

of seven weeks might. refer to a period of 49 years that began when God gave Jeremiah the divine promise that Jerusalem would be rebuilt, and ended at the coming of the anointed ruler Cyrus who fulfilled that prediction, or that it might reach from the time when Cyrus gave that decree to the coming of Christ, which would require taking the weeks as indefinite periods of time. We have seen the variety of possible interpretations of the phrase "and (but) will have nothing."

Having noticed these points at which various interpretations have been proposed, our next step should be to seek a way to combine selections from these alternatives into a satisfactory interpretation of the passage as a whole. At this point we shall not examine interpretations that divide the prophecy into two periods instead of three and are therefore clearly wrong, or interpretations that begin the 70 weeks with an edict other than that of Cyrus. Such interpretations will be examined in special notes, on pp. 193ff.

The View of Keil and Leupold

One of the best efforts that has been made to fit the different parts of the prophecy of the 70 weeks into a coherent picture is the view presented by Kliefoth⁴ and Keil⁵ and more recently by Leupold.⁶ According to this view the 70 weeks constitute three periods of indefinite length. It holds that the first period (7 weeks) reaches from Cyrus to Christ (actually about five and one-half centuries), that the second period (62 weeks) reaches from Christ to the rise of Antichrist, and that the third period (one week) covers the activities of Antichrist, just before the Lord's return. This view has three strong points in its favor: (1) It recognizes that the passage predicts three periods, not two, thus avoiding the unfortunate twisting of the passage that has been so common in Christian circles; (2) It parallels the predictions of other parts of Daniel by considering the passage as reaching to the very end of the reign of sin; (3) It recognizes the decree of Cyrus as the starting point, as