

Chapter 9

Oh, how ridiculous it seems to these circumcised saints that we accursed Goyim have interpreted and understand this saying thus, especially since we did not consult their rabbis, Talmudists, and Kokhbaites whom they regard as more authoritative than all of Scripture- For they do a far better job of it. This is what they say: "Know therefore and understand from the going forth of the word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem" -- this means, Ponder and understand it well that the word has gone forth that Jerusalem is to be restored. That is one point. Further, "To the coming of the Messiah, the prince" -- this means, until the time of King Cyrus there shall be seven weeks." That is another point. Further, "For sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with walls and streets, but in a troubled time." That is another point. "And after sixty-two weeks the Messiah (that means King Agrippa) will be killed and will not be" -- this means, will be no king, etc.

It is indeed tiresome to discuss such confused lies and such tomfoolery. But I have to give our people occasion for pondering the devilish wantonness which the rabbis perpetrate with this splendid saying. So here you see how they separate the text where it should be read connectedly, and join it where it should be separated. This is the way in which it should be connected:

"Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the word about how Jerusalem is to be restored and rebuilt to the coming of the Messiah, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks." These words, I say, are to be joined together to form one complete text. Then follows: "It shall be built again with walls and streets, but in a troubled time." This sentence, separate though it is, they connect with the foregoing words about the sixty-two weeks, so as to convey the meaning that the building of the walls and the streets will occupy sixty-two weeks.

That is truly a knavish trick. It reminds me of the rascal of whom I once heard as a young monk. He hacked the Lord's Prayer to pieces and re-arranged it to read thus: Our Father, hallowed be in heaven; thy name come; thy kingdom be done;

thy will as in heaven, so also on earth. Or as that ignorant priest read the lesson in the Vigils from I Corinthians 15: *Ubi est mors stimulus, tuus stimulus autem mortis, peccatum est virtus vero*, etc.

That is the way the Jews tear apart the text wherever they can, solely for the purpose of spoiling the words of Scripture for us Christians, although it serves no purpose for them either. For it teaches them nothing, it does not comfort them, it gives them nothing; it results in nothing but meaningless words. It is the same as if the angel had said nothing at all. But they would rather surrender such comforting, joyous words and suffer the loss than to have them benefit us. Similarly, Bodenstern maliciously tore the words of the sacrament apart lest they prove useful to us. However, this will not help the rabbis, those night herons and screech owls. With the help of God we will bring their howling and lying to light. Let us take up the several parts in order.

First I want to ask the Hebraists whether the word *intellige* ["know"] is construed with the word *de* ["from"] in any other place in Scripture. I have not found any, and this seems to me quite arbitrary. If it is to mean *de* as in the phrase *de subjecta materia*, the Hebrew uses the preposition *al*, just as the Latins use the word *super* ("*Multa super Priamo*," etc. [149]). I know very well, however, that the Jews cannot prove that such a construction obtains here. The biblical examples agree that it stands as an absolute, independently. But to ascribe something to God maliciously of which one is uncertain, and which one cannot prove, is tantamount to tempting him and giving him the lie.

Now let us see how they tear the text apart. "Know therefore and understand, from the going forth of the word, that Jerusalem will again be built." This, they claim, does not speak of the beginning of the seventy weeks but of the word that has gone forth. Then follows: "To the coming of the Messiah, the prince, there shall be seven weeks." Now it is in agreement with the customary usage of all languages that the word *donec*, "until" [or "to"], presupposes a beginning. However, the Jews assign it none; they refuse to have the text read "from the beginning of the word to the coming of Messiah." I must draw an analogy.

If some one on St. Gall Square here in Wittenberg were to tell you: "You have heard a sermon based on God's word, declaring that the church is holy. Ponder this and mark it well." All right, you look at him expectantly to hear what else he has to say; for he does have more to say. Then he abruptly blurts out: "There are still seven weeks till Michaelmas." Or, "It is a distance of three miles to Halle." Here you would look at him and say, What sense is there in that? Are you crazy? Are the seven weeks to begin now on the market-place? Or are the three miles to begin in Wittenberg? "No," he would reply, "you must understand this to mean from the Day of St. Lawrence to Michaelmas, and from Bitterfeld to Halle." At this point you would be tempted to rejoin: "Go plant a kiss of peace on a sow's rump! Where did you learn to jabber so foolishly? And what do the seven weeks have to do with your statement that I should note well the sermon that I heard at Wittenberg?"

