

Concerning the Time of the Messiah's Coming.

by John Gill

The sermon discusses the prophecy of the Messiah's coming, specifically the time of his coming, and how it relates to the tribe of Judah and the Jewish commonwealth.

Scripture: Genesis 49:10, Haggai 2:6, Galatians 4:4

Topics: "Messianic Prophecy", "Fulfillment of God's Promises"

Description

John Gill discusses the prophecies regarding the timing of the Messiah's coming, emphasizing that God had predetermined a specific time for this event, referred to as the 'fullness of time' in Galatians 4:4. He highlights that the Messiah was to come before the tribe of Judah lost its scepter and before the destruction of the second temple, as prophesied in Genesis 49:10 and Haggai 2:6-9. Gill argues that the prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus, who embodied the characteristics of the Messiah and came at the appointed time, thus validating the expectations of the Jewish people. He also notes that the prophets diligently sought to understand the timing of the Messiah's arrival, which was ultimately realized in Jesus Christ. The sermon serves as a reminder of the faithfulness of God in fulfilling His promises.

Transcript

The Prophecies Respecting the Messiah

CHAPTER III.

Concerning the Time of the Messiah's Coming

Having endeavored to prove that there was a very curly intimation given of the Messiah, as the seed of the woman, to our first parents after their apostasy from God; and considered the several advantages which the nations of the earth were to receive from him, as the seed promised to Abraham; and the various blessings which might be justly expected at his coming; it will be proper now to inquire into the time when this great person was to make his appearance in the world. That there was a time fixed and appointed by God for the Messiah's coming, which the apostle calls (Gal. 4:4) the fullness of time, the prophet Habakkuk ensures us, when he says (Hab. 2:3), the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

The vision, or prophecy, concerns the Messiah, therefore is called, by way of eminency, the vision; the impletion of which was exceeding desirable to the people of God, who were often impatient because it was

so long deferred; and therefore wanted fresh assurances to support them in their expectations thereof, which is the manifest design of these words. The person here spoken of, is described by a character which is peculiar to the Messiah, as being he who was to come, for those words כי בא יבא may be thus rendered, because he that is to come, or that cometh, will come; and so they are by the Septuagint version, and justified by the apostle's citation in Hebrews 10:37.

Now this was such a common paraphrase of the Messiah, and so well known among the Jews, that when John the Baptist sent his disciples to Jesus, for satisfaction about his Messiahship, the question was put in no other form than this (Matthew 11:3), Art thou he that should come, o ercomenoV, or do we look for another: which character will be hard to fix upon Cyrus, or any other beside the Messiah. Moreover, the manner of the Messiah's coming is very aptly represented in this text; for what we render, it shall speak; and not lie, may be well translated, he shall break forth as the morning, and not deceive.

And thus the coming of the Messiah is described in 2 Samuel 23:4, and he, that is, the king Messiah, according to the Targum, who, verse 3 was to arise and rule in the fear of the Lord, shall be as the light of the morning, even a morning without clouds: which well agrees with Jesus, who is called (Luke 1:78) the day spring from on high that hath visited us; but if we read the words thus, he shall speak and not lie, they are fitly expressive of the Messiah's work and office, as a prophet, who was to speak truth and not deceive, and well agree with Jesus, who spake such words of truth and wisdom, and in such a manner as never man did.

Nay, the very time of the Messiah's coming is pointed at in this prophecy, at the end he shall speak, or break forth, that is, at the end of the Jewish economy, as Bishop Chandler well observes, when their civil and church state were near their dissolution; at which time it is notorious enough that Jesus came. Moreover many Jewish writers acknowledge, that this prophecy belongs to the Messiah, and often use it to support them under the wretched disappointments they meet with, as to the coming of their vainly expected Messiah, as it was indeed of real service, this way, to their fathers before the coming of the true one: for the manifest design of it seems to be, to encourage the just to live by faith, in a full and humble expectation of it, though it might seem to tarry longer than they first looked or wished for, and not proudly and haughtily reject the promises of God, as never to be fulfilled; as appears from the following verse.

These things being considered, it will appear, that this prophecy does not intend Cyrus, and the restoration of the Jews from captivity by him; which a late author, supported by the authority of Grotius, thinks to be a more natural sense of it: but it is designed to carry the faith and expectation of God's people to a greater person, and a far greater deliverance. Now, as there was a fixed, determinate, and appointed time for the Messiah's coming; so the prophets of the Old Testament were very solicitous and diligent in their inquiries about it (1 Pet. 1:11), Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them, did signify, when it testified before hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

Nor were their searches fruitless; for God was pleased to point out to many of them, the very exact and precise time of his coming: And it is somewhat remarkable, that, whereas Jesus came at the very time fixed by the prophets, so there was about that time a general expectation of the Messiah's coming among the Jews, arising from the prophecies which went before it; which I shall consider in the following method. I. I shall endeavor to prove, that the Messiah was to come before the tribe of Judah, and rule and government in that tribe ceased; or before the Jews' commonwealth or political state were abolished.

II. Make it appear, that he was to come before their ecclesiastical or church-state ceased, or, in other words, before the second temple was destroyed. III. Shall consider the exact and precise time of his coming, as fixed in Daniel's weeks. First, I shall endeavor to prove, that the Messiah was to come before the tribe of Judah, and rule and government in that tribe ceased; or before the Jews' commonwealth or political state was abolished; which I shall endeavor to do from Genesis 49:10.

The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be which words are a prophecy of Jacob's concerning the tribe of Judah, and of the Messiah, who was to spring from thence, as I shall also endeavor to make appear. Jacob perceiving that the time of his departure was at hand, called his sons together, and being under a spirit of prophecy, declared unto them what would befall their posterity in succeeding ages: for it ought to be observed, that what he prophesies of them, does not so much concern them personally, as their tribes and future posterity; as also, that what he predicts concerning them, was to befall them in the times of the Messiah; for, says he (Gen. 49:1), Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days; that is, in the days of the Messiah.

