Lev 9:8, 16:6, 11, 17, Num 21:53, De 33:21, Jud 3:20, 6:31, 1 Sam 8:11, (stopped here in the search: searched for phrase “for himself” in the KJV and then looked to see what the Hebrew was. The majority of the times the phrase appeared in the ones I checked up to the book of Kings— there were 32 total appearances of the phrase in English— the Hebrew was לָּ. I didn’t bother looking at them all because I had a great many other things to get done and the point was already proved.

Well, that’s the defense of the translation! Now, what does the passage tell us about the Messiah? What I have written below is from a section of my composition on the Internet, “The Book of Daniel: Proof that the Bible is the Word of God,” at <http://faithalonesaves.googlepages.com/salvation>. The endnotes from this section are pasted in at the end of this letter.

At the beginning of chapter nine, the prophet Daniel “understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem” (Dan 9:2; cf. Jer 25:1, 11, 29:10, 2 Ch 36:21, Lev 26:34-35). He anticipated the upcoming end of this period of judgment upon his people, and sought the Lord in fasting and prayer. God sent the angel Gabriel to him, who both informed him of a coming “commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem” (Dan 9:25), which necessarily involved the conclusion of the time of judgment described by Jeremiah, and outlined the course of future history for the holy city and the world under the rubric of a greater and then future “seventy.” Daniel learned:

24 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. 25 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. 26 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. 27 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)

Verse twenty-four details the entire course of the seventy weeks. The following verse separates them into an initial division of seven and a second grouping of sixty-two weeks, while the final week is left without further mention until verse twenty-seven, where its events are given in some detail. Verse twenty-six unfolds the events after the sixty-ninth week but before the seventieth week. The first sixty-nine weeks of Daniel have been historically fulfilled, as we shall shortly see, and we are currently in the time period between the sixty-ninth week and the seventieth week of Daniel. The seventieth week of Daniel 9:27 will cover the period of time described in Revelation 4-19, Daniel 11:36-12:3, and other passages; however, since yet unfulfilled prophecy does not prove the infallibility of Scripture, we will focus on the historical fulfillment of the first sixty-nine weeks.

Before detailed examination of this prophecy in Daniel nine can begin, the nature of the “weeks” must be determined. A variety of factors evidence that the “weeks” of this text are weeks of years, rather than seventy literal weeks, a period of one year and a few months. Daniel had just inquired of God about a period of seventy years (9:2), which suggests year-weeks. Furthermore, the events of 9:27 cover the final “week” of the prophecy, but this “week” is really a seven year period, for half of it is said to be 42 months, or 1,260 days, namely, three and a half years long (Dan 7:25, Rev 11:2, 3, 12:6, 14, 13:5).¹ Since the seventieth “week” is seven years, it is reasonable to conclude that the other sixty-nine “weeks” represent periods of seven years as well. Furthermore, the Hebrew word translated “week” is the same word as that for the number “seven,” so that one could translate Dan 9:25 as “from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven ‘sevens’ and threescore and two ‘sevens.’” Also, Daniel 10:2-3, the only other reference to a “week” in Daniel, immediately after the prophecy we are examining in 9:24-27, specifies in Hebrew a “week of days” (KJV, “full weeks,” v.2, “whole weeks,” v. 3), distinguishing this literal week from the year-weeks of this passage. The natural and reasonable interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27 is that the passage deals with a period of seventy “sevens” of years, that is, $70 \times 7 = 490$ years, so that the first sixty-nine “sevens” or “weeks” refers to a period of 483 years.