The rabbis treat the angel Gabriel's words in the same way. They make his speech read thus: 'There are seven weeks until the Messiah.' Suppose now Daniel replies, "My dear Gabriel, what do you mean? Are the seven weeks to begin now that you are speaking with me?" "No," he says, "you must understand this to mean that they begin with the destruction of Jerusalem." Thank you, indeed, you noble, circumcised rabbis, for teaching the angel Gabriel to speak, as though he were unable to tell of the beginning of the seven weeks, which is all-important, as well as of the middle and the end of them. No, Daniel is to assume it. This is just nonsense. Shame on you, you vile rabbis, to attribute this foolish talk of yours to the angel of God! With this you disgrace yourselves and convict yourselves of being malicious liars and blasphemers of God's words. But this is just the grammatical side of the matter. Now let us study the theological aspect.

These holy, circumcised ravens say that the seventy weeks begin with the first destruction of Jerusalem and end with its second destruction. What better method could they have pursued for arriving at this conclusion than to close their eyes and ears, ignore Scripture and the history books, and let their imagination run freely, saying: "This is the way it seems right to us, and we insist upon it. Therefore it follows that God and his angel must agree with us. How could we be wrong? We are the ravens who are able to teach God and the angels."

Oh, what a base, vexatious, blasphemous people, that can merit the Messiah with such penitence! But let us listen to their wisdom. The seventy weeks begin with the destruction of Jerusalem by the king of Babylon; from that event until the coming of the Messiah, the prince (that is, King Cyrus), are seven weeks. Now tell me: Where is this written? Nowhere. Who has said it? Markolf the mockingbird. Who else might say or write it?

In the beginning of this ninth chapter stands Daniel's clear and plain statement that the revelation regarding the seventy weeks had come to him in the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede, who had conquered the Babylonian kingdom, which event had been preceded by the first destruction of Jerusalem seventy years earlier. For Daniel clearly states that seventy years of the devastation had been fulfilled, in accordance with Jeremiah 29:10. This we also read in II Chronicles, the last chapter [36:22]. And yet these two clear passages of Scripture, Daniel 9 and II Chronicles 36, must be accounted as lies by the rabbis. They insist that they are right and that the seventy weeks must have begun seventy years before they were revealed to Daniel. Isn't that great? Now go and believe the rabbis, those ignorant, untutored asses, who look neither at the Scriptures nor at the history books and who spew forth from their vicious mouth whatever they choose against God and angels.

For they herewith stand openly convicted of their lies and their erring arbitrariness. Since the seventy weeks which were revealed in the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede cannot begin seventy years previously with the destruction of Jerusalem, all their lies founded on this are simultaneously refuted, and this verse of Daniel regarding the seventy weeks must remain for us undefiled and unadulterated_no thanks to them. Eternal disgrace will be their reward for this impertinent and patent lie. With this lie another one also collapses; namely, their claim that the words about the Messiah, the prince, refer to King Cyrus, who supposedly appeared seven weeks after the destruction, although in fact he came ten weeks (that is, seventy years) after the destruction. This is recorded in II Chronicles 36, Daniel 9, and Ezra 1.

Even if we would assume which is impossible that the seventy weeks began with the destruction of Jerusalem, we could still

not justify this stupid lie. And with this the third lie collapses. For they say that Cyrus came fifty-two years after the destruction: the equivalent of seven weeks and three years, or seven and a half weeks. Thus they tear three years, or half a week, from the sixty-two weeks and add them to the first seven weeks. It is as though the angel were such a consummate fool or child that he could not count up to seven, and says seven when he should say seven and a half. Why do they do this? So that we might perceive how they indulge in lies for the purpose of tearing apart and turning upside down God's word for us. Therefore they insist that Cyrus came seven and a half weeks (which they call seven weeks) after the destruction, whereas (as was said) he really came ten weeks, i.e., seventy years, later.

Nor does the angel tolerate that these weeks be mangled and mutilated, subtracting three years from one and leaving it only four years, and adding to the one that has seven years three more, making it ten years or one and a half weeks. For he says that the seventy weeks are to be taken exactly; they are counted and reckoned precisely.

Much less does he tolerate the fourth lie that Cyrus is here called the Messiah even if the other lies were to be upheld, to the effect that Cyrus had appeared after seven weeks, that is, after fifty-two years. For here we find the unmistakable and simple words of the angel: "Seventy weeks of years are decreed concerning your people and your holy city" [Dan. 9:24]. He means to say: In other chapters I spoke of strange people and kings; but in this verse concerning the seventy weeks I am speaking of your people, of your city, and of your Messiah. And whoever refers this to a different people and to different kings is a wanton, incorrigible liar.

