

The Gospel, 1844, and Judgment

ADULT SABBATH SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

THE GOSPEL, 1844, AND JUDGMENT

July • Aug • Sept 2006



INDIAN OCEAN

PACIFIC OCEAN

AUSTRALIA

NEW ZEALAND

Tasman Sea

Great Australian Bight

INDONESIA

PAPUA NEW GUINEA (Lae)

SOLOMON ISLANDS

NEW CALEDONIA

FUJI ISLANDS (Suva, VITILEVU)

TONGA ISLANDS

COOK ISLANDS

SAMOA ISLANDS

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Unions	Churches	Companies	Members	Population
Australian Union Conference	409	77	51,884	20,129,000
New Zealand-Pacific Union Conference	137	33	17,146	4,596,000
Papua New Guinea Union Mission	844	2,461	224,469	5,680,000
Trans-Pacific Union Mission	438	563	84,782	1,985,000
Total	1,828	3,134	378,281	32,390,000

* Map not drawn to scale

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Editorial Office 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904

Principal Contributor
Clifford R. Goldstein

Editor
Clifford R. Goldstein

Associate Editor
Lyndelle Brower Chiomenti

Publication Manager
Soraya Homayouni Parish

Editorial Assistant
Larie S. Gray

Pacific Press® Coordinator
Paul A. Hey

Art Director and Illustrator
Lars Justinen

Concept Design
Dever Design

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THE *Gospel, 1844,*

The 1844 judgment brings the Cross into greater focus.

As Adventists, many of our “unique” doctrines are not, really, unique. After all, other Christians (not many, admittedly) keep the seventh-day Sabbath, as well. Though a majority of the Christian world believes in the immortality of the soul, other Christians understand that the dead sleep in the grave until the resurrection, either the first or second. Various “Adventist” teachings, i.e., eternal destruction (as opposed to eternal torment) or the nature of the millennium, can be found elsewhere too. In fact, almost all our doctrines are scattered throughout Christendom.

Except one: the 1844 pre-Advent judgment.

For some, this fact is worrisome; *Why don't more Christians see it, as well?* For others, the uniqueness of the doctrine points even more powerfully to the special calling of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It's precisely because no one else teaches this judgment that we have been raised to do so. From this doctrine, perhaps more than any other, our distinct identity as Seventh-day Adventists arises.

This quarter we will study the 1844 pre-Advent judgment. But not in isolation. As the title suggests, we're going to look at the judgment in the context of the gospel, because judgment without the gospel is like law without grace: It leads only to fear, condemnation, and death. On the other hand, judgment with the gospel (like law with grace) leads to faith, assurance, and hope.

Perhaps the clearest link between the gospel and judgment is the first angel's message: “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach. . . . Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come” (*Rev. 14:6, 7*). As far as God is concerned, the “everlasting gospel” includes judgment; how foolish for us to make it any less inclusive.

Our study this quarter will be divided into various parts. First, we'll let Scripture fill in the background for the judgment and the whole plan of salvation.

and Judgment

Next, in the bulk of the quarter, we'll establish the biblical basis for the 1844 judgment, seeing for ourselves just what a solid basis we have for this teaching, rooted in the Cross. For those whose knowledge of the doctrine began and ended with an evangelistic series, this study will help firmly ground you in this key truth. For those who have already studied it in depth, this quarter will reinforce what you already know and, perhaps, help you understand it even better.

We'll then look at some questions the teaching faces, using them as a vehicle to better grasp the biblical basis for the pre-Advent judgment.

Most important, we'll look at the judgment in the context of the gospel, of Christ's death in our behalf, with the understanding that because of His death we can have assurance in the judgment. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (*Rom. 8:1*). No condemnation now, and especially in the judgment.

Finally, we seek to answer such questions as: What does a judgment whose beginning was dated in the nineteenth century mean for us in the twenty-first? What does it tell us about ourselves, our church, and, most important, about the God who promises to return and take us home?

In the end, a proper understanding of the 1844 judgment will bring out Christ's death for us in greater clarity and depth, especially as we await the Second Coming. Perhaps that's why we, as Seventh-day Adventists, have been called to preach it, because it does bring the Cross into greater focus, and as we near the consummation of all things, how important that the Cross be understood with all possible clarity. Thus, more than wanting you to come away from these lessons with a better understanding of charts, dates, and numbers, we want you to come away with a greater understanding of Jesus, of the Cross, and of His ministry in heaven for us. If so, then our work together this quarter will have been—through the grace of God—richly rewarded and more than worth the effort.

Got Questions?

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Mission Ad

“Principalities *and* Powers”



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Ps. 51:1-4; Zech. 3:1-4; Matt. 22:11, 12; Rom. 3:4; Eph. 3:10; Heb. 2:14; 13:2; Rev. 12:7-13.*

Memory Text: “We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men” (*1 Corinthians 4:9, NIV*).

One of the most amazing discoveries of the past century was, literally, astronomical: the realization that billions of galaxies exist, each one containing billions of stars. Though new galaxies are being discovered every day, the latest estimates are at about 125 billion . . . and counting. When one considers that each galaxy contains billions of stars and that these stars could have planets revolving around them, it's not hard to understand why some people believe that life must exist elsewhere in the universe.

Thus, using elaborate and sensitive radio telescopes, people are engaged in a search for extraterrestrial life. Given the size of the universe and the number of stars scattered through it, surely we're not alone.

As Christians, though, we don't need radio telescopes to learn about the existence of life beyond our earthly borders. Through the Bible (and the Spirit of Prophecy) we know not only that other beings exist but that they're interested in what's happening here, on earth. In fact, the entire universe is involved in the great controversy between Christ and Satan, a struggle with implications that go far beyond our little planet.

This week we'll go where the greatest telescopes can't: into the heart of the great moral issues facing not only humanity but all of God's creation.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, July 1.*

“When the Morning Stars Sang”

Scripture mentions inhabitants from other worlds; that is, the existence of intelligent entities, not of earthly origin, is attested to all through the Bible. In the first chapter of Genesis, in which God Himself creates the world and in which He utters the famous words, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness” (*Gen. 1:26, NIV*), we’re shown immediately not only the existence of something else other than us, we’re shown it predating us, prior to us. We are, relatively speaking, latecomers.

And though, of course, we know that the Godhead had to precede us in order to create us, the Bible talks about other cosmic entities, as well.

