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# Gabriel's testimony concerning 1844

A recognized Adventist scholar attests the validity of the dating of the 2300-year prophecy.

By EDWIN R. THIELE

When the angel Gabriel is sent with a message from God, he comes, of course, with the authority of God. That was true when Gabriel was commissioned to help

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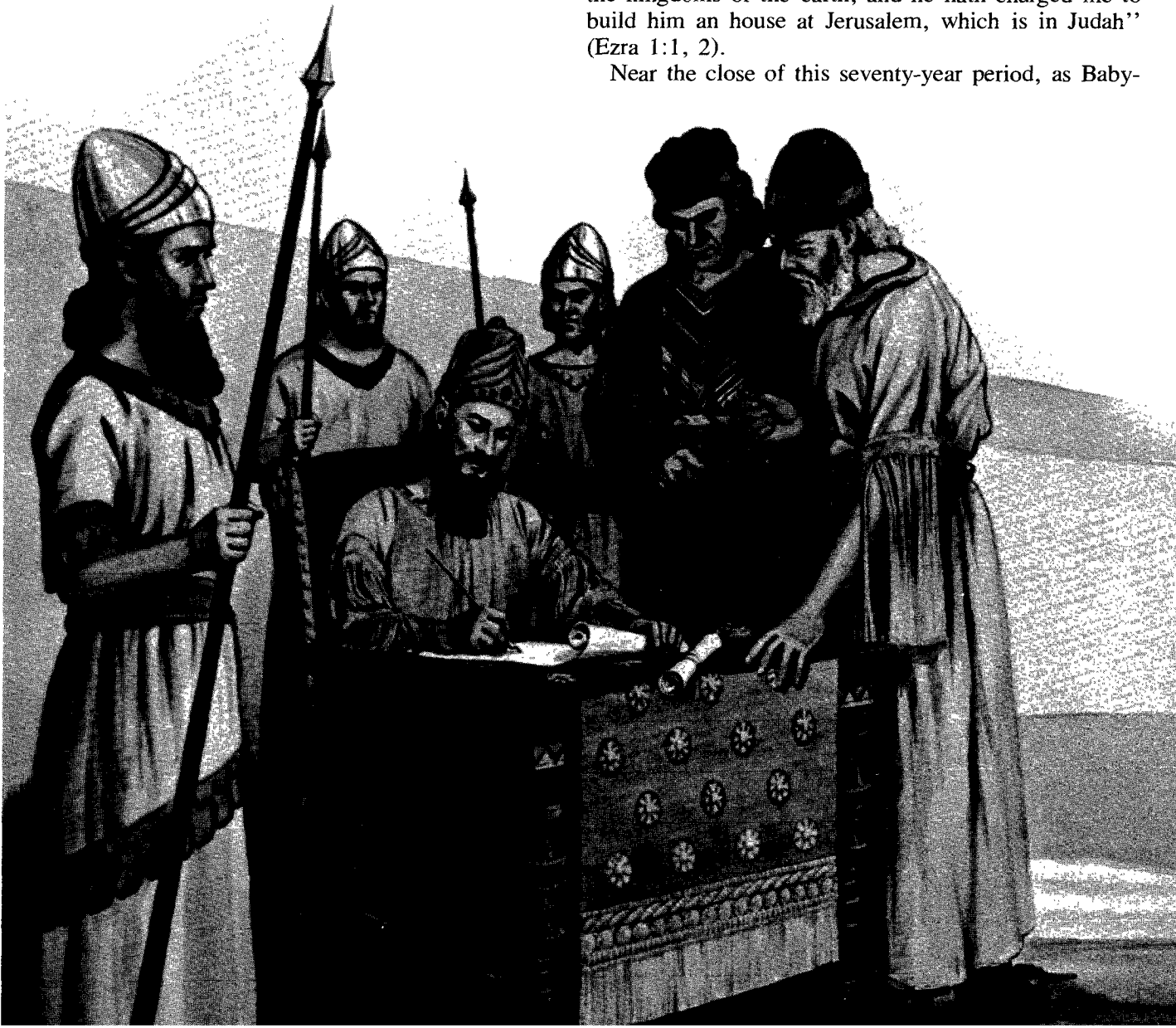
Daniel with the serious problem he was having with the time period involved in the prophecy of the 2300 days recorded in Daniel 8:14.

Daniel had been taken to Babylon in 605 B.C. when the armies of Nebuchadnezzar entered Judea. Later, in 586 B.C., the Babylonian armies captured Jerusalem, defiled its holy places, and destroyed the Temple.

God had given Jeremiah a message concerning the time of the restoration of Jerusalem: "After seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place" (Jer. 29:10).

When the armies of Media and Persia conquered Babylon in 539 B.C., Daniel realized from his study of Jeremiah's prophecy that the time was near for Jerusalem's restoration (Dan. 9:2). Subsequently, in 538, "in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, . . . saying, . . . The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah" (Ezra 1:1, 2).

Near the close of this seventy-year period, as Baby-



lon's doom was approaching "in the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar" (Dan. 8:1), an important vision was given to Daniel. He saw a ram, a rough goat, a great horn, and a little horn that warred against Christ, "the prince of the host," and against the saints of God and His sanctuary (verses 3-13).

