

Chapter 19

The Seder Olam Rabbah (Book of the Order of the World) and the Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9:24-27

Since the Bible stands alone and is the final arbiter on all matters relating to time, dates, and history, the question of 'apparent' or 'supposed' scriptural discrepancies is not open to debate. The following are just some of the dubious (doubtful) perspectives from which people approach the scriptures (Daniel 9:24-27 in particular). Like all of man's attempts at determining age outside the pages of scripture, the following produce confusion, no harmonious standard and involve a high degree of speculation.

The following methods of age determination have produced the following:

- ❖ **CONSTANTLY SHIFTING DATES**--While the 'truths' of archeology are often touted as absolute, they are constantly being revised
- ❖ **NO BEGINNING**--The construction of 'biblical' history on B.C. methods of time computation rather than the irrefutable date of creation
- ❖ **HARMONY IMPOSSIBLE**--Attempting to harmonize scriptural dates with profane Assyrian chronology
- ❖ **ACCEPTANCE OF THE BIBLICAL NARRATIVE REJECTED**--The utilization of a secular Seleucid calendar- dating methodology as opposed to biblical methods of age determination
- ❖ **REJECTION OF THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD**--The Jewish bias of Mishnah (the

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authoritative exegetical oral tradition of Hebrew law comprising the first part of the Talmud)

- ❖ **THE PURE WORD EXCHANGED FOR THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN**--The subjective commentary of the Talmud, or the core of Jewish political and ecclesiastical law, includes non-biblical stories, life lessons, and parables. This literary nucleus including the Misnah and Gemara comprise two versions: the Babylonian and the Jerusalem or Palestinian
- ❖ **RELIGIOUS JEWISH OPINION**--The personal rabbinic commentary of the Gemara or the secondary pillar of Talmudic literature
- ❖ **THE PROMISED SEED THROUGH JUDAH**--Failing to recognize the importance of the Southern Kingdom versus that of the Northern Kingdom

From these and numerous other biased approaches to scripture, Bible skeptics have always had an open prejudice and hostility toward the finality of holy writ in the area of absolute historical dating.

From the above list you can see how these chronologies plague and confuse the Jewish mindset, as well as the Gentile.

The worldly imaginations become problematic for the Hebrew race because of numerous Old Testament Messianic prophecies. These prophecies are abundant and detailed. Such is the case with the anti-messianic Jewish predisposition and the Seder Olam Rabbah with regard to Daniel 9:24-27.

Contrary to the second century Jewish practice of falsifying the Seventy Weeks' prophecy of Daniel to supposedly "shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end" (Daniel 12:4), upon closer examination the real reason the Jewish mindset is at odds with such a profound prophecy becomes apparent.

The reason for the falsification and manipulation of the Old Testament arises over the person and work of Jesus Christ. A closer examination of these verses has nothing to do with concealing the truth of this prophecy regarding the birth of Christ as much as it has to do with the Jew coming to grips with their own relationship with God.

The scriptural bedrock of Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy reveals a mindset that is averse (adamantly opposed) to the Messiah. This repudiation and rebellion towards what Christ came to do on behalf of the Jewish race, as well as the Gentiles, was the biggest obstacle the New Testament Church had in the dissemination (spread or disperse) of the Gospel.

The Jew saw God's grace as a threat to a system characterized by manipulation, control and external rules. This system given to oppression and manipulation was kept through the effort and discipline of the flesh instead of the Spirit's influence on the free conscience of men. Though Jesus said he came not to abolish the law but to fulfill it, the Jewish religious leaders failed to see that the keeping of the law in the life of the individual could only be accomplished by Christ in us—the Holy Spirit.

There had to be a way to minimize or altogether erase the significance of such a weighty prophecy such as Daniel 9:24-27. What becomes apparent in this attempt to rearrange the past is not the discrepancy (165 years) between Ussher's calculations and those of Rabbi Yose ben Halafta (160 A.D.) and his Seder Olam Rabbah. The Jewish mindset that was at odds against the Messiah was obvious. Also added to this was the elevation of Simon Bar Kokhba as the Jewish messiah in the year 135 A.D.

It was Bar Kokhba's (also spelled "Cocheba") elevated position over the real Messiah that was the underlying motive in juggling these misplaced years

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from Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy. It would include the birth of Christ to the exploitation of the Jewish political deliverer, Simon Bar Kokhba.

Through the efforts of the father of the Mishnah, Rabbi Akiva (Akiba) ben Joseph, the foremost Jewish scholar of Bar Kokhba's day, and the political turmoil of the time, Bar Kokhba rose to prominence. It is said in Ussher's, Annals of the World, "By removing the 164 (or 165) years from the duration of the Persian Empire, Rabbi Halafta was able to make the 483-year Daniel 9:24-27 prophecy fall reasonably close to the years prior to the 132 A.D. revolt during which Bar Kokhba rose to prominence as Israel's military and economic leader. Then with Akiva proclaiming, 'This is the King Messiah' followed by 'all the contemporary sages regarded him as the King Messiah,' the Jewish populace united around this false hope."¹

Let it be most emphatically stated that although the author has on numerous occasions cited secular B.C. computations I neither embrace nor endorse this method of time determination. It is because of the monumental task of writing and re-writing this book I reserve a future date for a more formal study and analysis of biblical time calculation.

¹ Ussher, Bishop James, *The Annals of the World*, first published in 1658, edited by Larry and Marion Pierce, Master Books, Inc., P.O. Box 726, Green Forest, AR 72638, Copyright © 2003, pp. 932, 933
Appendix G: "The Seder Olam Rabbah—Why Jewish Dating is Different"