Kimchi says, wherever the last days are mentioned, the days of the Messiah are to be understood, as they are here, which many Jewish writers acknowledge; and more especially what is foretold concerning the tribe of Judah, seems to concern him and his times; as when he speaks of his brethren praising of him, of his enemies being subdued under him, and the respect he should have from his father's children (v. 8), as also when he compares him to a lion's whelp, (v. 9). Hence one of the titles of Jesus is, The lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5), the time of whose coming is manifestly predicted in verse 18, as will appear by considering, 1.

Who is meant by Shiloh. 2. The time of his coming, as here fixed. 1. I shall consider who is here meant by Shiloh. The Targums of Onkelos, Jonathan ben Uzziel, and the Jerusalem, understand it of the king Messiah, which was certainly the generally received sense of the ancient Jews, and is acknowledged by many of the modern ones; though some indeed, observing how much this prophecy militated against them, and what use has been made of it by the Christians, to prove that the Messiah must be already come, have endeavored to apply the words to something else, or to some other person.

Some would have the city Shiloh intended; others Moses, others Saul, others David, others Jeroboam, others Ahijah the Shilonite, and others Nebuchadnezzar; which different senses, show the wretched puzzle and confusion they are thrown into, since they have forsaken the true sense of the words; and these being so disagreeable to each other, as well as inconsistent with the text, do not deserve a particular consideration. But that the Messiah is here meant by Shiloh, I shall endeavor to make appear; 1st, From the signification of the word Shiloh. 2dly, From what is said of him in the text, that unto him shall the gathering of the people be. 1st, That the Messiah is intended by Shiloh, may be collected from the signification of the word; for though learned men, both among Jews and Christians, differ about the derivation and signification of it; yet, in any, and every of the senses, which they give thereof, it well agrees with the Messiah.

Kimchi says it signifies his son, and so should be rendered, until his son come; that is Judah's son; now what son of his can be so reasonably supposed to be intended, as the famous renowned son of his, the Nagid, the prince Messiah, who was to spring from his tribe, as it is manifest the Messiah Jesus did; and the word having a feminine affix, had led some to observe, and that not without some reason, that this son of Judah was to be the seed of the woman, or to be born of a virgin.

Others, as Onkelos and Jarchi, paraphrase it, as if it was *shiloh*; that is, whose it is; thus, until he comes whose is the kingdom; and understand it of the Messiah, as they might justly do; for to him of right the kingdom belongs, and to him it is given; as it is said in Ezekiel 21:27, I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more until he come whose right it is; which R. Abendana applies to the Messiah, as it ought to be. Others have taken it to be a compound word of *shiloh*; and *shiloh*;, so read it, to whom gifts, that is, belong or shall be brought; for which Jarchi cites the Midrash Agadah.

Now of the Messiah it is prophesied, that presents should be brought, and gifts be given to him (Ps. 72:10, 15), which had its literal accomplishment in the Messiah Jesus, to whom the wise men presented gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. But most learned men derive the word from the root *shiloh*;, which signifies to be quiet, peaceable, and prosperous; so that Shiloh is one that is so; which character well agrees with the Messiah, who was to be of a quiet and peaceable disposition : His voice was not to be heard in the streets; he was to be the man, the peace, the author and donor of all peace, with whom all things were to succeed well; for the pleasure of the Lord was to prosper in his hand, as it did in Jesus', who obtained a complete victory over all his enemies, and procured eternal salvation for his people.

From the whole it appears, that the variety of interpretations this word is subject to, is not sufficient to confound the application of this prophecy to a Messias, as the author of The Scheme of Literal Prophecy, &c. p. 136, asserts. 2dly, That the Messiah is here, intended, may be also concluded from what is here said of this Shiloh, namely, and unto him, shall the gathering of the people, or Gentiles, be; which can agree with no other but the Messiah, to whom the Gentiles would seek, and in whom they would trust: for which way soever the words be rendered, they will suit with him.

Some render them the obedience of the people, agreeable to the use of the word in Proverbs 30:17. Now this is true of the Messiah, whose people are a willing people; that is, to serve and obey him in the day of his power, to whom the Gentiles have, in a very remarkable manner, given a free and cheerful obedience, and verified this prophecy of him (Isa. 55:5); Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee; that is, to him who is promised as a leader and commander of the people: which Kimchi understands of the Messiah.

Again, the Septuagint render the words by *rosdokia eJ nwn*, the expectation of the nations: and so indeed the Messiah was: not only of the Jewish, but of other nations; the isles afar off waited for him, who was the desire of all nations (Hag. 2:7). Moreover, if we read the words according to Jarchi, to him shall the gathering of the people be, and which is our version, they are very applicable to the Messiah, to whom the people, and particularly the Gentiles, were to be gathered; and well agree with Jesus, who had no sooner entered upon his public ministry, but crowds of people flocked to, and attended on him; and as soon as his gospel was published among the Gentiles, vast numbers of them embraced, and steadfastly adhered to it; through the preaching of which there has been a very great collection of persons to Christ, in all ages ever since; before whom all nations will be gathered, at the day of judgment, whom he will separate one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, But I proceed, 2.

To consider the time of Shiloh's or the Messiah's, coming, according to this prophecy; which was to be, before the scepter and lawgiver depart from Judah. The Hebrew word *shiloh*; here translated the scepter, frequently signifies a tribe, and is so used in this chapter (vv.16, 18), and may be so here; and then the meaning is, that Judah's tribe should not be scattered and confounded, as the rest

of the tribes of Israel were, but remain a distinct tribe, until the coming of the Messiah.

