

# Daniel 12 and the Mount Olivet Prophecy

At the beginning of the [first article](#) of his two-part study, "The time periods of Daniel 12", Brother Stephen Hughes rightly observes that the time periods of Daniel 12 "seem to connect with the Olivet Prophecy" (Oct. 2006, p. 376). Yet the table of time periods in his [second article](#) (Nov. 2006, p. 401) does not acknowledge the possibility that any of these time periods could have started (or ended) in A.D. 70. A [similar table](#) by different authors in the "Time of the End" special issue also suggests various start/end points for these time periods, again with the notable exception of A.D. 70 (May 2004, p. 230).

The temple was desecrated on more than one occasion, but the only one that should concern us here is the one identified by Christ: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains" (Mt. 24:15,16). The only event that Jesus could have been referring to is the Roman desolation in A.D. 70. The activities of Mohammed and his followers 600 years later could not have been of any practical consequence to Christ's contemporaries, much less any Babylonian or Greek sacrileges hundreds of years in the past.

The method of interpretation followed by Brother Hughes (and many other brethren) has generated a wide range of possible start/end dates spanning many centuries, and yet it is not able to accommodate the one event that Christ identified as being a fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy. This is a serious flaw. The least we should expect from any interpretation is that it should harmonise with the inspired commentary of Christ himself.

Taking the Seventy Weeks Prophecy as a precedent, it seems clear that faithful Jews understood when the time period started, when it would end, and what would happen when it ended—the advent of the Messiah. By contrast, we are unable to assign definite dates to the other time periods of Daniel's prophecy, even, in some cases, long after the period is deemed to have expired. And yet we are assured that "the wise shall understand" (Dan. 12:10). If these time periods are based on

past events (as I believe they are), it is not likely that the further passage of time alone is going to make us any wiser.

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I would like to thank Brother Camplin for his comments, in which he notes that none of the existing interpretations of the prophetic time periods incorporate the date A.D. 70, and states that this is a deficiency in the current interpretations. To be honest I have not paid much attention to this issue until prompted by Brother Camplin's letter. However, I have a few suggestions to make.

In the Seventy Weeks Prophecy (490 years) of Daniel 9 we are given a prophetic description of the death and resurrection of Jesus and also the events surrounding A.D. 70. In relation to this prophecy, the most important event must surely be the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have an amazingly precise time period of exactly 490 years between the time when Ezra set out with his compatriots from Persia to Jerusalem on the twelfth day of the first month in 458 B.C. and the day that Jesus gave the Olivet Prophecy on the twelfth day of the first month in A.D. 33, just two days before he was crucified.

The events of A.D. 70 are clearly connected with the crucifixion. God used the Roman army to punish the Jews for killing His Son, as foreshadowed by the parable of the servants who beat and killed the messengers sent from their master (Mt. 21:33-44). The rejection of God's Son sealed the fate of Israel. Therefore we can see the events of A.D. 70 as being a consequence of the crucifixion. If there is such a close connection between these events then the question might be asked, Is it necessary that A.D. 70 should have its own time period?

In a sense we can consider the crucifixion and A.D. 70 as two aspects of a single event. This might seem like a strange concept but we have other examples in Scripture. For example, in 1 Corinthians 15:21-23 Paul makes the point that the resurrection of Jesus and subsequent resurrection of the saints some 2,000 years later are in a sense a single event. The resurrection of

Jesus absolutely guarantees that there will be a future resurrection of the saints. In other words, there is no way that the resurrection of the saints cannot happen.

Another example of connected events is in the Olivet Prophecy itself and thus directly relevant to the issue being discussed. When we read through the Olivet Prophecy it is very difficult to separate out which bits apply to A.D. 70 and which to the return of Jesus. At least it is clear from this that the two events are closely coupled. Brother John Thomas uses a fence post analogy to describe the close connection between A.D. 70 and the return. Two fence posts may appear to be a single post if one is hidden behind the other. However, when we walk past the first post we then see that there is in fact a second. In a similar manner, when Jesus gave the Olivet Prophecy to his disciples, the events of A.D. 70 and the return looked like a single event. However, on passing A.D. 70 it became apparent that the return of Jesus was to occur later.

The last section of the Olivet Prophecy, Matthew 24:36-51, is applicable to both A.D. 70 and the return of Jesus. In this section Jesus emphasises that he will come unexpectedly: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (v. 36). If the angels did not know the date of Jesus' return at that time, it suggests that the date cannot be calculated from any of the Old Testament time periods. This is mentioned again in verses 42-44: "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh". A key point to note here is that, if it were possible to have calculated that the temple would be destroyed in A.D. 70, this would be equivalent to knowing when a burglar was going to arrive at a house.

We could be pedantic and note that Jesus did not say that we could not know the year of his return, only the day and hour. However, I would suggest that this means that we cannot know the year either. Normally we apply the words of Jesus in the last section of the Olivet Prophecy to his return. However, in view of the generic nature of the last section and the clear association between A.D. 70 and the return as discussed above, I suggest that this indicates that the date of the destruction of the temple cannot be calculated from

any of the prophetic time periods. Therefore the reason why none of the existing interpretations terminate in AD 70 is because it is not possible. Of course, I could be wrong about this, but I put this out for further discussion.

