

Part I, Chapter X: Of the Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks

Author: Isaac Newton

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CHAP. X.

Of the Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks.

The Vision of the Image composed of four Metals was given first to *Nebuchadnezzar*, and then to *Daniel* in a dream: and *Daniel* began then to be celebrated for revealing of secrets, *Ezek.* xxviii. 3. The Vision of the four Beasts, and of the *Son of man* coming in the clouds of heaven, was also given to *Daniel* in a dream. That of the Ram and the He-Goat appeared to him in the day time, when he was by the bank of the river *Ulay*; and was explained to him by the prophetic Angel *Gabriel*. It concerns the *Prince of the host*, and the *Prince of Princes*: and now in the first year of *Darius the Mede* over *Babylon*, the same prophetic Angel appears to *Daniel* again, and explains to him what is meant by the *Son of man*, by the *Prince of the host*, and the *Prince of Princes*. The Prophecy of the *Son of man* coming in the clouds of heaven relates to the second coming of *Christ*; that of the *Prince of the host* relates to his first coming: and this Prophecy of the *Messiah*, in explaining them, relates to both comings, and assigns the times thereof.

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This Prophecy, like all the rest of *Daniel's*, consists of two parts, an introductory Prophecy and an explanation thereof; the whole I thus translate and interpret.

[1] *Seventy weeks are [2] cut out upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression, and [3] to make an end of sins, to expiate iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, to consummate the Vision and [4] the Prophet, and to anoint the most Holy.*

'Know also and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to cause to return and to build Jerusalem, unto [5] the Anointed the Prince, shall be seven weeks.

'Yet threescore and two weeks shall [6] it return, and the street be built and the wall; but in troublesome times: and after the threescore and two weeks, the Anointed shall be cut off, and [7] it shall not be his; but the people of a Prince to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary: and the end thereof shall be <130> with a flood, and unto the end of the war, desolations are determined.

'Yet shall he confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in half a week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease: and upon a wing of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that which is determined be poured upon the desolate.'

Seventy weeks are cut out upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression, &c. Here, by putting a week for seven years, are reckoned 490 years from the time that the dispersed Jews should be re-incorporated into [8] a people and a holy city, until the death and resurrection of *Christ*; whereby

transgression should be finished, and sins ended, iniquity be expiated, and everlasting righteousness brought in, and this Vision be accomplished, and the Prophet consummated, that Prophet whom the Jews expected; and whereby *the most Holy* should be *anointed*, he who is therefore in the next words called the *Anointed*, that is, the *Messiah*, or the *Christ*. For by joining the accomplishment of the vision with the expiation of sins, the 490 years are ended with the death of *Christ*. Now the dispersed *Jews* became a people and city when they first returned into a polity or body politick; and this was in the seventh year <131> of *Artaxerxes Longimanus*, when *Ezra* returned with a body of *Jews* from captivity, and revived the *Jewish* worship; and by the King's commission created Magistrates in all the land, to judge and govern the people according to the laws of God and the King, *Ezra* vii. 25. There were but two returns from captivity, *Zerubbabel's* and *Ezra's*; in *Zerubbabel's* they had only commission to build the Temple, in *Ezra's* they first became a polity or city by a government of their own. Now the years of this *Artaxerxes* began about two or three months after the summer solstice, and his seventh year fell in with the third year of the eightieth *Olympiad*; and the latter part thereof, wherein *Ezra* went up to *Jerusalem*, was in the year of the *Julian Period* 4257. Count the time from thence to the death of *Christ*, and you will find it just 490 years. If you count in *Judaic* years commencing in autumn, and date the reckoning from the first autumn after *Ezra's* coming to *Jerusalem*, when he put the King's decree in execution; the death of *Christ* will fall on the year of the *Julian Period* 4747, *Anno Domini* 34; and the weeks will be *Judaic* weeks, ending with sabbatical years; and this I take to be the truth: but if you had rather place the death of *Christ* in the year before, as is com <132> monly done, you may take the year of *Ezra's* journey into the reckoning.