The word may be rendered a scepter, and often is, which being an ensign of government, is here expressive of the rule or government which was to continue in the tribe of Judah until Shiloh came. The Jews acknowledge that rule and government are here intended; and I think, that these two senses of the word may be very easily joined together; for there can be no rule or government, where there is not a tribe or a body of people collected together in some order, any more than such a body can subsist long without rule or government; and then the meaning of this prophecy is, that Judah's tribe, and rule and government therein, were to continue until the Messiah came; or that the Messiah was to come before it ceased to be a tribe, and rule and government were removed from it: That Judah continued a distinct tribe, and that only, until the coming of the Messiah Jesus, is certain: Now, that this may appear manifest, let it be observed, that Judah, with his posterity, upon this blessing, designation, or appointment of Jacob, first commenced a distinct tribe of themselves, as did also the other sons of Jacob, with their posterity: for in this chapter we have the first account of the tribes of Israel, and of Jacob's family being reduced into such a form: Now, from henceforward they, with Judah, continued so until they were carried away captive into Assyria, where they were scattered and lost, and never returned more; and yet, which is very remarkable, and was, no doubt, designed to fulfill this prophecy, Judah, though carried captive into Babylon, was preserved as a distinct tribe, returned as such from thence, and continued so until the times of Jesus.

Now, as long as this tribe continued a distinct tribe, rule and government continued in it; as they commenced together, they concluded together. What kind of rule or government was in Judah's tribe, may be collected from what appears to have been in the rest of the tribes: Judah's rule or government was of the same nature with that of his brethren, only it was to continue longer; his scepter was of the same kind with theirs, only it was not to depart when theirs did; and therein, and therein only, lies the superior excellency of Judah's blessing, as to this part of it at least, to the rest of his brethren.

Now it is plain and manifest from scripture, that every tribe had its heads, princes, and rulers; we are informed of this very early, for before the coming of the children of Israel out of Egypt, we have an account of the heads of their fathers houses (Ex. 6:14), which in other places are called the heads of the tribes (Num. 30:1; Joshua 14:1), and seeing this form of government obtained so early, it is highly probable that it was fixed by Jacob a little before his death, at the time when the distinct tribes were settled by him; and it is manifest enough, that the rule or government designed by the scepter here, be it what it will, was in the hand of Judah, when this prophecy was given forth; as appears from those words, the scepter shall not depart from Judah, which, as a late ingenious writer well observes, Suppose the scepter to be already in the hand of Judah, for there cannot be any sense in saying, that a thing shall not depart which never yet was in possession."

Now, as it appears that this form of government, among the tribes, was before Moses' time, so no alteration was made therein by him, though he was their legislator, who delivered to them, from God, the best system of laws and government that ever any people enjoyed, but left it just as he found it; (see Num. 1:14. Deut. 31:28), and so did Joshua his successor, as is manifest from Joshua 23:2 and chapter 24:1. It continued during the time of the Judges; nay, when all the tribes of Israel united under one head, and the kingly government took place, it no ways affected this (1 Chron. 28:1; 1 Kings 8: 4).

And thus it remained in all the tribes as long as they subsisted; the tribe of Judah, continuing longer than the rest, it abode with them, and that even in the Babylonish captivity, where it was preserved by

the Jews call their rulers which they had at that time, who returned with them into their own land, and marched at the head of them; (Ezra. 1:5; 2:2. Nay, this rule and authority were not abolished by the reign of the Hasmonæans, who were of the tribe of Levi; for, during their reign the Sanhedrim, which was their highest court of Judicature, chiefly consisted of men of the tribe of Judah, there being only that tribe, and little Benjamin which: was confounded with it, that returned from Babylon; and especially the נשיא, or prince of that assembly, was always of the tribe of Judah; even quite down unto, and in the times of Jesus, we have an account of those elders and rulers of the people; they are so frequently mentioned in the New Testament, that I need not take notice of particular instances: but quickly after those times, the tribe of Judah failed, and appeared no more a distinct tribe in the world, and with it was put down all rule and authority; the tribe ceasing, of consequence all rule and government must cease with it; the Jews are no more a body politic, in the possession of rule and government among themselves; but have been subjected, for these sixteen or seventeen hundred years, to the laws and government of other nations, among whom they are dispersed: the scepter is entirely departed from Judah, and therefore the conclusion which we may fairly deduce from hence is, that the Messiah must be come.

It appears from what has been said, that there is no need to suppose kingly power and authority intended by the scepter, that not always being an emblem of regal dominion. Those who understand it in this sense, are not able to defend the prophecy against the Jews; for the kingly power, in the tribe of Judah, did not take place till David's time, above six hundred years after this prophecy, and ceased in Zedekiah, above five hundred years before the birth of Jesus; but this form of government, which was placed in the heads and princes of the tribe, commenced when the tribe itself did, and continued in it, without interruption, as long as there was one.

Therefore if any particular form of government is here intended by the scepter, this bias the fairest for it; but if only rule and authority in general are here intended, without designing any one particular form, but that this tribe should be a body politic, governed by its own laws, until the coming of the Messiah, the prophecy has had its completion; for this tribe, ever since it existed, has been under some kind of government or other, either Monarchical, Aristocratical, or Democratical; nay, during the Babylonish captivity, it remained a body politic, governed by its own laws, as it was when Herod, an Idumean, was upon the throne, the scepter even then was not departed from it; 'but now there is not the least appearance of any form of government whatever, nor has there been for many hundreds of years; and indeed how should there be any, when even the tribe itself is not in being.

There remains one thing more to be considered, and that is, what is to be understood by the lawgiver between his feet, who was not to be removed from thence until the Messiah came: by a lawgiver, we are not to understand a person or persons, that have a power of making and prescribing laws; for the tribe of Judah had no power to make laws either for itself or others, but was subjected to and governed by those unalterable laws which were delivered by Moses to that and the rest of the tribes.

Some Jewish writers, understand by this word מחוקק any ruler or governor that has dominion and jurisdiction over others, and so the word is used (Judges 5:14), and then it intends the same as the word scepter does; others, as the three Targums on the place, understand by it, the Scribes, and teachers of the law, of which there was a great number among the Jews, in the time of Jesus; so that these were not then removed from between Judah's feet; but now the tribe is extinct, their genealogies are entirely lost, so that, though the Jews pretend to have doctors of the law among them, they are not able to make it appear that they are of the tribe of Judah.