The fourth lie is followed by the fifth, in which they divorce the seven weeks from the sixty-two. But these belong together, and there is no reason to separate them, especially since the lie regarding King Cyrus miscarried. It was for this reason that they severed the seven from the sixty-two weeks so that they could give him seven, that is, seven and a half. In biblical Hebrew it is customary to count the years thus: first to give the one, then the other number of years, but with both placed together. We find many illustrations for this in Genesis 5 and 11, where reference is made to the deceased fathers. For instance: "When Seth had lived five years and a

hundred years, he became the father of Enosh. Seth lived after the birth of Enosh seven years and eight hundred years" [Gen. 5:6 f.]. Similarly Genesis 11 [:17]: "Eber lived after the birth of Peleg thirty years and four hundred years." And Genesis 25 [:7]: "Abraham lived one hundred years, seventy years, and five years." From these illustrations one can easily see how arbitrary it is to separate the seven years from the sixty-two years in this verse.

The Latin and German languages prevent such a disruption nicely, since they do not repeat the little word "year" so often, but read the number connectedly, saying: "Abraham lived one hundred seventy-five years." In that way these words also are to be taken: "From the going forth of the word to the coming of the Messiah, the prince, there are seven weeks and sixty-two weeks." These two numbers belong together and compose one number, to the coming of the Messiah. The angel has a reason for designating the entire sum of years as seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. He might have spoken of nine weeks and sixty weeks, or found many different ways to name such a sum, such as five weeks and sixty-four weeks, or six weeks and sixty-three weeks, etc. He must have the seven weeks for the construction of the walls and streets of Jerusalem; and he must have the sixty-two, up to the last week, which is all important, for in it the Messiah will die, fulfill the covenant, etc.

Then comes the sixth lie which says that the walls and streets of Jerusalem were rebuilt for sixty-two weeks (minus three years). That would be up to the last week, after which as they lie for the seventh time Jerusalem was again destroyed. For with the last week the seventy weeks are ended. According to this, Jerusalem had not stood again for longer than one week, which means seven years. Go ahead, Jew, lie boldly and unashamedly! Nehemiah stands against you with his book and testifies that he built the walls, set the gates, and arranged the city, and that he himself gloriously consecrated it. Thus the temple was already completed in the sixth year of the reign of Darius (Ezra 7 [6:16]). Alexander the Great found the city of Jerusalem already long completed. After him that villain Antiochus found the city even further restored and the temple full of wealth, and he plundered them horribly.

The eighth rude lie follows when they interpret the words of the angel, "And after sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be killed, and shall have nothing," as if the Messiah refers to King Agrippa, who was killed and had nothing after his death; no king succeeded him. Why would it not be just as true to say that Emperor Nero was the Messiah? He was killed at that time and left no heirs. I believe that they would designate Markolf or Thersites as the Messiah rather than accept the true Messiah. How can God, who loves the truth and who is the truth himself, tolerate such shameful, open lies if these are intolerable even to a person who is given to lies or is untruthful or is at least not so strict a lover of the truth? And this eighth lie is a multiple one_in the first place, because they assign different meanings to the word "Messiah" within such a brief passage: there he has to be Cyrus after the seven weeks, here Agrippa after the sixty-two weeks. Just as though the angel were a fool who would point to a different Messiah with every other word!

As we heard earlier, the angel is not referring to a foreign people and city, but says, "I am speaking of your people and of your city." Therefore we must conceive of the Messiah in this verse not as two different beings, but as one_namely, the Messiah of this people and of this city, the Shiloh of Judah who came after the scepter departed from Judah, the Son of David, the chemdath of Haggai. This verse indeed refers to him, excluding all others. For Agrippa was not king in Jerusalem, much less the Messiah, before the last week (that is, after seven and sixty-two weeks). The Romans had graciously granted him a little country beyond the Jordan. The Roman procurators such as Felix, Festus, Albinus, etc., ruled the land of Judea. Nor was Agrippa killed after the sixty-two weeks. In brief, all that they say is a lie.

Since they now confess, and have to confess, that a Messiah was killed after the sixty-two weeks, that is, in the first year of the last week, and since this cannot have been Agrippa (as they would like to have it, in confirmation of their lie), nor anyone else, I am curious to learn where they might find one. It must be someone who lived before the expiration of the seventy weeks and who was killed after sixty-two weeks. Furthermore, as Gabriel says, he must have come from among their people, undoubtedly from the royal tribe of Judah. Now it is certain that since Herod's time they had had no king who

was a member of their people or race. But, on the other hand, it is just as certain that Gabriel must be believed, with his statement regarding a Messiah of their nation. How is this difficulty to be solved?