Daniel 9:25 informs us, then, that “from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince” 483 years, the first sixty-nine “weeks,” shall pass. The decree to restore and build Jerusalem, including “the street . . . and the wall” (v. 25), issued by king Artaxerxes to Nehemiah in 444 B. C., is referred to in the book of Nehemiah. This decree specifically refers to the restoration of the city (Neh 2:3, 5) and its gates and walls (Neh 2:3, 8). A letter was written to Asaph which

provided for material to be used specifically for the walls (Neh 2:8). The book of Nehemiah discusses extensively the names and sections of the wall that various men rebuilt (cf. Neh 3). Furthermore, the various attempts by the idolatrous enemies of Israel to prevent the wall from being built, from contemptible mocking, to threatening to assassinate Nehemiah, to threatening to attack the city and kill everyone building the wall, so that “the half [built the wall] . . . and the other half of them held both shields, and spears, and the bows, and the habergeons . . . they which builded the wall . . . every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon . . . for the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side . . . half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared” (Neh 4:16-21), clearly fulfill Daniel 9:25’s statement “the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in *troublous times*.” This decree fits the specifications of Daniel 9 exactly. No later decrees were issued by Persian kings pertaining to the rebuilding of Jerusalem.ⁱⁱ We see, then, that Daniel predicted that “the Messiah the Prince” (v. 25) would present Himself 483 years after the decree of king Artaxerxes “to restore and to build Jerusalem” in 444 B. C.ⁱⁱⁱ

The 483 years of Daniel’s prophecy are prophetic or Biblical 360-day years, not modern solar years of 365 days.^{iv} Several factors demonstrate this. First, a 360-day year is used elsewhere in the Bible. Genesis 7:11 states that the flood of Noah began on the 17th day of the second month. Genesis 8:4 declares that the flood ended on the 17th day of the seventh month, that is, exactly five months later. Genesis 7:24 and 8:3 indicate that the duration of the flood was 150 days. Therefore five months equals 150 days, so each month is 30 days, and a year is 360 days.^v The New Testament demonstrates that the years of Daniel 9 are 360 days long as a comparison of Revelation 12:6, 7, 14; 11:2, 3; 13:5 shows; these verses indicate that 1,260 days equals 42 months, which equal three and a half years. Furthermore, since these verses specifically refer to the seventieth week of Daniel (Daniel 9:27), indicating that the seventieth week is reckoned with 360 day years, the other sixty-nine “weeks” are also naturally reckoned with 360 day years. In addition, ancient India, Persia (in whose dominion the decree of Neh 2 was issued), Babylonia and Assyria, Egypt, Central and South America, and China all had 360 day years. Most had twelve 30 day months, and a few had eighteen twenty day months. They then had a variety of ways to play “catch up” to make these years work out to solar years. It was common, then, in ancient times to think of a 360 day year. The prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27, then, predicted the Messiah the Prince 483 years of 360 days each after the decree of Artaxerxes to restore and build Jerusalem in 444 B. C.

To figure out what year Daniel predicted “the Messiah the Prince,”^{vi} all that remains is simple calculation:

- I.) Convert 483 prophetic (360 day) years to days: $483 \times 360 = 173,880$ days.
- II.) Convert to solar years: $173,880 \text{ days} \div c. 365.25 \text{ days per solar year} = 173,880 / 365.25 = 476$ solar years.
- III.) Move forward 476 years from 444 B.C.: $444 - 476 = -32$ (A. D. 32).
- IV.) Add one year since there was no year zero: $32 + 1 = \text{A.D. } 33$.
- V.) The Old Testament predicted that the Messiah would be “cut off, but not for Himself” in A. D. 33.

We see that Daniel predicted that the Messiah would be “cut off, but not for himself” (9:26) in A. D. 33. “Cut off” is a Biblical term for death (i. e., Genesis 9:11, Exodus 31:14) with the implication of the receipt of God’s curse. It was the perfect term to use to predict Jesus Christ’s bearing the curse of God for the sins of the world on the cross (cf. Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Galatians 3:10-14). The Messiah would die under God’s curse, but “not for himself” (Daniel 9:26); He would die for the sake of others. The prophet Daniel predicted, over 500 years in advance, that the Messiah would die in A. D. 33, the exact year of the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ.^{vii}

To predict the death of Jesus Christ to the year in this manner constitutes a truly astonishing prophecy. However, Daniel’s prediction goes even beyond this. Artaxerxes’ decree would have been issued on March 5, 444 B. C.^{viii} We proceed to crunch the numbers with precision:

I.) Convert 483 prophetic (360 day) years to days: $483 \times 360 = 173,880$ days.