Now the Messiah was to come whilst this tribe was in such a state, that it might appear that it had rule and authority within itself, and proper persons to execute and explain its laws, which does not now appear, neither has it for many hundreds of years, and consequently the Messiah must be come; let the Jews therefore tell us what person appeared before the departure of the scepter and lawgiver, from that tribe, with whom the characters of the Messiah so well agree as with Jesus.

The Jews have tried several ways to enervate this testimony of the Messiah's being already come. Menasseh ben Israel, has collected together, no less than eleven different senses of the words, and all designed to baffle the argument made use of, from hence, by Christians, but to no purpose; the word translated a scepter, they would have rendered a rod or staff; and sometimes to signify a rod of correction, at other times a staff of support, which they say shall not be wanting to the tribe of Judah, until the Messiah comes; but it may be very reasonably demanded of them, what peculiar affliction has befallen that tribe, which did not the rest of the tribes of Israel; besides, Judah was in a very flourishing condition, for five hundred years, under the reign of David's family; and when the rest of the tribes were carried captive, and returned no more, Judah was preserved as a distinct tribe: it is true, ever since the rejection of Jesus, as the Messiah, the rod of correction has been upon them, and will continue until God gives them repentance: As to a staff of support, what support have they had, when they have been so many hundred years out of their land, destitute of those privileges they there enjoyed, living among the nations in the utmost disgrace, and for the most part, in poverty and distress?

Again, sometimes Shiloh must mean any body but the Messiah; and at other times they are obliged to own the Messiah is intended, which shows both the ignorance and confusion of their greatest masters. The story of Benjamin of Tudela, of a certain Jew of the house of David having jurisdiction over a thousand Jews at Bagdat in Persia, is not to be credited, it having never been as yet confirmed; and if it could, how would it prove that the scepter is still in the tribe of Judah, and that the lawgiver is not yet removed from between his feet.

From the whole, it appears that the tribe of Judah is not now a distinct tribe, but has lost all manner of rule and authority; and that the Jews are not a body politic, having rule and dominion within themselves, therefore the scepter is departed from them, and consequently Messiah must be come. That this is the true state of that people, themselves have been obliged to acknowledge and particularly that saying of R. Rachmon, recorded in the Talmud, is very remarkable, "Woe to us says he, for the scepter is departed from Judah, and the son of David is not yet come."

Now Jesus did come before the departure of the scepter and law-giver from Judah, and before the Jews ceased to be a nation, a body politic, governed by their own laws, and he having all the marks and characteristics of the true Messiah, ought therefore to be received as such. But I proceed, II. To show that the Messiah was to come before the Jewish Church state ceased, or before the destruction of the second temple, which I shall endeavor to make appear from Haggai 2:6-9. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land.

And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts. From whence I shall attempt to prove, First, That by this house, in the text, must be meant the second temple. Secondly, That the Messiah, who is here designed by the desire of all nations, was to come into this temple; and that accordingly our Jesus did.

Thirdly; That the Messiah's coming into this temple is the greater glory, which is promised to it. Fourthly, I shall consider some circumstances in the text, which not only point out the person that was to come, but also the time of his coming. First, I shall endeavor to prove, that the house here spoken of is to be understood of the second temple. This is so plain a case, that one would think no person could deny it. The temple which Solomon built was burnt down by the Chaldeans, and entirely destroyed.

The people of the Jews were just now returned from Babylon, with leave from Cyrus to rebuild their temple, which they undertook under the conduct of Zerubbabel, Joshua, and others; and it is the manifest design of the prophet, both in this and the preceding chapter, to animate them to it, and encourage them in it, notwithstanding the mean figure it was like to make in comparison of that of Solomon's. Several Jewish writers acknowledge the second temple to be here intended; though others of them, evidently seeing how strong the argument from hence is to prove that the Messiah must be come, would have a third, temple intended, which they fancy will be built in the days of the Messiah.

But that the second temple, and not a third is here meant, is evident, 1. From the pronoun this, את הבית הוה this house, which manifestly points out the house that was then building, exclusive of all others; this house, this very house, which you have begun to build, and which appears so mean and contemptible in your eyes, in comparison of the former, even this house will I fill with glory. Nay, 2. It is expressly called, in verse 9 הביח הזה האחרון this latter house, which distinguishes it from the former that was built by Solomon; now if that was the first house, then this must be the second.

Bishop Kidder has given instances, from Exodus 4:8, 9 and Deuteronomy 24:3, where the word אחרון, translated latter, must necessarily signify the second. Besides, 3. The scope of the prophecy being to encourage the present builders, confines it to the second temple. Cyrus had given the Jews leave to go into their land, and build their temple, which they undertook, but finding some difficulties attending, laid the work aside, and betook themselves to beautifying their own houses, vainly imagining, that the time was not come for this house to be built, as appears from chapter 1:2, therefore the prophet reproves them for it, verses 3-6, exhorts them to attend the work again, verses 7, 8, and informs them, that all the calamities which were come upon them; were owing to their remissness herein, verses 9-11, whereby the princes and people were stirred up; and, encouraged to reassume it, verses 12-14; but still it was discouraging to those who had seen the glory of the first temple, to observe that this came so very considerably short thereof.

Now the Lord, by the mouth of the prophet, encourages those persons to go on in building, by assuring them, that, notwithstanding the meanness of this fabric, it should be filled with a glory excelling the former. Had a third temple been intended, what encouragement would it have been to the builders to be told, that this house, which they were building, would in a very little time be pulled down, and a very stately and magnificent one built in its room, which should not only equal, but be superior to that of Solomon's?