Read the following texts (*Job 1:6; 38:7, 8; Dan. 9:21; Acts 12:7; 1 Cor. 4:9; Eph. 3:10; Heb. 13:2*). **What do they tell us about these nonhuman entities?**

As said yesterday, while scientists are busy trying to find out whether other life even exists elsewhere, the Bible shows not only that it does but that it’s involved with us here on earth, sometimes in a rather intimate way. Some of the above texts show these beings interacting with humans, rescuing them, giving them knowledge, etc. These texts reveal just a small sampling of the intense interaction between humans and these nonhuman beings from another part of the creation. That we can’t always see them means nothing, because we know that all sorts of things exist that we can’t see.

The crucial points in all this are simple and yet, at the same time, deep. First, we are not alone in the universe; other intelligent beings exist. Second, these beings are not isolated from us; instead, some, at least, are involved with humans here.

Thus, Scripture clearly paints a picture of reality not generally accepted by modern thinking: the existence of supernatural beings who are, indeed, closely tied with humanity.

What are some of your favorite angel stories from the Bible? If you’ve had some personal encounters with angels, be prepared to share your story with the class. What kind of comfort does the reality of angels give you?

The Devil's Wrath

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (*Rev. 12:7-9; see also vs. 10-13*).

As we saw yesterday, the Bible is clear on the existence of extra-terrestrial life. As we know, though, not all of this life is friendly toward us. On the contrary.

Based on Revelation 12:7-13, answer the following questions:

- 1** Where does the strife begin?
- 2** Where does this battle wind up being fought?
- 3** What are the three specific things the devil is depicted as doing against us?
- 4** The devil is angry because he has “but a short time” (*vs. 12*). What does that mean? *See Matt. 25:41.*
- 5** How do God's people overcome the attacks of the enemy?

These texts reveal the background and reality of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. Though begun in heaven, the battle is now unfolding here on earth. What's more, these texts show that we are involved in this battle, in which the devil, unable to prevail against Michael and His angels in heaven (*Rev. 12:8*), is now waging war on us here.

In what ways do you experience the reality of this great controversy every day? How does your understanding of the reality of this controversy help you cope with personal trials?

“The Accuser of Our Brethren”

Yesterday we looked at the foundations of the great controversy between Christ and Satan and how we, as human beings, are involved. We saw, too, that among the things that Satan does against us, he is also “the accuser of our brethren . . . which accused them before our God day and night” (*Rev. 12:10*).

Though the text doesn’t say just what it was Satan accused the brethren of doing, given what we know about the condition of humanity, what’s the logical answer? What texts can you find to back up your answer? See, for example, *Rom. 3:10-19*.

Whatever else is going on in the great controversy between Christ and Satan, we, as human beings, are in the middle of it. Satan, obviously, in his attack on God is attacking us, as well. This idea is brought out in the book of Genesis, where the serpent, Satan (*Rev. 12:9*), cast out of heaven to earth, brought about the fall of our earthly parents (*Gen. 3:1-7*), which, in turn, led to the fall of the whole human race, along with all its horrible consequences (*Rom. 5:12*). It’s clear, too, that Satan is now taking advantage of what happened to us, and among the things he does is to accuse us regarding our sins and fallen condition. After all, if we were perfect, what would Satan have to accuse us of? It’s because we’re flawed that he has so much to say against us.

Read Zechariah 3:1-4. The Hebrew verb translated in verse 1 as “resist” or “oppose” or “accuse” (in the context of what Satan is saying directly to Joshua) comes from the same root word for “Satan.” What is going on here, and how does this fit in with what we understand about the great controversy?

Though we can see here in Zechariah the work of Satan against us, we also see the work of God for us. What hope and promise can you find from these verses that God is working in our behalf, even though we are sinners?

“The Lord Rebuke Thee, O Satan”

As we saw yesterday, though Satan accused Joshua, who had been dressed in filthy garments, it was Satan—not Joshua—who had been rebuked. How could that be? It’s only because of the plan of salvation, in which Christ defeats Satan and his accusations. The language of Zechariah itself, with filthy garments and change of garments, is gospel language; that is, it’s pointing to the plan of salvation and what Christ does for His fallen people.

Read the following texts (*Isa. 61:10; Matt. 22:11, 12; Rev. 3:18*). **How do they help us understand the gospel imagery in Zechariah 3?**

Though fallen from heaven, Satan had brought the great controversy to the earth. Through the fall of Adam and Eve, Satan brought all humanity into the fray; through the plan of salvation, not only does the Lord save us from the final consequences of that fall; He also defeats Satan in the whole great controversy.

Read Hebrews 2:14. **How does it help us understand the inseparable link between what Christ did here on earth and the ultimate defeat of Satan?**

Though this text doesn’t specify why, the death of Jesus is the means through which, ultimately, Satan (and thus his rebellion) will be defeated. There are bigger issues in the plan of salvation than just saving us from sin. We need to remember—sin didn’t begin here; it began somewhere else in the universe (*Isa. 14:12, Ezek. 28:15, Rev. 12:7*). Though we are in the midst of the great controversy, the issues it go beyond us. They are, literally, universal.

What are some local issues in your community that are small parts of much grander themes? How do these relationships (that is, local issues contrasted against the grander themes behind them) help you understand how the issues in the great controversy could go beyond our personal salvation?

The “Justification” of God

“God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus” (*Rom. 3:25, 26, NIV*).

If you read carefully the above verses, they reveal the idea that whatever else Christ accomplished at the Cross, it was also a demonstration of God’s justice. “He did this to demonstrate his justice,” the text says.

This leads to a fancy theological term important for Adventists to understand. The term is *theodicy*, and it means, basically, “the justification of God.” It’s not justification in the sense that humans are justified (pardoned from sin) but justification in the sense of vindication. *Theodicy is the vindication of God’s goodness and justice, despite the existence of evil.* Here is the foundation of the great controversy: God’s goodness and His justice will be revealed not just before human beings but before all the onlooking universe.

Besides the texts for today, how do these additional texts bring out the idea of theodicy? *Ps. 51:1-4; Rom. 3:4; Eph. 3:10; Rev. 19:1, 2.*

The whole idea of the great controversy and the ultimate vindication of God and His ways forms a wonderful background to the plan of salvation. Though it doesn’t answer everything, it helps form a template in which many issues, such as (1) Why did Jesus have to die? (2) Why are we still here so long after the Cross? (3) Why does evil still exist? can be answered. The concept of theodicy, too, as we’ll see later, helps us understand the background for the pre-Advent judgment; that is, it helps us understand why God even has the judgment.

