

century A.D. by Julius Africanus, the first great Christian chronographer. Africanus made no effort to interpret the three segments of the predicted 70 weeks but simply assumed that the entire period should reach from a decree to rebuild Jerusalem to the time of Christ. Taking the 20th year of Artaxerxes as a starting point he decided that 70 weeks (490 years) would reach fifteen years beyond the time of the crucifixion, and therefore suggested that the years should be considered as lunar years. (Actually, "lunar year" is a contradiction in terms. Months, not years, were originally based upon the moon. Except for the present Mohammedan calendar, a year has always been understood to mean a round of the seasons, caused by the earth's changing relation to the sun.) According to Africanus' calculation there were 475 years between the 20th year of Artaxerxes' reign and the year in which the crucifixion of Christ occurred. Since a well-established system of intercalation was followed in Babylonia and also in Israel, it was easy to figure that during these 475 years 180 months would have been intercalated. Dividing this number by 12 he said that the intercalations would equal 15 lunar years and that therefore the 475 solar years should be considered as 490 lunar years, and thus exactly fulfill the prediction of the 70 weeks. Since we know that years were not counted this way in Babylonia or in Israel, his suggested system is quite arbitrary and unfounded. Africanus' view is described in detail by Eusebius¹¹, and by Jerome¹², though neither expresses agreement with it.

Notes

1. See Dan. 9:24-26.
2. Keil, Commentary on Daniel. p. 380.
3. Some of the writers favoring it are: Robert D. Culver, Daniel and the Latter Days, (Westwood, NJ 1954), p. 145; Harold W. Hoehner, Chronological