I say, what encouragement would this have been to them to go on with their work, and prosecute it with vigor? It would rather have discouraged, and made them remiss, careless, indolent, and inactive. Moreover, 4. The time, yet a little while, when all this glory was to appear, can by no means agree with a third temple; it is now above two thousand years ago since this prophecy was given out, which surely cannot be accounted a little while, and yet no third temple built, nor any likelihood of any.

The objection from hence against the application of the prophecy to the times of Jesus, will be considered hereafter. The second temple then being intended by this latter house, I shall, Secondly, Endeavor to prove, that the Messiah, who is here designed by the desire of all nations, was to come into this temple, and that Jesus accordingly did. It may be expected that I should first prove, that the Messiah is intended by the desire of all nations. Jarchi, Kimchi and Aben-Ezra, would have the desirable things of the nations meant, such as gold, silver, and precious stones, which they would bring into the temple and offer there as presents, which sense is not only contrary to the grammatical construction of the words, but foreign enough from the context, as well as too low to answer those surprising instances of God's power, as the shaking the heavens and the earth, &c. which were to usher it in.

R. Akiba applied this prophecy to the Messiah, and the character, here given, well agrees with him; all nations of the earth were to receive very great blessings and considerable advantages from him, as has been already proved, and therefore he must needs be a very desirable person. Besides, the very great commotion of the heavens, the earth, the sea, and dry land, and all the nations therein, here mentioned, can agree with no other but the Messiah, and the time of his coining.

Moreover, nothing but the appearing of the Messiah in this temple, could make it preferable to, and more glorious than that of Solomon's. Now it is certain, that the Messiah was to come into this temple, the desire of all nations shall come; whither? To his temple, as we are taught to explain it, from what follows, namely, I will fill this house with glory, and from a parallel text in Malachi 3:1. Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple: even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

R. David Kimchi understands this prophecy of the Messiah, who may very easily be concluded to be the person intended, from those magnificent titles here given to him, as the Lord, and the messenger of the covenant, which can agree with no other: One and the same person is meant both in Haggai and Malachi, in the one he is called the desire of all nations, in the other the Lord whom the Jews sought and delighted in; the one says, he shall come in a little while; the other that he shall come suddenly to his temple; which is the same with Haggai's latter house; for into no other could he come suddenly.

Nothing is more manifest, than that Jesus did come into this temple: The Jews expected to meet with the Messiah in the temple; hence old Simeon and Anna the prophetess waited there for him; where the former met with the young child Jesus, at the time of his presentation before the Lord: Here at twelve years of age, he disputed with the doctors; when he had entered upon his public ministry, here he taught the people, and that daily; here he wrought many of his miracles; here he was acknowledged to be the Messiah, and that even by the children, who cried in the temple, and said, Hosanna to the son of David; where, as the Lord and proprietor of it, he cast out the buyers and sellers, and other profaners thereof (Matthew 21:12-14).

It can be no objection against the application of these prophecies to Jesus, that it was the temple built by Herod, that he came into; for the temple which was built by the Jews, after their return from Babylon, re-edified by Herod, and at last destroyed by Vespasian, was but one and the same, and is always called by the Jews *the second house*; besides, if they make Herod's temple to be distinct from Zerubbabel's, and so a third temple; then this temple which they vainly expect, must be a fourth, and not a third; nor can the objection of the Jew be thought to have any weight in it, namely, that Jesus came into this temple at the latter end of it; for it is enough that he was there at all; and the very objection is an acknowledgment thereof.

But I. proceed,. Thirdly, To show, that the Messiah's coming into this temple is the greater glory promised unto it. I will fill this house with glory,--the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former. Now let it be observed, that Solomon's temple, which is the former house referred to, was very great, glorious, and magnificent; nay wonderful great, as will evidently appear, if we consider the vast treasure amassed together by David, and expended by Solomon; the large number of workmen employed therein, the prodigious charge in making provisions for them, the stateliness and richness of the fabric; the like to which was never seen in the world; God himself having drawn the model and pattern of it, and gave it to David in writing: Its dedication by Solomon was very magnificent; to all which add; the glory of the Lord filled it, and continued in it.

Now the glory of the latter house must be something very considerable, which made it not only equal, but even superior to this. Again, it ought to be remarked, that by the Jews' own confession, there were several things wanting in this latter house, which were in the former, especially these five, the ark, the Urim and Thummim, the fire from heaven, the Shechinah, and the Holy Ghost: Besides, several of the ancient men, who had seen the glory of the former house, wept when the foundation of this was laid; it being, in their eyes, in comparison of that as nothing.

Therefore I say it must be something very considerable in this latter house, which must make the glory of it exceed that of the former. Some of the Jewish writers would have the glory of this second house consist in its duration; the first house, they say, continued four hundred and ten years, but this second house four hundred and twenty; so that, according to this computation, it stood ten years longer than the former, though they are not able to give any proof thereof: but supposing this to be true, and that the builders were beforehand acquainted with it, what great encouragement could this be to them to go on with their work? how could the continuance of it a few years longer compensate for the want of what has been mentioned, and set it upon a level with, nay make it preferable to such a glorious fabric, as Solomon's was?

Besides, can it ever be imagined, that such a strange and uncommon commotion would be made in the heavens, earth, and sea, and that only to usher in such a trifling glory as this? Others therefore say, that the structure of this second temple, as it was built by the Jews in Zerubbabel's time, the glory of it increased by the great riches which the Gentiles brought into it in the times of the Hasmoneans; and as it was re-edified by Herod, exceeded in magnificence even that built by Solomon: But it is not at all likely, either that the people of the Jews, who were just returned from captivity, and were both poor and few, or that Herod, who was a tributary to the Roman empire, should ever be able to raise such a structure: Their whole account depends upon the authority of Joseph ben Gorion, who was a much later author than the true Josephus; and as to the riches which were brought into this temple by the Gentiles, in the times of the Hasmoneans, they were very inconsiderable and could never equal, much less give it an excelling glory to Solomon's temple; besides, gold and silver are expressly excluded in the text, from being any part of this glory: The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts; as much as to say, "Silver and gold, which so much adorned the first house, the want of which makes this look so mean and contemptible in your eyes, are wholly at my command; I have an indisputable right to, and propriety in them; and was it my will and pleasure, I could easily amass vast treasures together, to enrich and adorn this house; but I have in my eye a greater glory than this, which I design to introduce into it; The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former."