Know also and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to cause to return and to build Jerusalem, unto the Anointed the Prince, shall be seven weeks. The former part of the Prophecy related to the first coming of *Christ*, being dated to his coming as a Prophet; this being dated to his coming to be Prince or King, seems to relate to his second coming. There, the Prophet was consummate, and the most holy anointed: here, he that was anointed comes to be Prince and to reign. For *Daniel's* Prophecies reach to the end of the world; and there is scarce a Prophecy in the Old Testament concerning *Christ*, which doth not in something or other relate to his second coming. If divers of the antients, as ^[9] *Irenæus*, ^[10] *Julius Africanus*, *Hippolytus* the martyr, and *Apollinaris* Bishop of *Laodicea*, applied the half week to the times of *Antichrist*; why may not we, by the same liberty of interpretation, apply the seven weeks to the time when *Antichrist* shall be destroyed by the brightness of *Christ's* coming?

The *Israelites* in the days of the antient Prophets, when the ten Tribes were led into captivity, expected a double return; and that at the <133> first the *Jews* should build a new Temple inferior to *Solomon's*, until the time of that age should be fulfilled; and afterwards they should return from all places of their captivity, and build *Jerusalem* and the Temple gloriously, *Tobit* xiv. 4, 5, 6: and to express the glory and excellence of this city, it is figuratively said to be built of precious stones, *Tobit* xiii. 16, 17, 18. *Isa.* liv. 11, 12. *Rev.* xi. and called the *New Jerusalem*, the *Heavenly Jerusalem*, the *Holy City*, the *Lamb's Wife*, the *City of the Great King*, the *City into which the Kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour*. Now while such a return from captivity was the expectation of *Israel*, even before the times of *Daniel*, I know not why *Daniel* should omit it in his Prophecy. This part of the Prophecy being therefore not yet fulfilled, I shall not attempt a particular interpretation of it, but content myself with observing, that as the *seventy* and the *sixty two weeks* were *Jewish* weeks, ending with sabbatical years; so the *seven weeks* are the compass of a *Jubilee*, and begin and end with actions proper for a *Jubilee*, and of the highest nature for which a *Jubilee* can be kept: and that since *the commandment to return and to build Jerusalem*, precedes the *Messiah the Prince* 49 years; it may perhaps come forth not from the *Jews* themselves, but <134> from some other kingdom friendly to them, and precede their return from captivity, and give occasion to it; and lastly, that this rebuilding of *Jerusalem* and the waste places of *Judah* is predicted in *Micah* vii. 11. *Amos* ix. 11, 14. *Ezek.* xxxvi. 33, 35, 36, 38. *Isa.* liv. 3, 11, 12. lv. 12. lxi. 4. lxv. 18, 21, 22. and *Tobit* xiv. 5. and that the return from captivity and coming of the *Messiah* and his kingdom are described in *Daniel* vii. *Rev.* xix. *Acts* i. *Mat.* xxiv. *Joel* iii. *Ezek.* xxxvi. xxxvii. *Isa.* lx. lxii. lxiii. lxv. and lxvi. and many other places of scripture. The manner I know not. Let time be the Interpreter.

Yet threescore and two weeks shall it return, and the street be built and the wall, but in troublesome times: and after the threescore and two weeks the Messiah shall be cut off, and it shall not be his; but the people of a Prince to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, &c. Having foretold both comings of *Christ*, and dated the last from their returning and building *Jerusalem*; to prevent the applying that to the building *Jerusalem* by *Nehemiah*, he distinguishes this from that, by saying that from this period to the *Anointed* shall

be, not seven weeks, but threescore and two weeks, and this not in prosperous but in troublesome times; and at the end of these Weeks the *Messiah* shall <135> not be the Prince of the *Jews*, but be cut off; and *Jerusalem* not be his, but the city and sanctuary be destroyed. Now *Nehemiah* came to *Jerusalem* in the 20th year of this same *Artaxerxes*, while *Ezra* still continued there, *Nehem.* xii. 36, and found the city lying waste, and the houses and wall unbuilt, *Nehem.* ii. 17. vii. 4, and finished the wall the 25th day of the month *Elul*, *Nehem.* vi. 15, in the 28th year of the King, that is, in *September* in the year of the *Julian Period* 4278. Count now from this year threescore and two weeks of years, that is 434 years, and the reckoning will end in *September* in the year of the *Julian Period* 4712 which is the year in which *Christ* was born, according to *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Irenæus*, *Eusebius*, *Epiphanius*, *Jerome*, *Orosius*, *Cassiodorus*, and other antients; and this was the general opinion, till *Dionysius Exiguus* invented the vulgar account, in which *Christ's* birth is placed two years later. If with some you reckon that *Christ* was born three or four years before the vulgar account, yet his birth will fall in the latter part of the last week, which is enough. How after these weeks *Christ* was cut off, and the city and sanctuary destroyed by the *Romans*, is well known.