II.) Convert to solar years: $173,880 \text{ days} \div \text{exactly } 365.24219878^{\text{ix}} \text{ days per solar year} = 476.06766299$ years.

III.) Moving forward 476 years from 444 B. C. brings us to A. D. 33, since there is no year zero, as mentioned before. This leaves us with 0.06766299 of a year, which is 24.713379244 days, since $0.06766299 \times 365.24219878 = 24.713379244$.

IV.) Rounding off, we have 25 days. Exactly 476 years after March 5, 444 B. C, when the decree was issued, brings us to March 5, A. D. 33. Adding 25 days, one comes to March 30 of A. D. 33 for the exact day the sixty-nine weeks concluded.

The sixty-nine weeks of the prophecy of Daniel 9 ended on March 30 of A. D. 33. This is the exact day of Jesus Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem, when He officially presented Himself as the Messiah to Israel.^x Zechariah 9:9 reads, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he *is* just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.” Christ, proclaiming Himself the King predicted in Zechariah, entered the city on that day sitting upon a donkey while great crowds, knowing that He had recently raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11; 12:12), shouted “Hosanna to the Son of David [a Messianic title, Isaiah 11:1ff, 1 Chronicles 17:7-14, etc.]: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest” (Matthew 21:9). Jesus’ entry in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9 asserted that He was the Messiah, and the crowds that came to meet Him recognized and shouted agreement with His claim. When the Lord Jesus entered Jerusalem that day when Daniel 9:25 was fulfilled, He “beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation” (Luke 19:41-44). The Lord Jesus Christ, the all-knowing God, knew that the sixty-nine weeks His servant Daniel had prophesied about ended that day; He wept that Israel did not recognize it. He said to Jerusalem that this was “this thy day” and “the time of thy visitation” because it was the exact day that the weeks of Daniel 9:25

were finished. Daniel chapter nine predicted to the exact year and day of the presentation of Jesus Christ to Israel as the Messiah.

Daniel predicted that “after” the sixty-nine weeks were over the Messiah would be “cut off, but not for himself” (v. 26), referring to His substitutionary death. He then states, “The people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.” The “prince that shall come,” whose “people” shall destroy Jerusalem and its sanctuary, is the Antichrist,^{xi} who is spoken of in 9:27, 11:36-45, 2 Thess 2:1-12, Rev 13, etc. Daniel two and seven predicted that this future world ruler would arise from the fourth world empire Daniel foresaw, Rome. Consequently, the “people of the prince that shall come” are the Romans. Daniel predicted that the Romans would, after the Messiah was cut off, “destroy the city and the sanctuary” (9:26). In A. D. 70 the Romans, responding to a Jewish revolt, invaded and destroyed Jerusalem and leveled the temple. In Luke 19:41-44, immediately after Christ weeps over Jerusalem for not realizing that her “day,” the end of the sixty-ninth week of Daniel, had arrived, He told the inhabitants of Jerusalem: “Thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground,” as judgment upon the city for rejecting Him, and in fulfillment of Daniel 9:26. He predicted that the temple would not have left “one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down” (Mt 24:2, Mr 13:2, Lu 21:6), and warned His disciples to flee out of Judea when Jerusalem would be “compassed with armies . . . [for then] the desolation thereof is nigh . . . and they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles . . . that all things which are written may be fulfilled” (Lu 21:20-24). This prediction of Daniel, confirmed by Christ^{xii} as He fulfilled the preceding section of the prophecy, took place exactly as stated.

