

forward to the great final victory over sin predicted in chapters 2, 7 and 11-12.

The third purpose was discussed on p. 160.

The Fourth Purpose

The fourth purpose is "to bring in everlasting righteousness." If it had said "universal righteousness" it would clearly point to the time when all wickedness will be removed and the reign of Christ made universal, after the destruction of the evil powers so vividly described elsewhere in Daniel's prophecies. As the phrase stands, there are two possible interpretations. It may point to the time when righteousness will cover the earth, never again to be overcome by wickedness, or it may be taken as pointing to the fact that for God's people the guilt of the sins for which Christ shed His blood is forever replaced by His everlasting righteousness, and thus as paralleling the third purpose.

The Fifth Purpose

The fifth purpose reads: "to seal up vision and prophecy." In our consideration of the second purpose we noticed that the word "seal" has two meanings: to authenticate or certify, and to close up for privacy or safe-keeping. The translation "to seal up" seems to fit the second meaning rather than the first, while the word "seal" by itself could represent either meaning. Since there is nothing in the Hebrew to suggest that the word "up" should be inserted, it would be better to leave the reader free to decide between the two possible meanings.

Actually the first meaning, to authenticate or certify, makes excellent sense, for the Hebrew word *hatam* and its Greek equivalent *sphragizo* are often used in the Bible to express this meaning. In John 6:27 Jesus says of the Son of Man: "On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval" (more literally in KJV, "him hath God the Father sealed.") Thus in that context the NIV gave a clear rendering