R. Azarias, by the desire of all nations, and the excelling glory of this latter house, would have the coming of Alexander the Great to Jerusalem, with his princes, intended, who honored the temple with his presence, and gave peace to the Jewish nation, when all the rest of the nations were in commotion and

disturbance: but surely the coming of this person into this house, could not give it a greater glory than that which the first house had, which was built and dedicated by Solomon; who was a far greater prince than ever Alexander was: However this we gain by this interpretation; that a person or persons are here intended by the desire of all nations, and not things; which person I have before proved to be the Messiah.

Seeing therefore none of the things mentioned can give this latter house a greater glory than the first, and there being nothing, either in the text or context, which points out this excelling glory to us, but the coming of the desire of all nations into it, it may very safely be concluded, that it was the appearance of the Messiah in his temple, which was here designed, whose presence made it far more glorious than the former house was; for the glory of God, which was in shadow in the former house, here appeared bodily.

But, Fourthly, There are several circumstances in the text which point out, both the person that was to come, and the time of his coming. 1st, All this was to be done in a very little time. Yet once it is, a little while, very quickly after this prophecy, or suddenly, as Malachi says, the Messiah was to come. Now, if the Messiah was to come in a little time after this, certainly he must be already come; for surely the space of two thousand years, and upwards, (for so long it is since this prophecy was given) can never be accounted a little while.

Indeed a late author objects, that this seems a phrase not very properly applicable to a fact four hundred years after; to which I answer, that this space of four hundred years, might very well be called a little while, in comparison of the long space of time which had elapsed since the first promise of the Messiah was given; besides, it is usual with the prophets to represent things which were at some distance, near; in order to strengthen the faith, and encourage the expectation of God's people; moreover, it was but a little while ere things began to work towards the accomplishment of this prophecy. 2dly, It is prophesied that at, or before, the coming of this great person, there would be a very great shaking of the heavens, the earth, the sea, and dry land, yea of all nations; which may intend those mutations and revolutions that were made in the several kingdoms and nations of the world, between this prophecy, and the coming of Jesus, which the history of those times gives an account of; and indeed it was but a little while ere this shaking began, for the Persian monarchy, which was then flourishing, was quickly after subdued by the Grecian; and that, in a little time, underwent the same fate from the Roman: Or else it may intend those prodigies and wonders, which were wrought in the heavens, earth, and sea, at the birth, in the lifetime, and at the death of Jesus; at whose birth an unusual star appeared in the heavens, in whose lifetime miracles of various sorts were wrought, both by land and sea; and at whose death the sun was darkened, the earth quaked and the rocks were rent asunder.

Never was there such a shaking among the nations as at the time of Christ's coming. Herod and all Jerusalem with him, were moved and shaken at the tidings of His birth; angels descended from heaven to celebrate it, wise men came from the east to inquire after it; and, in a little time, all the nations under the heavens were shaken, moved, and stirred up, either to oppose or embrace him. Moreover, the apostle, in Hebrews 12:26 and 27, does not unfitly apply those words to that change which was made in the worship of God, by the coming of Jesus the true Messiah. 3dly, The Lord promises to give peace in this place at this time, and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts; which was made good, when he gave the Messiah, Jesus, the man, the peace, who has made peace by the blood of his cross, and has sent forth his ministers into all the nations of the earth, preaching peace by Jesus Christ who is Lord of all.

And if it is true, what some have asserted, that there was an universal peace in the world, in the times of Augustus, after all those shakings in the nations, in whose time Jesus was born; this prophecy has then

had its fulfillment in a temporal way, and if there was not peace in those times, it will be hard to find it during the second temple. From what has been said, it appears, that the Messiah was to come before the second temple was destroyed, and consequently must be come many hundred years ago: and it is certain that Jesus did come whilst this temple stood, attended with all the characters of the Messiah.

The Jews are very much perplexed with this argument; and therefore are forced to acknowledge, that the Messiah was born before the destruction of the second temple, but ridiculously though tell us, that he lies hid, either at Rome, or in the sea, or in paradise, which shows the wretched ignorance, obstinacy, and judicial blindness, attending those people. R. Josse, who saw the destruction of the temple by Titus, said. " The time of the Messiah is come:" which he might very well conclude from hence, as all Jews ought to do.

III. The next thing to be inquired into, is the exact and precise time of the Messiah's coming, and cutting off, as fixed in Daniel's weeks; the whole prophecy we have at large in Daniel 11:24-27. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an, end of sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Know therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the prince, shall be seven weeks, and three, score, and two weeks, the street shall be built again, and the wall even in troublous times.

And after threescore and two weeks, shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself; and the people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week, he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations, he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined; shall be poured upon the desolate.

The occasion of this prophecy is manifestly this; The prophet Daniel now being in captivity, and understanding by books, especially by the prophecy of Jeremy, that it would be a seventy years captivity, falls into a very great concern of mind for the people of the Jews, the city of Jerusalem, and the holy temple; and therefore sets apart some time in fasting and prayer to God on the account thereof; whose prayers were very quickly heard, he being a person greatly beloved; for even at the beginning of his supplications, the commandment came forth, orders were given and the angel Gabriel immediately dispatched, as a messenger, to give him an account of those things which he was so very solicitous about; and the things which the angel had a commission to give him skill and understanding in, were of very considerable importance; as that there would be a royal edict issued forth in favor of the Jews; by virtue of which they would have full liberty to rebuild Jerusalem, the streets and wall thereof, though it would be attended with a great deal of trouble and opposition; that after a certain space of time, here specified, was elapsed, the Messiah, the prince, whom he, and those of his nation expected, would be cut off; and that upon the cutting off of this great person, would very quickly ensue the utter ruin and destruction of the Jewish nation, city, and temple.