Daniel chapter nine, over five hundred years beforehand, predicted that the Messiah would come in A. D. 33, specifically on March 30. On March 30, A. D. 33, Jesus Christ officially presented Himself as the Messiah to the nation of Israel. Daniel then predicted that the Messiah would die a substitutionary death, which Jesus Christ did four days later. After this, Daniel predicted that Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed by the Romans. This took place in A. D. 70. These predictions could not have happened by chance. Nor can one say that the book of Daniel was composed after the events of Daniel 9 took place; the book is written in sixth century Hebrew and Aramaic, and was translated into Greek far before the fulfillment of Daniel 9—it is hard to translate a book that has not yet been written—and we have Hebrew manuscripts of the book in the Dead Sea Scrolls that were copied far earlier than the time these predictions were fulfilled. The prophecies of Daniel 9 prove beyond any doubt that the Bible is indeed the Word of the one true God.

Thus, it looks to me like Daniel 9:24-27 predicts that the Messiah would come on March 30, A. D. 33, and that is the exact day that Jesus presented himself as the Messiah by entering Jerusalem on a donkey in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9. Furthermore, Daniel 9:24-27 predicts that the Messiah would have to come before the city of Jerusalem was destroyed, as it was in A. D. 70 by the Romans. While I realize this analysis of the passage has been somewhat lengthy, what alternative interpretation can be maintained and make sense of the context? Could it possibly be sheer chance that Jesus presented

himself as the Messiah on the exact day predicted by the prophet Daniel? Who else could be the Messiah, if the Messiah needed to come before the city of Jerusalem was destroyed?

-----, I would think that after the years you have studied already, and with your desire to study to the depth required for being a Rabbi, you might be able to explain how I am misinterpreting the texts above, Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Micah 5:2; Daniel 9:24-27; and the others mentioned, if I am doing so. I believe you sincerely desire to follow the God of Israel and do whatever He says in His Word—that is likewise my desire, out of love for Him. Thus, I look forward to hearing what you have to say about these texts. Again, I would also be happy to hear what someone else you know who is also devoted to the study of the Scriptures would have to say. Thanks so much, -----, for reading through this really long letter!

Your friend,

Thomas Ross

Endnotes to the Daniel 9:24-27 analysis:

ⁱ 1,260 days = 42 months of 30 days each = 3.5 years.

ⁱⁱ The decree mentioned in Daniel 9:25 cannot be the earlier pronouncement of king Cyrus in 539 B. C. (2 Chronicles 36:22-23, Ezra 1:1-4, 6:3-5). Cyrus' decree related specifically to the rebuilding of the temple, and said nothing about the streets or walls of Jerusalem. It is very clear that later, just before Artaxerxes' decree, which actually set the clock ticking on the Daniel 9 prophecy, "the wall of Jerusalem [was still] . . . broken down, and the gates thereof . . . burned with fire" (Neh 1:3. cf. 2:13-14). Nor can it refer to the decree of Darius of 519/518 B. C., because this just confirmed Cyrus' original decree and again specifically refers to the temple alone. (Ezra 5:3-6:12). Nor is the decree of Artaxerxes to Ezra in 457 B. C. in view, for this decree related to the return of more exiles with Ezra, the further enhancement of the temple and its accompanying worship, and the appointment of civil leaders (Ezra 7:11-26), not to the restoration and rebuilding of the streets and walls of Jerusalem, as Daniel 9 specifies. The decree of Daniel 9 simply must be the 444 B. C. pronouncement of Artaxerxes.

ⁱⁱⁱ We can determine the date of this decree from the Biblical record. First, we note that Nehemiah 1:1 states that Nehemiah heard of Jerusalem's desolate conditions in the month Chislev (November/December) in Artaxerxes' 20th year. Later in Artaxerxes 20th year, in the month Nisan (March/April), he was granted permission to restore the

