

in length, verse 26 would certainly have said: "After the 69 'sevens."

- 2) If the angel had desired to say that the first segment would include 69 'sevens' he might conceivably have said "9 and 60," but there is no parallel for speaking of 69 as "7 and 62."
- 3) The punctuation that takes the "7 and 62" as two distinct segments instead of running them together fits the accents contained in the Hebrew Bible. This fact might not, by itself, be sufficient to prove the case, since there is no evidence that accent marks were included in Hebrew manuscripts written during the early centuries of the Christian era. Yet they, like the vowel points, may well represent a tradition passed on with remarkable accuracy for many centuries. In any case the two considerations mentioned above should be sufficient to establish the point.

Thus we reject the erroneous punctuation inserted by Theodotion in his translation into Greek, and followed in many later translations, including the KJV and the NIV. As a vital first step toward interpreting this difficult passage we recognize that the account of the first segment of the 70 'sevens' ends with the words "seven 'sevens'", and that the description of the second segment begins with the words: "And (for) sixty-two 'sevens' it will be rebuilt."

The First Segment

At the first reading of the NIV text the extent of the first segment of the 70 weeks seems clear: "From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens."

Yet serious questions arise as soon as one notices the marginal readings of the NIV, which call attention to the fact that at certain points it has made a selection among possible