These things, I say, which the angel had to deliver to him, being so very important and momentous, he prefaces the account of them after this manner, understand the matter, and consider the vision, that he might closely fix his attention thereunto. And that we may the better understand the meaning of this prophecy it will be proper to consider, First, What kind of weeks are here intended, which are said to be

determined upon Daniel's people, and upon his holy city, and what meant by their being thus determined.

Secondly, The several events which were to be fulfilled within, or quickly after, the expiration of these weeks, and how they have had an actual and exact completion. First, It will be proper to inquire, what kind of weeks are here meant, and in what sense they were determined upon the people of the Jews, and their holy city Jerusalem. By weeks here, we must either understand weeks of days or weeks of years; not weeks of days, that being too short a time for so many events, as are here specified, to be fulfilled in; the whole seventy weeks, taken in this sense, not amounting to a year and a half, within which space of time, none of those things, predicted by the angel, came to pass: Jerusalem with its streets and wall was not rebuilt in seven weeks time, nor was the Messiah cut off after sixty-nine weeks, understanding them of weeks of days, according to any hypothesis whatever; nor were the Jewish nation, city, and temple wholly destroyed, after the expiration of the whole seventy weeks, taking them in this sense: therefore we are to understand by them weeks of years.; and about this, we have no controversy with the Jews, nor with the author of the Scheme of Literal Prophecy, who readily acknowledge it.

This way of speaking and writing has been used both by Greek and Latin authors; though was it not, yet the frequent use of it, among the Jews, would be sufficient to justify such a sense of it here: thus in Genesis 29:27, says Laban to Jacob, concerning his daughter Rachael, מלאשבע זאת, fulfill her week, or fill up a week for this: that is, Serve me seven years for this, and we will give her also unto thee, which Jacob accordingly did (v. 21).

Thus the Jews reckon their Jubilees by sabbaths or weeks of years; (see Lev. 25:8). Besides, this appears to be a style in use among the prophets, to put a day for a year, as in Ezekiel 4:4, 5, which way of writing the apostle John has followed in his Revelation (see 12:6. and 13:5), and that this kind of week Daniel intends here, seems manifest from chapter 10:2, 3, where Daniel, speaking of his mourning and fasting for the space of one and twenty days, expresses it, not as our translation, three full weeks, but שלשה שבים ימים three weeks of days, which seems to be designed to distinguish them from those weeks used in this prophecy, as well as to prevent any mistakes that might arise from hence; so that by the space of seventy weeks we are to understand four hundred ninety years; for such a length of time was to run out, ere all the events specified in this prophecy should have their full accomplishment.

Now these weeks are said to be determined upon Daniel's people, and holy city: By his people, we are no doubt to understand the Jews, who were his countrymen, of the same stock and religion with him, for whom he had, a very great and affectionate regard; and by his holy city, the city Jerusalem, the metropolis of Judea, where the temple formerly stood, and the pure worship of God had been kept up, for which Daniel had no small concern. Now when seventy weeks, or four hundred ninety years, are said to be determined upon these, the meaning is, that such a space of time was fixed and determined for the accomplishment of several events here mentioned, relating to the people; of the Jews and their city; and a verb singular being in construction with a noun plural, may denote, that every week in the whole number was determined, fixed, and cut out for some event or other; every which event was to have its full and exact completion.

The word which is here translated determined, is, by the Vulgate rendered *abbreviatæ*, shortened or abbreviated; which version the Papists adhere very closely to, and which the author of the Scheme of Literal Prophecy, page 175, appears to be an advocate for; he says it is so rendered by the Greek. The Septuagint indeed translates it *suneiuqhhsan*, *conciscæ sunt*, are concise or cut, but not shortened: He

notion which he seems to espouse, and in which he agrees with Harduin, namely, that the seven weeks and the sixty two weeks have one and the same epoch, which they make to be the fourth of Jehoiakim; for lunar years are rejected by them both, which most, who follow this version, contend for, and which they suppose to be the reason, why those weeks are said to be shortened: But, not to insist any longer upon this, I would only add, that to understand the word in its first and primary sense, which is to cut, is very aptly expressive of the division or section of those seventy weeks into distinct periods, as 7. 62. 1. in which distinct periods different events were to be accomplished.

I therefore, Secondly, Proceed to consider the several events which were to be fulfilled within, or quickly after the expiration of these weeks, and how they have had their actual and exact establishment; which are delivered. First, More generally, in verse 24. When I say more generally, I mean, that the angel in this verse gives an account of the several events which are not particularly referred to any distinct period, into which those seventy weeks are divided; but are given out in general as to be all of them fulfilled within the term of seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety years, which upon enquiry, we shall find to be fulfilled in, or by Messiah, the prince, and at, or about the time of his being cut off, and principally regard the work he was to do, which was, 1.

To finish the transgression. The Hebrew word שָׁמַר signifies to restrain as well as to shut up or finish; and the former Dr. Predeaux observes, rather than the latter; (see Gen. 8:2; Ps. 40:11; 119:101; Ezek. 31:15) and indeed it will be very difficult to give one single instance where it is used in the latter sense; so that the meaning is not to put an end to all punishment for the sins of the Jews, which the author of the Literal Scheme, from Grotius, Marsham, and Harduin, endeavors to establish; for nothing is more manifest, than that the measure of the punishment of that people, is not completed yet; but the plain meaning is, that a restraint would be laid upon the prevalence of transgression by the Messiah when he came.

Now it is notorious enough, that though sin very much abounded when Jesus came, both in the Jewish nation and in the Gentile world, and, perhaps, as it had never done before, since it first entered into the world, and which, by the way, the Jews make to be one sign of the Messiah's coming; yet, notwithstanding this, I say, there never was an age wherein greater restraints were laid upon sin, than in this and that first by the ministry of John the Baptist, and at Jesus Christ, in the land of Judea, and then by his apostles, in the Gentile world. 2.