In short, we are not alone in the universe; other beings exist, and it’s before these other “principalities and powers in heavenly places” (*Eph. 3:10*) that issues in the great controversy will be resolved in a way so that, as the psalmist said of God: “You are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge” (*Ps. 51:4, NIV*).

Further Study: “The Great Controversy” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* (*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 12), pp. 980–1009; Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 498, 499; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 22, 116; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 68, 69.

“But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. To this result of His great sacrifice—its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man—the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: ‘Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me.’ John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 68, 69.

Discussion Questions:

- 1 Talk about the ministry of angels in your own experience.
- 2 For many people, the idea of a literal battle between unseen forces going on around us is a bit hard to believe. What other examples, though, are there of unseen realities around us (e.g., germs, radio waves)? How could you use some of these to help someone who is skeptical about the reality of the great controversy?
- 3 As a class, talk about the idea of *theodicy*, using also the Ellen White quote above. Why is the idea so important? How does it help us answer questions such as, Why are we still here so long after the Cross?
- 4 Does anyone in the class know someone who’s taking a bad beating in the great controversy right now? If so, what can you do as a group to bring that person some comfort and hope?

Labor of Love

Valerie Fidelia

Jane lives in northern Uganda. Like many others, she fled her home in southern Sudan during heavy fighting. It is still too dangerous for her to return. Jane is a displaced person, but she does not live in a tent and receive food from charities. She lives in a thatched-roof mud hut that she helped build. Every morning she rises before dawn and walks four kilometers to her garden, where she tends her cassava and peanut crops, which will feed her family. Then she returns home, showers, and walks another six kilometers to teach sewing to displaced persons in another village.

Because there is no electricity, Jane uses two treadle sewing machines to teach her students. They learn the principles of cutting and sewing using brown paper rather than cloth. Once they are proficient using their paper garments, Jane gives them cotton cloth to cut and sew.

Jane could get a job teaching sewing in a city, but she prefers to help others who can't afford to pay. Her sewing-school ministry will improve the lives of many who have no other source of income. Jane also dreams of teaching women to read and write in their own language and in English, but she has no resources to start a literacy project.

Sewing and teaching are not Jane's only ministries. Several evenings a week she directs the church choir and works with the youth. Often she arrives home after dark to prepare food and wash and iron her clothes.

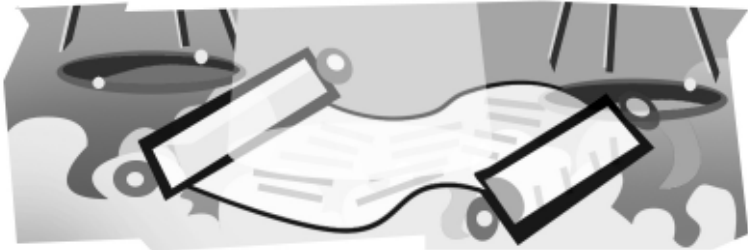
When Jane dreams of the future, she does not dream of an easier life. She dreams of using her skills and knowledge to help others. Jane receives no income from the sewing students. Her work is her ministry for God,

teaching and leading them to the feet of Jesus. With willing hands such as Jane's, the work of God is moving forward rapidly in southern Sudan and northern Uganda. Our mission offerings provide resources to lay men and women such as Jane to share God's love with others.



Jane (left). Valerie Fidelia is director of family, women's, children's, and health ministries in the Middle East Union in Cyprus.

Judgment Must Begin



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Eccles. 12:14; Dan. 12:1, 2; Matt. 8:12; 22:1-13; 25:31-33, 46; John 3:18; 2 Cor. 5:10.*

Memory Text: “In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (*Romans 2:16*).

Graffiti written on a wall by an Italian atheist reads: “There is no God—and Mary is His mother!” However funny, the point is important: As human beings, we are subjective creatures. However much we might try to be objective—to look at things honestly, fairly, logically, without preconceived notions—we inevitably bring our own ideas, culture, moods, and experiences into whatever subject we approach. Even the idea of not having a preconceived notion about something is, indeed, to have a preconceived notion about something.

This week, while realizing our inherent limitations, we’re going to be as objective as we can as we look at what the Bible says about judgment. Let’s forget for the moment about 1844, the pre-Advent judgment, Ellen White, Hiram Edson in the cornfield, etc. Instead, let’s just let the Bible speak for itself on this important topic. And, as it does, let’s see what answers it gives to the following questions: How are judgment and the gospel linked? What are the final results of judgment? Are Christians judged? What role do works play in judgment? When is the judgment?

Though none of these answers contains all that we need to know on the subject, woven together they form a nice tapestry that will enable us to grasp better the concept of judgment, regardless of whatever preconceptions we already have about it.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, July 8.*

Hour of His Judgment

As Adventist Christians, we say that the gospel of Jesus Christ is “good news.” In fact, the Greek word translated “gospel” means just that, “good news.”

But if it’s good news, it’s good news about what? It’s the good news that Jesus died as our Substitute (*1 Pet. 2:24*); that at the Cross He paid the penalty for our sins (*Isa. 53:6*); that through faith in Him we stand perfect in God now because we are covered with perfect righteousness (*Rom. 3:22*); and that because of what He has done for us, we have the promise of eternal life (*1 John 5:11, 12*).

So, the good news is that we have eternal life, as opposed to—what?

Read the following texts. **What’s the option for those who, in the end, don’t have eternal life?** *Dan. 12:2, Matt. 8:12, 25:46, John 3:18, 2 Thess. 1:9, Rev. 14:11.*

Look at some of the images and phrases from these texts: “everlasting punishment,” “smoke of their torment,” “condemned,” “everlasting destruction,” “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” If this isn’t talking about judgment, what is?

Thus, the good news of the gospel is that we *are spared* condemnation in judgment. In other words, inherent in the gospel itself is the promise that those who have accepted Jesus aren’t condemned as are those who have rejected Him. There is, then, no such thing as the gospel without judgment because “the good news” of the gospel is that we are spared condemnation. In short, the gospel without judgment is like a circle without roundness: By its very definition, the gospel includes judgment.