And there is more. They themselves confess that they had no Messiah, that is, no anointed king ("Messiah" means "the anointed one"), between the first and the last destruction of Jerusalem, for the sacred anointing oil, of which Moses writes in Exodus 30:22, with which kings and priests were anointed, no longer existed after the first destruction. Consequently, Zedekiah was the last anointed king; his descendants were princes, not kings, down to the time of Herod, when the scepter departed and Shiloh, the true Messiah, was to appear.

We want to purge out their lies completely. With reference to Daniel's saying, "And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week" [Dan. 9 27], that is, the last week, they perpetrate the ninth lie, saying that the Romans agreed to a peace or a truce for this last week (or seven years) with the Jews; but since the Jews grew rebellious the Romans returned in three years and destroyed Jerusalem. Now how does this bear out Gabriel, who says that the peace or truce (as they interpret the word "covenant") is to last seven years? If it did not endure longer than three years, then Gabriel, who speaks of seven years or the last week must be lying. Thus the mendacious hearts of these incorrigible liars falsely impugn the truthfulness of the angel Gabriel. Alas, what truce? What peace? Read Josephus and the history books and you will learn that the Romans slew many thousands of Jews a long time before, and that there was no peace up to the time when they were constrained to destroy Jerusalem and the country.

The tenth and final lie concerns the assertion that the destruction of Jerusalem will last until the end of the strife. They interpret this as meaning: until the strife of their Messiah, who will kill Gog and Magog and conquer the whole world. This is a vicious, miserable lie which is dead before it is born. Let those who maintain that the Messiah appeared before the expiration of the seventy weeks be informed that such a lie was discredited as long as fifteen hundred years ago. Thus the Jews do not retain a single word of Gabriel's statement intact; they pervert all his words into lies, with the

exception of the angel's prophecy regarding the destruction of Jerusalem. But no one need thank them for believing that and admitting the truth of it now. While they still inhabited Jerusalem, they believed this prophecy still less than they believe now in our Messiah, although it was foretold plainly enough, here in Daniel 9 as well as in Zechariah 14. If they were still dwelling in Jerusalem today, they would invent a hundred thousand lies before they would believe it, just as their ancestors did prior to the first destruction. The latter were not persuaded by any prophet that the holy city of God would be laid waste. They harried them, they raved like mad dogs until they stood face to face with the fulfillment of the prophecy. This has always been a stiff-necked, unbelieving, proud, base, incorrigible people, and so it ever remains.

From all of this we gather that Daniel with his seventy weeks takes our position against the Jews' lies and folly, a position as reliable and firm as an iron wall and an immovable rock, affirming that the true Messiah must have come before the termination of the seventy weeks; that he was killed and made alive again; that he fulfilled God's covenant (for why should Daniel here be speaking of the Gentiles' covenant, which, moreover, did not even exist at the time?) in the last week; that he thereby took leave of the city and the people at the end of the seventy weeks; that the city was razed by the Romans shortly after; that the people were destroyed, with their government and all they had_all of this in accordance with the angel's words: "Seventy weeks of years are decreed or reckoned concerning your people and your holy city" [Dan. 9:24], But enough!

No doubt it is necessary for the Jews to lie and to misinterpret in order to maintain their error over against such a clear and powerful text. Their previous lies broke down under their own weight. But even if they were to lie for a hundred thousand years and call all the devils in to aid them, they would still come to nought. For it is impossible to name a Messiah at the time of the seventy weeks, as Gabriel's revelation would necessitate, other than our Lord Jesus Christ. We are certain, sure, and cheerful about this, as we snap our fingers at all the gates of hell and defy them, together with all the gates of the world and everything that wants to be or might be exalted, smart, and wise against us. I, a plain insignificant saint in Christ, venture to oppose all of

them singlehandedly and to defend this viewpoint easily, comfortably, and gladly. However, it is impossible to convert the devil and his own, nor are we commanded to attempt this. [154] It suffices to uncover their lies and to reveal the truth. Whoever is not actuated to believe the truth for the sake of his own soul will surely not believe it for my sake.