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Yet shall he confirm the covenant with many for one week. He kept it, notwithstanding his death, till the rejection of the *Jews*, and calling of *Cornelius* and the *Gentiles* in the seventh year after his passion.

And in half a week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease; that is, by the war of the *Romans* upon the *Jews*: which war, after some commotions, began in the 13th year of *Nero*, A.D. 67, in the spring, when *Vespasian* with an army invaded them; and ended in the second year of *Vespasian*, A.D. 70, in autumn, *Sept.* 7, when *Titus* took the city, having burnt the Temple 27 days before: so that it lasted three years and an half.

And upon a wing of abominations he shall cause desolation, even until the consummation, and that which is determined be poured upon the desolate. The Prophets, in representing kingdoms by Beasts and Birds, put their wings stretcht out over any country for their armies sent out to invade and rule over that country. Hence a wing of abominations is an army of false Gods: for an abomination is often put in scripture for a false God; as where *Chemosh* is called ^[11]the abomination of *Moab*, and *Molech* the abomination of *Ammon*. The meaning therefore is, that the people of a Prince to come shall destroy the sanctuary, and abolish the daily <137> worship of the true God, and overspread the land with an army of false gods; and by setting up their dominion and worship, cause desolation to the *Jews*, until the times of the *Gentiles* be fulfilled. For *Christ* tells us, that the abomination of desolation spoken of by *Daniel* was to be set up in the times of the *Roman Empire*, *Matth.* xxiv. 15.

Thus have we in this short Prophecy, a prediction of all the main periods relating to the coming of the *Messiah*; the time of his birth, that of his death, that of the rejection of the *Jews*, the duration of the *Jewish* war whereby he caused the city and sanctuary to be destroyed, and the time of his second coming: and so the interpretation here given is more full and complete and adequate to the design, than if we should restrain it to his first coming only, as Interpreters usually do. We avoid also the doing violence to the language of *Daniel*, by taking the *seven weeks* and *sixty two weeks* for one number. Had that been *Daniel's* meaning, he would have said *sixty and nine weeks*, and not *seven weeks* and *sixty two weeks*, a way of numbring used by no nation. In our way the years are *Jewish Luni-solar years*, ^[12]as they <139> ought to be; and the *seventy weeks of years* are *Jewish weeks* ending with *sabbatical years*, which is very remarkable. For they end either with the year of the birth of *Christ*, two years before the vulgar account, or with the year of his death, or with the seventh year after it: all which are *sabbatical years*. Others either count by Lunar years, or by weeks not *Judaic*: and, which is worst, they ground their interpretations on erroneous Chronology, excepting the opinion of *Funccius* about the *seventy weeks*, which is the same with ours. For they place *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* in the reign of *Artaxerxes Mnemon*, and the building of the Temple in the reign of *Darius Nothus*, and date the weeks of *Daniel* from those two reigns.

The grounds of the Chronology here followed, I will now set down as briefly as I can.