Read Romans 2:16 and Revelation 14:6-8. How do these verses show the link between the gospel and judgment? How does what we’ve read today help you to understand even better what we have to thank the Lord for because of the sacrifice of Jesus?

Life or Damnation?

Look up the texts below. Who are the two ultimate classes of people depicted here?

Dan. 12:2

Matt. 12:37

John 3:16

John 5:29

Whatever else judgment involves, it results in only two classes of people: those who are saved eternally and those who are lost eternally. These texts don't show any kind of happy medium or middle ground. In the end, the ultimate fate of all of us is either eternal life or eternal destruction.

Thus, it's clear from even these texts that some sort of judgment divides the righteous from the wicked. A final separation occurs, a judgment in which the final fate of everyone is, forever, decided.

Read the following text: “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left” (*Matt. 25:31-33*). What more do they teach us about the nature of judgment?

A number of fascinating points are brought out here. First of all, who is being judged? It says that “all nations” shall be gathered before Him. Thus, this seems to be some sort of universal judgment; all nations come under scrutiny, which means that everyone does because, after all, is not the Lord “the Judge of all the earth” (*Gen. 18:25*)?

Here, too, we are faced with the same clear division: the sheep and the goats, the lost and the saved, those who shall, in Christ's own words, “go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (*Matt. 25:46*).

It doesn't get much plainer than that.

Dwell on the sober implications of the texts for today's study. How much more earnest should you be in caring not only for your own soul but in working prayerfully and faithfully for the salvation of others?

House of God

Yesterday's study revealed the idea of some sort of universal, end-time judgment that involved all people. But what about the church? What about those who have professed the name of Jesus and, from all outward appearances, are living the Christian life in sincerity and faithfulness? Are they, too, judged?

As Christians, we understand that Jesus was judged and condemned at the Cross in our stead. He faced the condemnation for sin that we, otherwise, would have to face ourselves (*see Isa. 53:4-6, Matt. 20:28, Rom. 5:8, 2 Cor. 5:14, Eph. 5:2, 1 Thess. 5:10*). As Ellen White expressed it: "Upon Christ as our substitute and surety was laid the iniquity of us all. He was counted a transgressor, that He might redeem us from the condemnation of the law. The guilt of every descendant of Adam was pressing upon His heart."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 753. Does this mean, then, that because Christ was condemned in our stead, Christians don't face judgment?

Look up the following texts. How do they answer the question Are Christians judged?

Matt. 7:21-23

Rom. 14:10

Heb. 10:30

1 Pet. 4:17

These few texts, along with many others, make it abundantly clear that God's people, His church, do face judgment. When Jesus in Matthew chided those who claimed that they did many wonderful things "in thy name," He wasn't talking to atheists, Hindus, or Wiccans because they don't do things in His name. Christians do. Paul's words that "we shall all" stand before the judgment seat includes himself in those who will be judged.

There's no question that, according to the Word of God, those who profess to be followers of Christ, those who are indeed "his people" (*Heb. 10:30*) will face some sort of judgment at the end of time.

When was the last time you were judged, either rightfully or wrongfully? What difference does it make for you knowing that, in the end, God will judge both with mercy and with justice? Why do you want mercy more than justice? Why will you need it?

“Every Secret Thing”

“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (*Eccles. 12:14*).

Solomon writes the whole book of Ecclesiastes and ends with the above text, which is about as clear and unambiguous a statement one could find in Scripture regarding not only the reality of judgment but that judgment involves our works, even “every secret thing.”

Of course, Solomon wasn’t the only one to tell us about a judgment by works. Jesus was pretty explicit in Matthew 12:36, 37 when He said that “every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” Peter makes it plain also: “And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear” (*1 Pet. 1:17*). Paul, too, understands the reality of a judgment by works: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (*2 Cor. 5:10*). John, in Revelation, writes also of a judgment by works: “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (*Rev. 20:12*).

What other Bible texts can you find, such as in the parables, that talk very clearly about a judgment by works?

Why does it make sense for there to be a judgment by works? When you think about all the evil that has been done in this world, how could God be just if there weren’t such a judgment? On the lines below write out why it’s important, especially in the context of theodicy (see last week’s lesson), for there to be a judgment by works. Be prepared to compare your answers in class on Sabbath.

His Reward Is With Him

Read Matthew 22:1-13 and then answer the following questions:

1 What is the wedding imagery all about? See also *Isa. 62:5, Hos. 2:19, Matt. 9:15, Rev. 21:2.*

2 What significance is there to the fact that a person who had accepted the invitation faced judgment?

3 What was the fate of the man who, after scrutiny, was found without a garment?

What this parable also teaches is that there is some sort of judgment prior to execution of the sentence. After all, even in human courts, how often is a sentence executed before an inquiry that leads to judgment? Revelation 22:12, in which the Lord says that when He returns, His “reward is with me,” also implies a prior judgment. (Why would the reward already be with Him if there were not something beforehand that determined who should get it?) Second Corinthians 5:10 implies a reckoning prior to a final reward or punishment, so that “each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body” (*NIV*). This idea is found also in Daniel 12:1, where those found in the book of life are delivered.

Any kind of judgment according to works implies a reckoning of those works *before* the execution of the reward or punishment that those works have deserved, be that judgment a hundred years or a hundred seconds before the punishment or vindication is carried out. And because, according to many of the texts we’ve seen this week, the reward or punishment comes at the Second Coming, there must be some sort of reckoning or judgment prior to that event itself.

How would you like to be judged, even punished, prior to some sort of fair scrutiny of the facts? Why, then, is the idea of a prior judgment so fair and logical? Think, too, about the question of theodicy, of God being vindicated in His whole dealing with Satan, sin, and evil. How does the idea of theodicy help us understand the need for a scrutiny prior to execution of a sentence?

Further Study: “Judgment deserves careful attention, since it is involved in the issues of (a) divine justice in an unjust world (theodicy), (b) retribution for wrong done, (c) the suffering of the innocent, (d) the resolution of the conflict of good and evil, and (e) the end of sin and suffering. But above all, final judgment vindicates the Creator—His character, law, and governance—in the minds of all created intelligences, whether loyal or lost, thereby obtaining eternal security and peace for the universe. Judgment is thus portrayed in Scripture as an essential part of the ‘eternal gospel’ (Rev. 14:6, 7).”—*Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, vol. 12, p. 815.