In answer to the question, "How long shall be the vision . . . to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?" the forthright answer was given, "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (verses 13, 14). The translation "cleansed" is based on the word used in the Septuagint, the Greek Bible. The Hebrew word used here can be translated "vindicated" or "restored."

As Daniel sought the meaning of the vision, Gabriel was sent to explain it. He told the prophet that the ram represented Media and Persia, the rough goat was Greece, and Greece would be followed by a "king of fierce countenance" who would "stand up against the Prince of princes: but he shall be broken without hand" (verses 20-25).

The machinations of Satan were revealed in this vision as he warred desperately against God, against the saints of God, and against His sanctuary. But the downfall of the enemy also was foretold.

The question of time seems to have been of major concern to Daniel. The vision came as Babylon was approaching its end and the time of the restoration of Jerusalem was near. Daniel had seen the enemy riding high and had heard the question asked as to how long "both the sanctuary and the host" were "to be trodden under foot." The clear answer came back that in 2300 days the sanctuary would be vindicated, restored, or cleansed. Daniel believed that time to be immediately at hand, but Gabriel's explanation seemed to him to be

putting the event off into the far-distant future—"for many days"; in "the time of the end"; at "the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed [by God] the end shall be" (verses 26, 17, 19).

A mere 2300 literal days until the sanctuary would be restored would not have been distressful to Daniel, but a matter of joy. However, to see the saints oppressed horribly, and to learn that the restoration of the sanctuary would be put off to "the time of the end" caused him to faint, to be "sick certain days" and "astonished at the vision," and to mention that "none understood it" (verse 27).

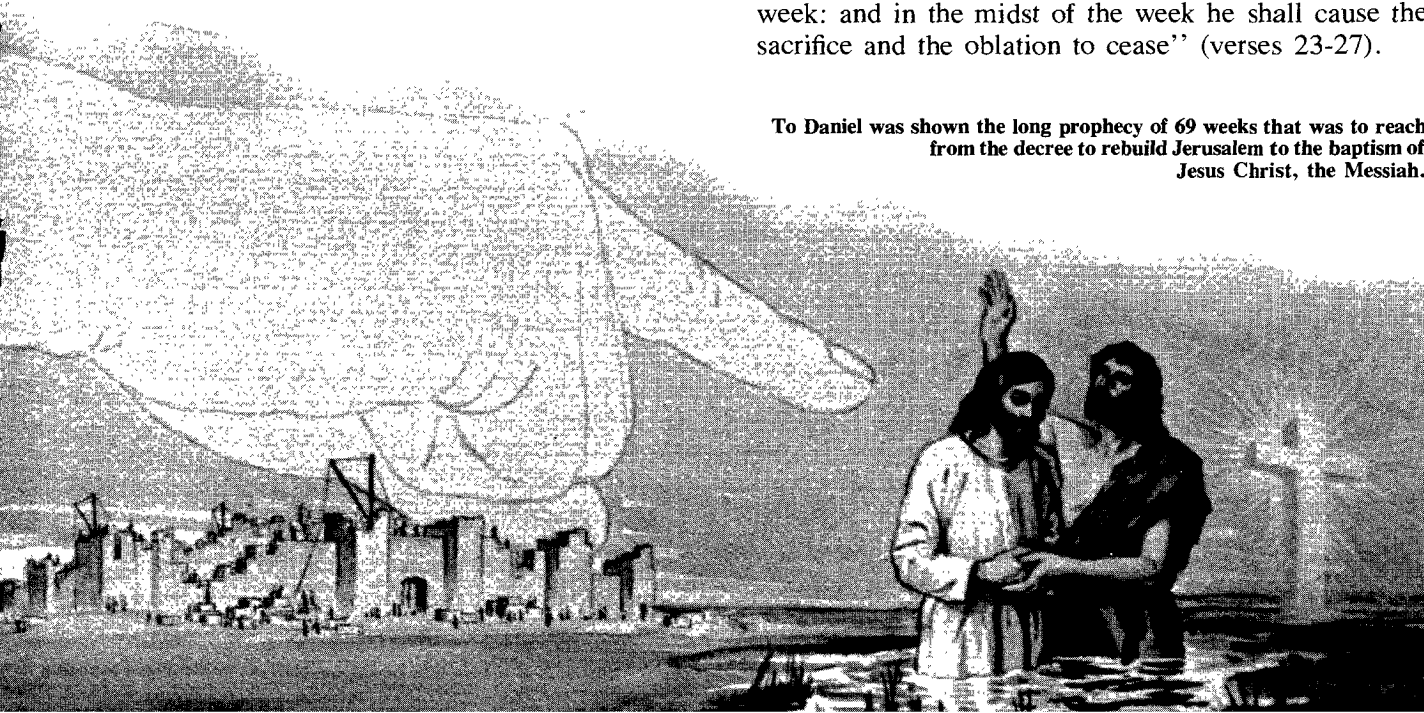
When Gabriel made it clear that the 2300 days stretched out "many days," to "the last end of the indignation," he confirmed, in this passage, the employment of the year-day principle of Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6, "each day for a year."