The *Peloponnesian* war began in spring An. 1 *Olymp.* 87, as *Diodorus*, *Eusebius*, and all other authors agree. It began two months before *Pythodorus* ceased to be *Archon*, *Thucyd.* l. 2. that is, in *April*, two months before the end of the *Olympic* year. Now the years of this war are most certainly determined by the 50 years distance of its first year from the transit of *Xerxes* inclusively, *Thucyd.* l. 2. or 48 years exclusively, *Eratosth. apud*

Clem. Alex. by the 69 years distance of its end, or 27th <140> year, from the beginning of *Alexander's* reign in *Greece*; by the acting of the *Olympic* games in its 4th and 12th years, *Thucyd.* l. 5; and by three eclipses of the sun, and one of the moon, mentioned by *Thucydides* and *Xenophon*. Now *Thucydides*, an unquestionable witness, tells us, that the news of the death of *Artaxerxes Longimanus* was brought to *Ephesus*, and from thence by some *Athenians* to *Athens*, in the 7th year of this *Peloponnesian* war, when the winter half year was running; and therefore he died *An. 4 Olymp.* 88, in the end of *An. J.P.* 4289, suppose a month or two before midwinter; for so long the news would be in coming. Now *Artaxerxes Longimanus* reigned 40 years, by the consent of *Diodorus*, *Eusebius*, *Jerome*, *Sulpitius*; or 41, according to *Ptol. in can. Clem. Alexand.* l. 1. *Strom. Chron. Alexandr. Abulpharagius*, *Nicephorus*, including therein the reign of his successors *Xerxes* and *Sogdian*, as *Abulpharagius* informs us. After *Artaxerxes* reigned his son *Xerxes* two months, and *Sogdian* seven months; but their reign is not reckoned apart in summing up the years of the Kings, but is included in the 40 or 41 years reign of *Artaxerxes*: omit these nine months, and the precise reign of *Artaxerxes* will be thirty nine years and three months. And therefore since his reign ended in the be <141> ginning of winter *An. J.P.* 4289, it began between midsummer and autumn, *An. J.P.* 4250.

The same thing I gather also thus. *Cambyses* began his reign in spring *An. J.P.* 4185, and reigned eight years, including the five months of *Smerdes*; and then *Darius Hystaspis* began in spring *An. J.P.* 4193, and reigned thirty six years, by the unanimous consent of all Chronologers. The reigns of these two Kings are determined by three eclipses of the moon observed at *Babylon*, and recorded by *Ptolemy*; so that it cannot be disputed. One was in the seventh year of *Cambyses*, *An. J.P.* 4191, *Jul.* 16, at 11 at night; another in the 20th year of *Darius*, *An. J.P.* 4212, *Nov.* 19, at 11^h. 45' at night; a third in the 31st year of *Darius*, *An. J.P.* 4223, *Apr.* 25, at 11^h. 30 at night. By these eclipses, and the Prophecies of *Haggai* and *Zechary* compared together, it is manifest that his years began after the 24th day of the 11th *Jewish* month, and before the 25th day of *April*, and by consequence about *March*. *Xerxes* therefore began in spring *An. J.P.* 4229: for *Darius* died in the fifth year after the battle at *Marathon*, as *Herodotus*, *lib.* 7, and *Plutarch* mention; and that battle was in *October* *An. J.P.* 4224, ten years before the battle at *Salamis*. *Xerxes* therefore began within less than a year after *October* *An. J.P.* 4228, suppose in the spring following: for he <142> spent his first five years, and something more, in preparations for his expedition against the *Greeks*; and this expedition was in the time of the *Olympic* games, *An. 1 Olymp.* 75, *Calliade Athenis Archonte*, 28 years after the *Regifuge*, and Consulship of the first Consul *Junius Brutus*, *Anno Urbis conditæ* 273, *Fabio & Furio Coss.* The passage of *Xerxes's* army over the *Hellespont* began in the end of the fourth year of the 74th *Olympiad*, that is, in *June* *An. J.P.* 4234, and took up one month: and in autumn, three months after, on the full moon, the 16th day of the month *Munychion*, was the battle at *Salamis*, and a little after that an eclipse of the sun, which by the calculation fell on *Octob.* 2. His sixth year therefore began a little before *June*, suppose in spring *An. J.P.* 4234, and his first year consequently in spring *An. J.P.* 4229, as above. Now he reigned almost twenty one years, by the consent of all writers. Add the 7 months of *Artabanus*, and the sum will be 21 years and about four or five months, which end between midsummer and autumn *An. J.P.* 4250. At this time therefore began the reign of his successor *Artaxerxes*, as was to be proved.