This week we’ve seen that Scripture teaches the following points about judgment: (1) Judgment and the gospel are linked, even inseparable; (2) there is some sort of final judgment near the end of time; (3) among those judged are the professed followers of Christ; (4) works are clearly part of this judgment; (5) only two final outcomes are presented, eternal life or eternal destruction; and (6) some sort of judgment takes place prior to the execution of the sentence.

Discussion Questions:

- ❶ As a class, go over your answers to the question at the end of Wednesday’s study. What can you learn from one another? How, too, does the question of theodicy play in with your answers?
- ❷ Go around the class and have each person who is willing answer this question: How do you feel about the prospect of being judged by your works?
- ❸ Ask different people in the class whether they have ever been in a position in which they had to execute some sort of judgment upon another person. What was the process like? How important was it to be fair? How seriously did they take their responsibility? Why was it important to get all the facts before coming to a conclusion? What can the class learn from what was said that could help us better understand the idea of God’s judgment?

Seeking the Faith of Jesus

Nixon Noel

When I realized that the church I had grown up in did not follow all of God's teachings, I began searching for a church that kept all of God's commandments, a church whose members loved one another. I asked my friends for suggestions, and I prayed for God's guidance. I was sure that somewhere I would find a church that stood faithful to God's Word.

One Sunday I heard a radio program amplified by a loud speaker outside my home. The speaker's message captured my attention. After the program ended, the radio announcer identified the station as the Voice of Hope, broadcasting from Haitian Adventist University in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The announcer invited listeners to a week-long series of meetings starting the next day.

I went to the meetings and arrived early so I would not miss a thing. The speaker's messages filled my spirit and refreshed my soul. I returned every night and drank up the wonderful truths I was hearing. On Friday evening, the last night of the meetings, I wondered where I could go to continue feasting on the truths I had heard all week.

As I walked out of the hall, a woman invited me to church the next day. Eagerly I accepted her invitation. I hurried home to polish my only pair of shoes and press my threadbare shirt and trousers. My parents urged me to wait to go until I had better clothes. But I was determined. If the people in this church treated me badly because of my clothes, then I would know it was not God's church.

As I entered the church, I was welcomed warmly and shown to a seat. The sermon touched my heart. During the closing song the pastor invited those present to give their hearts to God. As the pastor repeated his invitation, I walked forward.

The people prayed for me, and I knew I had found the church I was searching for, the church that shows God's love to everyone regardless of status or clothes, the church that teaches the truth without fear of others. I accepted each Bible truth as it was revealed to me, and I joined the Adventist Church.

I thank God for the Voice of Hope in Haiti, the voice that led me to Jesus.

The Voice of Hope radio station recently received part of a Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, which will allow the station to increase its output and reach even more people in Haiti for Christ.

Nixon Noel lives in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Daniel 2



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Daniel 2.*

Memory Text: “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever” (*Daniel 2:44*).

A young man, struggling with questions about God, confronted a Christian and said, “I’ll give you an hour to prove to me that God exists!” The Christian, without hesitation, took him through Daniel 2. When he was finished, the young man confessed, “Now I know there is a God in heaven!”

Those who know Daniel 2 can understand what happened. Here was this book, written in the sixth century B.C., laying out the history of the world from Daniel’s time through ours, and even beyond. It’s hard to see how any rational person, after studying Daniel 2, could come away unimpressed by the prophecy and the God who has revealed Himself in it. In fact, so powerful is Daniel 2 (as well as other parts of the book) as a witness for the Christian faith that, in early centuries of the church, opponents already argued that Daniel was written in the middle of the second century B.C., after the events it talked about, a view still held by many today. This theory, though, is not only unsubstantiated but doesn’t explain how the chapter could predict events long centuries beyond the supposed second-century B.C. date of its composition.

This week we’ll look at this fascinating prophecy, which helps form the foundation for our study this quarter on the judgment and the gospel.

**Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, July 15.*

The Big Picture

Read Daniel 2:1-25 and then answer the following questions:

1 Why did the king’s servants want him to tell them the dream?

2 What were the only two possible fates all the wise men of Babylon faced with the king’s decree?

3 How did Daniel’s actions reveal the utter helplessness of his situation from a human standpoint alone?

4 Why was Daniel so confident (*vs. 24*) that he could reveal to the king this secret?

Daniel’s prayer of thanksgiving in many ways reveals the main message of the whole book: Despite outward appearances, the Lord is Sovereign, even to the point of removing or setting up kings. Though we, with our limited view of things (*1 Cor. 13:12*), may feel overwhelmed by events, we can have the assurance that God is ultimately in control.

Even more important, what this first section of the chapter shows is that not only is God in control of the big picture, He’s close to us as individuals. Look at how He came to Daniel in a “night vision” and revealed to him what he needed to know. Talk about intimate contact! Though Daniel was only a foreign captive in a massive world empire, the Lord of all the earth (*Josh. 3:11*), the Creator of the heavens and the earth (*Gen. 1:1*), the One who holds the stars in their paths (*Job 38:31*), manifested His power and His care to this simple Hebrew lad.

And, lest we forget—this is the same God whom we worship and serve today.

When was the last time you were in a “hopeless” situation? In what way did the Lord manifest His power and care to you at that time? If willing, share your answer with the class.

Secret Revealed

Read Daniel 2:26-45 and write out a summary of the dream and the interpretation. To the best of your knowledge, what are the four earthly kingdoms represented here?

1

2

3

4

Here's Daniel, six centuries before the birth of Christ, laying out the history of the world. The head of gold, of course, is named as Babylon (*vs. 38*). The next kingdom, the one depicted by the breast and arms of silver (*vss. 32, 39*), was the Medo-Persian Empire. The next one, symbolized by the belly and thighs of brass (*vss. 32, 39*), was Greece; and the fourth kingdom, symbolized by the iron in the legs (*vss. 33, 40*), was the Roman Empire, which eventually led into the nations of modern Europe, symbolized by the feet, part of iron and part of clay (*vss. 33, 41-43*).

This is not some Adventist scenario: Jewish and Christian Bible students for many centuries have long interpreted Daniel 2 in this manner.

How does the prophecy end? What kingdom is ultimately established? And what does that answer reveal about the whole range and sweep of this chapter?