As God appeared to him to be delaying Jerusalem's restoration, Daniel feared that the sins of Israel were responsible. Consequently, he engaged in earnest "prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes." "We have sinned," he cried, "and have committed iniquity." "O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate. . . . Defer not, for thine own sake, O my God" (Dan. 9:3, 5, 17-19).

In response the Lord once more sent Gabriel to give further light on the vision of Daniel 8. That Jerusalem was soon to be restored was revealed clearly; the year of the coming of the Messiah and of His death was foretold.

Gabriel said to Daniel: "Consider the vision. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city. . . . 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. . . . And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off. . . . 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" (verses 23-27).

**To Daniel was shown the long prophecy of 69 weeks that was to reach from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem to the baptism of Jesus Christ, the Messiah.**



This most significant revelation tied in the 70 weeks of Daniel 9 with the 2300 days of Daniel 8: it gave the event with which both predictions would begin (the restoration of Jerusalem); it showed that the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 was not the Jerusalem Temple; it foretold the year when the Messiah would come, when He would be cut off; and when the sacrifice and oblation would end; it revealed that Jerusalem would once more be destroyed; and by dealing with definitely known dates it would make it possible to check the accuracy involved.

Gabriel began the 70 weeks with the issuing of the command to “restore and to build Jerusalem” (verse 25). Three Persian kings issued decrees concerning the restoration of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem—Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes (Ezra 6:14). In 538 B.C., Cyrus issued the decree under which the rebuilding of the Temple was begun. In 516, the sixth year of Darius, the Temple was finished (verse 15). In 457, the seventh year of Artaxerxes, the decree was issued under which Ezra and his company went to Jerusalem (chap. 7:6-26).

The 70 weeks deal with events that can be checked by human calculations. Siegfried H. Horn and Lynn H. Wood have established the beginning date, 457 B.C., in their work entitled *The Chronology of Ezra 7*.

The 70 weeks consist of two parts, 69 weeks and a final week. The 69 weeks reaching to the Messiah extended from 457 B.C. to A.D. 27. Jesus became the anointed Messiah at His baptism in A.D. 27 (Matt. 3:16, 17; Acts 10:38). He died in A.D. 31, “in the midst of the week.” After that, sacrifices and oblations were no longer of service (Dan. 9:27). The final week ended in A.D. 34, when the 70 weeks decreed for the Jews came to their end and the gospel was given to the Gentiles.

All this makes the 70 weeks one of the most vital of Biblical prophecies—one of the most amazing prognostications to have come to us from the ancient world. Rarely has an angel from heaven brought more interesting or more important tidings. The years of the Messiah were foretold. Chronological verification is thus provided that Jesus was indeed the Messiah who was to come. The disciple Andrew was correct when he announced after Jesus’ baptism that the Messiah had been found (John 1:40, 41). Jesus’ message, “The time is fulfilled,” was based on Daniel’s prophecy (Mark 1:14, 15). “The ‘time’ which He declared to be fulfilled was the period made known by the angel Gabriel to Daniel.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 233.

## Confidence in the future

With such a remarkable fulfillment of the predictions of the 70 weeks we can look with confidence to the completion of the 2300 days. Beginning in 457 B.C., they extend to A.D. 1844. But the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 is in heaven, and of that the earthly is only a type.

Events taking place in heaven are not seen by human eyes. They are spiritually discerned, and are understood only as God makes them clear. Concerning the vision of Daniel 8, God’s messenger had been sent: “Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision” (verse 16). Then again Gabriel came: “O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. . . . Thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision” (chap. 9:22, 23).

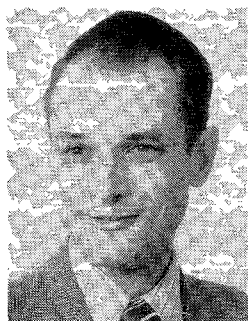
In Daniel 8 and 9 we discover that even a prophet of God who has been given visions may experience difficulties in understanding the things of God. To understand what God has to say, one must be willing to accept what He reveals, and not endeavor to instruct Him. Total humility is a prime essential. “The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way” (Ps. 25:9). “Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit” (Isa. 57:15). “Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly” (Ps. 138:6). “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:9). “Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him?” (chap. 40:13).

It is when humans endeavor to set themselves up as teachers of God that they get into trouble. When dealing with the truths of God, we must always be willing to hear what He has to say, and not to endeavor to teach Him to say or do what we think He should.

In the prophecy of Daniel 8:14 there are things that are not easy to understand, but with the light that God has given, the basic points are clear. In this article I have dealt primarily with the validity of the time period of 1844. In a following article I will deal with what it was that took place at that time. □

*To be concluded*

## INSPIRED GEMS



Favorite Bible texts  
and Spirit of Prophecy quotations  
selected by local conference  
presidents of  
North America.

**Philip Follett**  
Northern California Conference

• “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Gal. 6:14).

• “Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. ‘With his stripes we are healed.’”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 25.