The same thing is also confirmed by *Julius Africanus*, who informs us out of former writers, that the 20th year of this *Artaxerxes* was the 115th year from the beginning of the reign of <143> *Cyrus* in *Persia*, and fell in with *An. 4 Olymp.* 83. It began therefore with the *Olympic* year, soon after the summer Solstice, *An. J.P.* 4269. Subduct nineteen years, and his first year will begin at the same time of the year *An. J.P.* 4250, as above.

His 7th year therefore began after midsummer *An. J.P.* 4256; and the Journey of *Ezra* to *Jerusalem* in the spring following fell on the beginning of *An. J.P.* 4257, as above.

[1] Chap. ix. 24, 25, 26, 27.

[2] *Cut upon*. A phrase in *Hebrew*, taken from the practise of numbring by cutting notches.

[3] *Heb. to seal*, i.e. to finish or consummate: a metaphor taken from sealing what is finished. So the *Jews* compute, *ad obsignatum Misna*, *ad obsignatum Talmud*, that is, *ad absolutum*.

[4] *Heb. the Prophet*, not the Prophecy.

[5] Heb. *the Messiah*, that is, in *Greek*, *the Christ*; in *English*, *the Anointed*. I use the *English* word, that the relation of this clause to the former may appear.

[6] *Jerusalem*.

[7] *Jerusalem*.

[8] See *Isa.* xxiii. 13.

[9] *Iren.* l. 5. *Hær.* c. 25.

[10] *Apud Hieron.* in h. l.

[11] 1 *Kings* xi. 7.

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The antient solar years of the eastern nations consisted of 12 months, and every month of 30 days: and hence came the division of a circle into 360 degrees. This year seems to be used by *Moses* <138> in his history of the Flood, and by *John* in the *Apocalypse*, where a time, times and half a time, 42 months and 1260 days, are put equipollent. But in reckoning by many of these years together, an account is to be kept of the odd days which were added to the end of these years. For the *Egyptians* added five days to the end of this year; and so did the *Chaldeans* long before the times of *Daniel*, as appears by the *Æra*, of *Nabonassar*: and the *Persian* Magi used the same year of 365 days, till the Empire of the *Arabians*. The antient *Greeks* also used the same solar year of 12 equal months, or 360 days; but every other year added an intercalary month, consisting of 10 and 11 days alternately.

The year of the *Jews*, even from their coming out of *Egypt*, was Luni-solar. It was solar, for the harvest always followed the Passover, and the fruits of the land were always gathered before the feast of Tabernacles, *Levit.* xxiii. But the months were lunar, for the people were commanded by *Moses* in the beginning of every month to blow with trumpets, and offer burnt offerings with their drink offerings, *Num.* x. 10. xxviii. 11, 14. and this solemnity was kept on the new moons, *Psal.* lxxxix. 3, 4, 5. 1 *Chron.* xxiii. 31. These months were called by *Moses* the first, second, third, fourth month, &c. and the first month was also called *Abib*, the second *Zif*, the seventh *Ethanim*, the eighth *Bull*, *Exod.* xiii. 4. 1 *Kings* vi. 37, 38. viii. 2. But in the *Babylonian* captivity the *Jews* used the names of the *Chaldean* months, and by those names understood the months of their own year; so that the *Jewish* months then lost their old names, and are now called by those of the *Chaldeans*.

The *Jews* began their civil year from the autumnal Equinox, and their sacred year from the vernal: and the first day of the first month was on the visible new moon, which was nearest the Equinox.

Whether *Daniel* used the *Chaldaick* or *Jewish* year, is not very material; the difference being but six hours in a year, and 4 months in 480 years. But I take his months to be *Jewish*: first, because *Daniel* was a *Jew*, and the *Jews* even by the names of the *Chaldean* months understood the months of their own year: secondly, because this Prophecy is grounded on *Jeremiah's* concerning the 70 years captivity, and therefore must be understood of the same sort of years with the seventy; and those are *Jewish*, since that Prophecy was given in *Judea* before the captivity: and lastly, because *Daniel* reckons by weeks of years, which is a way of reckoning peculiar to the *Jewish* years. For as their days ran by sevens, and the last day of every seven was a sabbath; so their years ran by sevens, and the last year of every seven was a sabbatical year, and seven such weeks of years made a *Jubilee*.