Daniel 2 unfolds a sweeping panorama of history, an unbroken succession of world powers beginning more than five centuries before Christ and ending sometime in the future, when God's eternal kingdom will be established after Christ's return. Thus, Daniel 2 takes us to the end of the world as we now know it. Those who limit it and its prophecies to events prior even to the first advent of Christ are severely misinterpreting a foundational teaching of the chapter, not to mention (as we'll see) the entire book. Daniel, without question, is a book that unfolds events right up to the second coming of Christ, and beyond. It truly is, as it says in other places, dealing with the time of "the end" (*Dan. 8:17, 19; 12:4, 9, 13*).

The Roman Empire

When you read Daniel 2, you'll notice something:

What metal was used for Babylon? _____ What metal was used for Media-Persia? _____ What metal was used for Greece? _____ What metal was used for Rome? _____

Babylon is compared to a metal, Media-Persia is compared to a metal, and Greece is compared to a metal. In contrast, in verses 33, 34 the iron that comes up after Greece (representing Rome) stays there until the stone cut out “without hands” (*vs. 34*) destroys everything. The iron that arises after Greece remains until the end, though in the feet it becomes mixed with clay. In the interpretation of that part of the vision, the metal representing the fourth power, iron, remains until the end, as well, though it's depicted as mixed with miry clay (*vss. 40-44*). The point is unmistakable: The fourth power arises after Greece and remains until the end, even though it is manifested in a different form. In Daniel, the fourth power, the power rising after Greece, stays the same power (for it's iron all the way through, unlike the previous powers whose metal disappeared when a whole new empire arose), though at some point it changed form. Thus, it's Rome from the time of Greece until the end of the world. Amazingly enough, Rome still exists today as a worldwide power, though its form is radically different from when it first arose after Greece.

Many centuries ago, one of England's greatest political thinkers wrote: “If a man considers the origin of this great ecclesiastical dominion, he will easily perceive that the papacy is no other than the ghost of the deceased Roman empire, sitting crowned on the grave thereof.”— Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*. How does that quote help us understand what Daniel 2 teaches about the Roman Empire?

Think for a few moments about how amazing this prophecy is, how so many centuries ago such an accurate prediction could be made. How should this give you more confidence to trust in the Bible and the promises made in it to us?

Multiple Fulfillment?

In Daniel 2, five kingdoms are depicted, though the chapter itself specifically identifies only two: the first, Babylon (*vss. 37, 38*), and the last, God's kingdom (*vs. 44*). However, as we'll see in greater detail later, Daniel 7 and Daniel 8 cover much of the same ground, only from different perspectives. Also, in those two chapters, two more of the five kingdoms are named.

Read Daniel 8:20, 21. What two kingdoms, already discussed in yesterday's study, are specifically named?

If we were to chart the kingdoms depicted, *and specifically named*, in Daniel, the outline would look like this:

Babylon (*Dan. 2:37, 38*)
 Media-Persia (*Dan. 8:20*)
 Greece (*Dan. 8:21*)
 Fourth kingdom
 God's eternal kingdom (*Dan. 2:44*)

Read Daniel's own interpretation of the vision (*Dan. 2:37-45*). Do you see anything there indicating that these prophecies can have different meanings in different times? Defend your answer.

Though the fourth kingdom is not named, only one power can possibly fit (more on this later). However, of the five kingdoms depicted, four are named. The prophecy says absolutely nothing about their having multiple fulfillment; that is, the kingdoms symbolizing one thing in one era, another thing in another. Considering what's named—massive empires immovably and immutably rooted in world history itself—the idea that we can somehow give these specific prophecies here in Daniel different fulfillment in different eras certainly doesn't arise from anything in the texts themselves. In short, there is absolutely no justification for the idea that this prophecy is open to different fulfillment in different times in history.

We live in a world in which things are, inherently, unstable. The ground, in an instant, can crumble beneath our feet. The past, though, is unchangeable, immovable. Look at how solid a foundation God has given us with this prophecy. How can you use what's been depicted here to strengthen your own faith?

Antiquity to Eternity

One point should, by now, be very clear regarding our study of Daniel 2, and that is—it is, in many ways, a historical study. Though some of the prophecy leads into our time and beyond, its foundation is based *in history*.

Read again Daniel 2:37-45. Summarize, on just two lines, the basic message of this text.

This prophecy begins in antiquity and follows a continuous sweep of world history that extends unto “the time of the end” (*Dan. 12:9*); that is, beyond us and into the future world of God’s eternal kingdom.

More than anything else, these verses reveal, too, the method for how we should interpret the prophecies in Daniel. Daniel 2:37-44, by interpreting the dream, contains the key to understanding the prophecies, because *the texts themselves interpret the prophecies*. This proves that the historicist approach to interpretation (of which Adventists remain almost alone in still adhering to) is what the text demands. The historicist approach teaches what Daniel 2 teaches, that these prophecies follow the sweep of human history from antiquity to eternity and that they are not focused solely on events in the far past or solely on events in the future but cover the scope of world history from the past into the future. Thus, in the first prophetic section of Daniel, we are given the key to understanding its prophecies.

Read Daniel 2:34, 35 and its interpretation in verses 44, 45. What do they tell us about the nature of this last kingdom in contrast to the fate of all the kingdoms before it? What do we find in these texts that proves this kingdom has not yet been established?

As we can see, Daniel was correct about all the kingdoms he predicted would rise and fall. His predictions about Europe have come true with painful accuracy. How much reason, then, do you have to trust him on the promise of the establishment of God’s final kingdom?

Further Study: “Some will take the truth applicable to their time, and place it in the future. Events in the train of prophecy that had their fulfillment away in the past are made future, and thus by these theories the faith of some is undermined.”—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 102.

As we’ve seen this week, Daniel 2 presents a powerful case for our trust in the inspiration of the Word. How someone six centuries before Christ could have outlined world history as accurately as he did is something that defies a purely natural explanation. That point is so obvious, in fact, that some people have claimed that the prophecy is *vaticinium ex eventu* (prophecy after the event), that the book of Daniel was written in the second century before Christ and that it was about only past events, events prior to it being written.

This view falls apart on a number of counts.

First of all, Christ’s words in Matthew 24:15 prove that Jesus believed some of Daniel’s prophecies were yet future.