Another thing, mentioned in this prophecy, which the Messiah was to do at his coming, was to make an end of sins. Our translators here follow the Keri, or marginal reading, and not the Cetib, or textual writing, which is to seal up sins; either reading, fully expresses the Messiah's work: Things which are sealed up, are hid and covered, and sin is said to be so, when forgiven (Ps. 32:1). Now when the Messiah is said to seal up sins, the meaning is, that he should procure the pardon of them, which Jesus has done by the effusion of his blood; as also, by the sacrifice of himself, has put away sin, or made an entire end of it. 3.

As another branch of his work, he was to make reconciliation for iniquity. The Hebrew word כִּפֵּר ; here used, signifies to expiate or make atonement for sin by sacrifice, as it is frequently used; (see Ex. 30:10; Lev. 4: 20, 26, 31, 35). Now that the Messiah, Jesus, made reconciliation for the sins of the people, this way, is manifest enough from the writings of the New Testament, and especially from the epistle to the Hebrews. I shall take no other notice of three different Hebrew words being here used, to express sin by, than only just to observe, that it may be to show, that all manner of sin was to be restrained, sealed up, made an end of, and expiated by the Messiah; to which well agrees what

the apostle John says, the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin (1 John 1:7). 4.

The Messiah was also, according to this prophecy, to bring in everlasting righteousness; for this, surely, could be brought in by no other, than he, whose name is the Lord our righteousness. The author of the Literal Scheme, refers this to the very great piety and religion of the Jews, in the times of Onias the high-priest, so much extolled in 2 Maccabees 3:2 which father Harduin makes typical of the holiness that was to be brought into the world by the Messiah; but surely, how considerable so ever the improvement of those persons was, in the observation of their religion and laws; yet it could never be called an everlasting righteousness.

Sir J. Marsham has given a better sense of this clause than this, who acknowledges it to be the eternal righteousness of God, to whom righteousness is ascribed in verse 7, and indeed it is no other than the righteousness of God, which is unto all, and upon all them that believe, of which the Messiah, Jesus, is the author, who is become the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes. Now, 5. By the Messiah's accomplishing all this, he was to seal up the vision and prophecy; not the prophecy of Jeremiah, concerning the end of the captivity, which the author of the Literal Scheme thinks is intended, supported by the authorities of Marsham and Harduin; for this prophecy, when Daniel had this vision, wanted but a very little time of having its full accomplishment; therefore it cannot be supposed, that seventy weeks of years should be fixed and determined, for the accomplishing of an event, which was to be fulfilled, in two years time, or thereabout.

No, by sealing the vision and prophecy is meant the Messiah's fulfilling whatever was predicted by the prophets concerning him, whereby he would seal up, and put an end to vision and prophecy in the Jewish church; all which has been exactly completed by the Messiah, Jesus, who, in what he has done and suffered, has sufficiently verified whatever was in the Old Testament, prophesied of the Messiah; as I hope my account of prophecies will make appear. It is undeniable matter of fact, that ever since the times of Jesus, prophecy has ceased among the Jews; nor can they themselves deny it, nay they tell us, that "There has never arose a prophet in Israel since the building of the second temple;" which deficiency, they say, was supplied by Bath-Kol; but that is ending prophecy too soon, for the law and the prophets were until John; however, it is now ceased; it lasted so long as there was any need of it; but when the Messiah, the sum and substance of all, was come, it was at an end among that people.

Now in order to the accomplishing of all these things, 6. The most holy was to be anointed. The author of the Literal Scheme would, with Marsham and Harduin or rather Harduin's defender, have either the high priest or temple intended, which cannot be true of the second temple, nor of the high priest under that: for the anointing oil being hid, as the Jews say by Josiah, could never be found, and consequently not used under the second temple. It is better, therefore, with some Jewish writers, to understand the Messiah, who was typified both by the high-priest and temple, and was to be anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows; the whole well agreeing with the Messiah, Jesus, who was perfectly holy, both in nature and life, and being anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with power, went about doing good and healing all manner of diseases; preached the gospel to the meek, expiated the sins of his people, and now reigns as God's anointed king, upon his holy hill of Zion.

But I proceed, Secondly, To consider those events which are more particularly delivered in the verses 25-27, where the seventy, weeks, or four hundred and ninety years, are distributed into three distinct periods, and to every period, particular events are assigned. 1st, The seventy weeks are distributed into seven weeks, or forty-nine years. 2dly, Into sixty and two weeks or four hundred and thirty-four years. And,

3d1y, Into one week, or seven years. I shall begin, 1st, With the consideration of the seven weeks, or forty-nine years, and the events to be fulfilled within that time, and endeavor to fix the true epoch of them, which as Sir.

J. Marsham says, is totius negotii cardo, the chief point of all, the very hinge, on which the whole affair turns. Now the rule which we are to go by, and which is fixed by an express character in the text, is, the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, its streets and wall, within the compass of which time all this was to be effected; now then the question is, of the going forth of what commandment these words are to be understood? That the word, commandment, or promise of the Lord to Jeremiah in chapter 25 and 29, concerning the end of the captivity, is not intended; which hypothesis the author of the Literal Scheme has embraced, is manifest; because that was not a commandment to rebuild Jerusalem, its wall and street, after an expiration of seven weeks, or forty-nine years; but only a promise of release from captivity, after seventy years were accomplished; so that there is a wide difference between the one and the other: besides, these seventy years were now very near accomplished, nor did Daniel want any information about the expiration of them; he had learnt, by books, the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet; so that he knew when these years began, and consequently when they would end, therefore there was no necessity of an angel's being dispatched from heaven to acquaint him with these things; nay, this would be to make the angel's preface to the account of these weeks trifling, when he says, know therefore, and understand, when he must be supposed to know this already; nor can the epoch of the

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