

Special Note on the Purposes of the 70 Weeks

The seven purposes mentioned by the angel Gabriel as objectives of the predicted seventy weeks (or 'sevens') have been the subject of more heated arguments than almost any other individual verse of Scripture, even though no one of them is the starting-point or principal support of any biblical or theological belief. The fact that there are textual questions about the first two of these purposes may account for some of the argument, but this is far from enough to explain it fully. The main difference would seem to be that many interpreters think that the third segment of the seventy weeks involves prediction of events related to the time of Antichrist, while others insist that every part of the prophecy was fulfilled by the events connected with the first advent of Christ.

The present writer finds it hard to understand why there should be so much heat about this matter. All the writers involved in this particular discussion thoroughly believe in the great importance of the substitutionary death of Christ, and most of them (probably all) believe that the Bible predicts the rise of a great and powerful enemy of God near the time of the second advent of Christ. I have never heard that an important theory about any of those events originated from the study of this prophecy or was principally based upon it, but in view of the amount of discussion that it has occasioned I see a special need to examine the facts and the arguments carefully and impartially, reaching solid conclusions wherever the evidence warrants it, but reserving