Second, even if one were to reject Daniel’s own words about when he lived (*Dan. 1:1, 2:1, 7:1, 9:1*) and date the book in the second century before Christ, how does this explain the amazing accuracy with which he predicted not only the world dominion of the Roman Empire (which hadn’t happened yet) but its breakup into what became the nations of modern Europe, which—in its present state—is exactly as Daniel had written? Not bad for a man writing centuries before some of these events unfolded. In short, there is no reason whatsoever that we should accept the second century B.C. date for Daniel, especially when the idea was originated by people who wanted to discredit Christianity to begin with. As Christians, we must take the Word for what it says, as opposed to what humans say instead.

Discussion Questions:

- ❶ As a class, talk about your answers to Sunday’s final question.
- ❷ In what ways can the prophecy of Daniel 2 be a powerful witnessing tool, especially for those who are skeptical even about the existence of God?

The Greatest Physician

Elvie Velasco

Felix was too busy enjoying life to think about God. Then he got sick. We helped him get from his mountain home in southern Philippines to the hospital several hours away. After examining him, the doctors told Felix that he had cirrhosis of the liver and probably would die within the month. “Go home,” they urged.

Back home Felix lay on his mat, too weak even to sit up. Every day my student-missionary partner and I visited him and prayed for him. Felix could hear the village children singing songs during morning worship. He heard us tell Bible stories. One day Felix said, “I heard you tell the children that your Jesus healed a man who could not walk. Can your Jesus heal me too?”

We assured Felix that Jesus can heal if it is His will.

“How do I ask God to heal me?” Felix asked. We explained that he must believe that Jesus could heal him and be willing to give his life to God and follow Him.

“But how do I keep the Sabbath?” Felix asked. “I am too weak to attend church or even to sit up,” he said, his voice choked with tears.

We explained that God had set aside the Sabbath as a day to worship, and Felix could worship God on his sick bed by praying and by listening to God’s Word spoken from the church.

“I will do that!” he promised. We prayed with Felix and encouraged him to trust in God.

On Sabbath we were surprised to find Felix sitting in the church long before services started. “How did you get here?” we asked.

“Every day I prayed to Jesus to heal me. I promised to keep His Word and obey His commandments. Today my wife helped me sit up. It was painful, but I made it. Then she helped me stand and slowly walk to church.”

We praised God for healing Felix in body and in soul. Today Felix walks around the village without help, stopping to tell people how his friend Jesus, the greatest Physician, healed him. Felix and his wife will be baptized as soon as a minister can climb the mountain to their village.

Our mission offerings help support Mountain View College and the student-missionary program there that has reached thousands of people in southern Philippines.

Elvie Velasco was a student missionary (SULAD) from Mountain View College, in southern Philippines.

Daniel 7



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Daniel 7.*

Memory Text: “Until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom” (*Daniel 7:22, NIV*).

If Daniel 2 provides powerful, rational evidence not only for God's existence but for His power to control the future, Daniel 7 provides even more. Daniel 7 covers the same ground as does Daniel 2, as well as provides a key element not explicitly expressed in Daniel 2: the great judgment in heaven that leads directly to the second coming of Jesus and the end of this world as we know it. In short, in Daniel 7 we are shown the pre-Advent judgment.

The key to understanding Daniel 7 is found in Daniel 2. “In fact, the two visions [Daniel 2 and 7] follow a parallel development. They cover the same time span, from Babylon to the end of human time, and evoke the same four kingdoms represented symbolically by metals in chapter 2, and by beasts in chapter 7. Such a parallel is more than a unifying factor—it is the key to our method of interpretation. We must read chapter 7 in the light of chapter 2.”—Jacques Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Assoc., 2000), p. 100.

There's so much in Daniel 7 (we will return to it later); for now, we will get a quick overview of this amazing prophecy, with an emphasis on its climactic scene: the heavenly judgment, which leads to the return of Christ and the fulfillment of our great hopes as believers in Jesus.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, July 22.*

Daniel's Dream

Read Daniel 7:1-14. On the lines below, summarize in your own words the essence of Daniel's dream.

As you read, you've probably noticed a few parallels with Daniel 2, such as (1) the same number of different entities appear, (2) there is emphasis on the last entity (in Daniel 2 it was the iron), and (3) both end with God establishing His eternal kingdom.

Are there any other parallels?

In verses 16 and 17, Daniel is immediately given the basic interpretation of his dream. What is the interpretation, and how does it parallel Daniel 2?

It's obvious that what we have in Daniel 7 is a more detailed depiction of what was revealed in Daniel 2. Though more details are given about these powers, the four beasts in Daniel 7 represent the same four kingdoms as in Daniel 2. Scholars have long recognized them as the following:

Babylon (lion)
 Media-Persia (bear)
 Greece (leopard)
 Rome (fourth beast)
 God's final kingdom

Here, again, we are shown that the foundation of the prophecies in Daniel is based on *history*. Daniel sweeps over world history from ancient times right through to ours and beyond. If that point wasn't made clear enough in Daniel 2, it's repeated in Daniel 7.

How blessed we are to know not only that our God is in control but that, regardless of what happens here and now, in the end, He will set up His eternal kingdom.

The establishment of God's final kingdom is assured. What assurance do you have that you will be there when it is? What is your assurance based on?

The Fourth Beast

There's an important parallel between Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 that we don't want to miss. In Daniel 2, the iron, the fourth power, arises after Greece (*vss. 32, 33, 39-45*), and, though taking another form, it remains until the end. It was destroyed only when God set up His kingdom.

In Daniel 7, with the fourth beast, the fourth power, the same thing happens. The fourth beast, which arose after Greece (*vss. 6, 7*), remains until the end of time (though taking another form), when it is destroyed at the establishment of God's eternal kingdom (*vss. 19-27*).

Thus, in both Daniel 2 and Daniel 7, the fourth power, the one arising after Greece, remains until the end of the world.

Read Daniel 7:19-27 and then answer the following questions:

What parallels do you see between the description of the fourth beast (*Dan. 7:19*) and that of the fourth power in Daniel 2 (*vs. 40*)?

From where does the little horn arise?

What ultimately brings about the demise of the little-horn power in Daniel 7?

In Daniel 7, more time is spent dealing with this little-horn power than with any of the other powers. Obviously, this little horn, which arose out of the fourth beast, and thus remains part of it, is deemed very serious by the Lord, for so much time is spent on it. This power, though arising out of the fourth beast, exists until the end of time, when—*after the judgment in heaven*—God sets up His earthly kingdom. Only then is it destroyed.