city and build its walls. To have Nisan after Chislew in the same year may seem strange unless one realizes that Nehemiah was using a Tishri to Tishri (September/October) dating method rather than the Persian Nisan to Nisan method. Nehemiah in this was following the example of the kings of Judah earlier in their history (see *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, Edwin R. Thiele, rev. ed.; Grand Rapids, 1965, pgs. 28-30, 161). Secondly, we can establish the time of the commencement of Artaxerxes' rule. His father Xerxes died shortly after December 17, 465 B. C., and his son immediately succeeded him. Since the accession-year system (in which the first year of a king's reign was reckoned from the first day of the following New Year, so that Artaxerxes' 1st year was considered to begin the first Nisan after December 17, 465 B. C.) was used, the first year of Artaxerxes' reign according to the Persian Nisan to Nisan reckoning would be Nisan 464 to Nisan 463, and according to Jewish Tishri to Tishri reckoning it would be Tishri 464 to Tishri 463. This would mean that the report to Nehemiah (1:1) occurred in Chislew (Nov-Dec) of 445 B. C., and the decree of Artaxerxes (2:1), which set the clock ticking in the Daniel 9 prophecy, occurred in Nisan (March/April) of 444 B. C.

^{iv} Our calendars include leap years because solar years are actually approximately 365.25 days long, specifically 365.24219878 days long, that is, 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 49.75 seconds long.

^v It is noteworthy that Hebrew also employs the same word for "new moon" and "month" (cf. 1 Sam 20:5, Gen 7:11, etc.), so a non-solar calendar is natural for this prophecy.

^{vi} The Hebrew word "Messiah" is the same as the Greek word "Christ," both signifying "Anointed One" and referring to the great King predicted throughout the Old Testament who appeared in the New in the Lord Jesus.

^{vii} For evidence that this was the year of Christ's crucifixion, see pgs. 95-114 of *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, Harold W. Hoehner (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1977). The analysis on pgs. 115-140 of the same volume constituted an important source for much of the material on Daniel presented here.

^{viii} See pgs. 137-138, Hoehner, *Chronology of the Life of Christ*.

^{ix} See note #4.

^x Jesus Christ was crucified on Friday, Nisan 14 (April 3) of A. D. 33. Christ's entry into Jerusalem, presenting Himself as Israel's Messiah, took place the previous Monday (Mt 21:1-11 Mr 11:1-11, Lu 19:28-44, John 12:12-16). Four days later, as Daniel 9 states, "after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself," He was sacrificed as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world, and, in fulfillment of the type of the firstfruits (Lev 23:9-14, 1 Cor 15:23) offered the day after the Sabbath, He rose again from the grave on Sunday (Mt 18:1-15, Mark 19:1-20, Lu 24:1-35). For more detail on the day of Christ's crucifixion and His final week, see Hoehner, *Chronology*, pgs. 65-93.

^{xi} The ruler mentioned in this part of Daniel 9:26 and of 9:27 is not Jesus Christ, but Antichrist, because his people destroy Jerusalem and its sanctuary, because Christ never "confirmed" an already-existing covenant, and because He never broke such a covenant. Also, this person causes sacrifices to cease in the midst of Daniel's 70th week; while Christ made such offerings unneeded, He did not make temple sacrifices cease immediately, since they continued to be offered until the destruction of the temple in A.

D. 70. This “prince” is the wicked person of Daniel 7:25, who there “changes times and laws” for “a time and times and the dividing of time,” that is, for a year, two years, and half a year, or 3 1/2 years, exactly the same length of time as the one in Dan 9:27 changes times and laws by causing the sacrifice and oblation to cease.

^{xii} It is noteworthy that the gospel of Luke was written c. A. D. 56-60, and, since Jerusalem was destroyed in A. D. 70, Jesus’ own words, spoken in A. D. 33 and enscripturated before the prophecy was fulfilled, are also an unmistakable instance of predictive prophecy. In 1 Timothy 5:18, the epistle of 1 Timothy, written by the apostle Paul c. A. D. 62-66, quotes Luke 10:7 as a book of “scripture.” It is very difficult to quote from and call a book Scripture that has not yet been written. Note that the quotation also happens a number of years before the Lord Jesus’ prediction recorded in Luke was fulfilled. Furthermore, the gospels of Matthew and Mark also record Jesus’ prophecy of the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem, and both of these were also written far before A. D. 70. For more information on the dating of the various New Testament books, see, among others, *Introduction to the New Testament*, Henry Thiessen, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1950.