

judgment wherever the evidence is insufficient to provide certainty.

In the NIV the verse reads as follows:

Daniel 9:24 -- Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish^a transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.^b

^a The NIV margin reads: Or restrain.

^b The Hebrew original has no article with this phrase. The NIV margin reads: "*Or Most Holy Place or most holy One.*"

Here six purposes are mentioned, each consisting of a verb and a noun or noun phrase. The nouns in the first three statements are synonyms rendered "transgression," "sin," (KJV "sins") and "wickedness" (KJV "iniquity"). The fourth purpose is "to bring in everlasting righteousness," following up the emphasis of the first three on removing sin. The sixth continues the positive note of the fourth with the words "to anoint a most holy," (literally "a holy of holies"). The remaining statement of purpose, "to seal up vision and prophecy," seems to be in a somewhat different category.

Each of the first two statements has a *qere* and a *kethibh*.¹ In each case some interpreters strongly defend the *qere* and others equally strongly support the *kethibh*. The last two statements of purpose are understood in widely differing ways by various scholars. The only one of the six where neither semantic nor textual grounds provide a basis for a difference of opinion is the third, which, as we have seen, clearly points to atoning for sin and uses the terminology so often found in the sacrificial ritual.² It predicts the most important event in all history, and shows that the atonement of Christ must have a vital place in the purposes of the 70 weeks. This gives us warrant for believing that either the reference to the coming of "an anointed one, a ruler" in