We will limit ourselves for the time being to these four texts_ those of Jacob, David, Haggai, and Daniel_ wherein we see what a fine job the Jews have done these fifteen hundred years with Scripture, and what a fine job they still do. For their treatment of these texts parallels their treatment of all others, especially those that are in favor of us and our Messiah. These, of course, must be accounted as lies, whereas they themselves cannot err or be mistaken. However, they have not acquired a perfect mastery of the art of lying; they lie so clumsily and ineptly that anyone who is just a little observant can easily detect it.

But for us Christians they stand as a terrifying example of God's wrath. As St. Paul declares in Romans 11, we must fear God and honor his word as long as the time of grace remains, so that we do not meet with a similar or worse fate. We have seen this happen in the case of the papacy and of Muhammad. The example of the Jews demonstrates clearly how easily the devil can mislead people, after they once have digressed from the proper understanding of Scripture, into such blindness and darkness that it can be readily grasped and perceived simply by natural reason, yes, even by irrational beasts. And yet they who daily teach and hear God's word do not recognize this darkness but regard it as the true light. O Lord God, have mercy on us!

If I had to refute all the other articles of the Jewish faith, I should be obliged to write against them as much and for as long a time as they have used for inventing their lies -- that is, longer than two thousand years. I stated earlier that they corrupt their circumcision with human ordinances and ruin their heritage with their arrogance. In the same manner they also desecrate their Sabbath and- all their festivals. In brief, all their life and all their deeds, whether they eat, drink, sleep, wake, stand, walk dress, undress, fast, bathe, pray, or praise, are so sullied with rabbinical, foul ordinances and unbelief, that Moses can no longer be recognized among them. This corresponds to the situation of the papacy in our

day, in which Christ and his word can hardly be recognized because of the great vermin of human ordinances. However let this suffice for the time being on their lies against doctrine or faith.

In conclusion we want to examine their lies against persons, which, after all, do not make the doctrine either worse or better, whether the persons are pious or base. Specifically, we want to look at their lies about the person of our Lord, as well as those about his dear mother and about ourselves and all Christians. These lies are such as the devil resorts to when he cannot assail the doctrine. Then he turns against the person_lying, maligning, cursing, and ranting against him. That is what the papists' Beelzebub [156] did to me. When he was unable to refute my gospel, he wrote that I was possessed of the devil, that I was a changeling, that my dear mother was a whore and a bathhouse attendant. [157] Of course, no sooner had he written this than my gospel was destroyed and the papists carried the day! Similarly, John the Baptist and Christ himself were charged with having a devil [Matt. 11:18; John 8:20] and were called Samaritans_and shortly thereafter John's and Christ's doctrine was shown to be false, and that of the Pharisees true. The same thing happened to all the prophets. Recently also, when the stealthy, murdering arsonist of Wolfenbuttell who, next to the archbishop of Mainz, is the holy Roman Church's one relic and jewel shamefully slandered and defamed the persons of the elector of Saxony and the landgrave of Hesse, both were instantly doomed; but he, the holy man, king over all kings, was crowned with a diadem and gold so heavy that he could not bear it and had to flee.

Therefore, whenever you wish to win in an evil cause, do as they do and as the glib babblers do in court when the silver-or gold-fever seizes them. Scold and lie boldly about the person, and your cause will win out. It is like the mother who instructed her child: "Dear son, if you cannot win otherwise, start a brawl." These are lies in which the liar does not fabricate or err in the chief question at issue (as happens also in religious disputes), but nevertheless is well aware that he is lying and wants to lie against the person. He does not dream of proving his point, either by appearances or by truth, and is unable to do so.

That is how the Jews, too, are acting in this instance. They blatantly inveigh and lie against and curse the person, against their own conscience. In that way they have long since won their case, so that God had to listen to them. Already for fifteen hundred years they have been sitting in Jerusalem, in a golden city, as we can clearly see. They are the lords of the world, and all the Gentiles flock to them with their chemdath, their coats, pants, and shoes, and permit themselves to be slain by the noble princes and lords of Israel, giving them land and people and all that they have, while the Jews curse, spit on, and malign the Goyim.

And you can well imagine that if they would not lie so outrageously, curse, defame, blaspheme, and revile the persons, God would not have heard them, and their cause would have been lost long ago; they would not be lords in Jerusalem today but live dispersed over the world, without seeing Jerusalem, and making their living among the accursed Goyim by means of lying, cheating, stealing, robbing, usury and all sorts of other vices. So effective is it to curse the person if the cause in question is evil and therefore doomed! Consequently, if you have a poor cause to defend, do not overlook this example of the Jews. They are the noble princes of Israel who are capable of everything. When their cause is lost, they still can curse the Goyim thoroughly.