A weak point in the above argument might be that, although it was impossible to work out the date of the destruction of the temple before A.D. 70, it might have been possible to do so after the event. I think that there are two points to note here. Firstly, although in modern times we have had trouble applying prophetic time periods before their expiry, we know that in principle it is possible to do so, as Daniel was able to do this in relation to the end of the seventy-year captivity (Dan. 9:2). However, the words of Jesus to his disciples just before his ascension seem to indicate that it is not possible to calculate the date of his return: "And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power" (Acts 1:7). Since the Bible at this time consisted only of the Old Testament, the implication is that there was nothing in the Old Testament prophecies enabling the date of the return to be calculated.

Secondly, the time period between the crucifixion and A.D. 70 is a rather 'awkward' thirty-seven years. With hindsight we can note that 37 is the twelfth prime number (1, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37), which may or may not be significant since 12 is the 'number' of Israel. The point of this argument is that there does not seem to be an obvious way of determining that the destruction of the temple would occur thirty-seven years after the crucifixion.

To briefly summarise the above argument:

- In the Seventy Weeks Prophecy a clear link exists between the crucifixion and A.D. 70. However, the crucifixion is the primary event, therefore the seventy weeks terminates here.
- Evidence suggests that it is not possible to work out the date of the return of Jesus. In the Olivet Prophecy, A.D. 70 and the return are connected. The generic section at the end of the prophecy would seem to indicate that it is not possible to determine the date of either the destruction of the temple or the return.

Brother Camplin says that "The activities of Mohammed and his followers 600 years later could not have been of any practical consequence to Christ's contemporaries, much less any Babylonian or Greek sacrileges hundreds of years in the past". This is, of course, true. However, the information is useful for brethren and sisters

living 600 years later and beyond, for example people like us who can look back and marvel at the accuracy of prophecy.

Also, the vast majority of the book of Revelation was not relevant to the seven ecclesias of Asia Minor to whom the prophecy was sent. Nevertheless, God wanted the prophecy sent to these ecclesias. Brethren and sisters down through the ages, ourselves included, have benefited enormously from these prophecies.

Finally, to pick up on Brother Camplin's point about multiple start/finish dates for prophecies, personally I see this as a strength rather than a weakness in our method of interpretation. As mentioned in previous articles, I see the prophetic time periods as measuring rules connecting periods in history. For example, the seven times, or 2,520 years, spans the time from the Jewish captivity in Babylon to the end of the Diaspora in the twentieth century. The multiple start and finish dates can be likened to the individual planks of wood in a bridge. A bridge with more than one plank of wood is a more substantial structure than a bridge with a single plank.

*Stephen Hughes*

I would like to offer some further comments on this matter. The specific reference of Jesus to Daniel in the Mount Olivet Prophecy reads, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) . . ." (Mt. 24:15). The words in brackets may indicate that the reader needs some discernment regarding the application of Daniel's prophecy to the Roman suppression of the Jewish revolt of A.D. 66-70.

The idea of desolation first comes in Daniel

in 8:13, in relation to the little horn of the goat (Rome) and its destruction of the temple and its sacrifices, where we have a reference to "the transgression of desolation". Regarding this Roman power, 9:27 says, "for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate", in context another reference to A.D. 70. In 11:31 we have the first occurrence of the words quoted by Jesus: "they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate". Though this section of Daniel 11 is often applied to Antiochus Epiphanes, over 150 years before the time of Christ, I believe it applies more fittingly to the Romans, as is evidenced by verbal links between the Mount Olivet Prophecy and this part of Daniel 11. Three out of the four references in Daniel to a desolator therefore refer to Rome, as picked up in the Mount Olivet Prophecy.

Whilst it may be thought appropriate that time periods in Daniel should have A.D. 70 as their terminus, the periods given do not, on a day-for-a-year basis, fit either a terminus or commencement at that time. They fit better with a commencement at the time when the Muslims took over the Land. Hence the fourth reference to the desolator in Daniel, "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days" (12:11). Daniel 9:27 refers to "abominations" in the plural, and 12:11, as the last of the four references to the abomination, refers to a succeeding abomination, the Muslim one. The span of Gentile times is revealed in Daniel 4 to be 2,520 years, and the arrival of the Muslims in the Land separates this period into two halves.—*T.B.*

## The promise of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2

Aleck Crawford

I WOULD LIKE to offer the following comments in reply to Brother Don Harrison's article of the above title published in December 2006 (p. 442), in particular the concluding two sections under the headings, "The gift of the Holy Spirit" and "The Spirit gifts". Quotations from Brother Harrison's article are in italics with my replies following.

*I had Simon the sorcerer in mind when I visualised the number of fake repentants there would have been if the Spirit gifts had been bestowed as a result of baptism. The inspired record does not say Simon was a "fake repentant". It says the opposite: "when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and*