People have often talked about trying to build a kingdom of God on earth here and now. Inevitably, all these have failed. Why? Why is our ultimate hope only in God's supernatural intervention in our behalf, as depicted in this chapter?

The Little Horn

Daniel 7 goes from Babylon, Media-Persia, and Greece to pagan Rome, the phase of Rome that arose right after the downfall of Greece. Then, while depicting this Roman power, Daniel 7 describes the rise of the little horn, which is still part of the fourth beast, though another phase of it. Who is this little horn? The Protestant Reformers almost unanimously saw it as papal Rome. Indeed, even before the Reformation, some Jewish scholars also identified the little horn as the papal phase of the fourth beast. It's hard to see how it could be anything else. In fact, it *can't* be anything else. You might need faith to believe in the Second Coming or the resurrection of the dead, but you don't need much faith to see papal Rome as the power depicted here.

Below are some traits of the little horn. Given however much you know about the papacy, how do these descriptions match it?

- 1 The little horn arises from pagan Rome (*Dan. 7:19, 20*).
- 2 The little horn makes war with the saints and prevails against them (*Dan. 7:21, 25*).
- 3 The little horn thinks to change “times and laws” (*Dan. 7:25*).
- 4 The little-horn power is blasphemous (*Dan. 7:25*).

All these attributes have been powerfully and graphically recorded in history. There's no question here regarding the identity of this little-horn power. Though we have to be diplomatic in how we deal with these prophecies, and seek to teach them in a way that doesn't hurt other people, we would be unfaithful to our biblical mandate (*see Rev. 13:1-9, 14:6-12*) were we, in the interest of political correctness, to abandon this position in favor of something less controversial.

Time, Times, and Dividing of Time

Read Daniel 7:25. What is the time prophecy given there?

Even non-Adventists have recognized that the time, times, and dividing of time here means three and a half years. One study Bible by Thomas Nelson says: “A time, times and the dividing of time . . . is an expression used in Daniel and in Revelation to refer to three and a half years, or 1,260 days, or 42 months (12:7; Rev 11:2; 12:6, 14; 13:5).”

How do the texts in the above quote help you understand why the time prophecy in Daniel 7:25 is the same as 1,260 days?

As others have done, Adventists apply the day-year principle to this prophecy, which means it's dealing with 1,260 years, not 1,260 literal days. Later we will spend a whole week on the day-year principle. For now, we can see that Daniel 7 is full of symbols: a lion with wings, a beast with iron teeth, a little horn that has eyes. Why would a time prophecy, imbedded among these symbols, be anything but symbolic itself?

Thus, we're given a 1,260-year period delineating an aspect of papal Rome, in this case, a period of persecution.

If we date the beginning of papal Rome to the late fifth, early sixth century, 1,260 years later brings us to the late eighteenth, or early nineteenth, century. Again, history bears out that the long period of papal political dominion, which included massive persecution, petered out in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

What happens in the prophecy after the 1,260-year period is depicted? *Dan. 7:25-27 (see also Dan. 7:8-10, 21, 22).*

After the rise of the little horn, which came after all the preceding beasts, the prophecy depicts a great judgment in heaven that leads to the Second Coming.

The crucial point here is that, according to this prophecy, the judgment in heaven comes *after* the 1,260-day prophetic period, sometime *after* that phase of persecution that ended in the late eighteenth, or early nineteenth, century yet before the Second Coming.

Thus, within the interpretation, we are given historical evidence to help us understand the timing of this judgment, which leads to the demise of the little horn and to the end of this world.

One thousand two hundred and sixty years is a long time. What message is there for us, who might die before seeing all our hopes and dreams realized in this life?

Horn, Judgment, Kingdom

Yesterday we saw that Daniel 7 presented a specific sequence of events: There was the little-horn power, followed by a judgment in heaven, which ended in the establishment of God's kingdom. This sequence is so important it's found three times in the chapter itself.

Read Daniel 7:7-10, 14. How is this specific order—little horn, judgment, God's kingdom—shown there?

Read Daniel 7:19-22. How, again, is that same sequence depicted?

Read Daniel 7:24-27. How, again, is that sequence presented?

Three times in Daniel we are given this sequence:

Little horn
Judgment in heaven
God's kingdom

Obviously, this sequence must be of major importance; otherwise, why would the Lord have given it *three times* in the prophecy? What's fascinating, too, is that with the little horn, we are given our first apocalyptic time prophecy (*apocalyptic* simply means dealing with end-time events), a time prophecy that helps us understand the timing of this judgment, which occurs after the 1,260 years and yet before God's eternal kingdom is established.

Thus, we can express the prophecy like this:

Little horn (late eighteenth, early nineteenth, century)
Judgment in heaven
God's eternal kingdom

What's crucial to understand about this judgment, too, is that though it results in the demise of the little-horn power, it also results in the end of this world. As Daniel 2 showed, everything is going to be swept away and replaced by God's kingdom.

Daniel doesn't depict the end of the world as some sort of compromise: It culminates, instead, in the total victory of good over evil. What lesson is there for us in how we deal with evil in our own lives on a day-by-day basis? Are you compromising with evil now, in any way?

Further Study: Below is all of Daniel 7, with the first apocalyptic time prophecy imbedded in the sequence. What we've added, too, are the approximate times that each of the empires collapsed. Though historians often put specific dates on these events, centering often around decisive military battles, the collapse of one empire and the rise of another usually occurs over many years, not just one (remember, too, that the fourth beast and the little horn that comes out of it are depicted in Scripture as one power):

Babylon

(Ends early mid-sixth century B.C.)

Media-Persia

(From early mid-sixth century to early mid-fourth century B.C.)

Greece

(From early mid-fourth century to mid-second century B.C.)

Pagan Rome

(From mid-second B.C. to fifth–sixth century A.D.)

Papal Rome

(Persecution from sixth century A.D. to eighteenth–nineteenth century A.D.)

Judgment in heaven

Second Coming

Sure, the papacy didn't end in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, but that's not what the prophecy says. Instead, it says only that persecution would last for this length of time, or at least that phase of that persecution (Revelation 13, of course, talks about a resurgence of papal persecution, but that's another issue).

Thus, what's clear so far from Daniel 7 is that this massive judgment scene in heaven leads to the establishment of God's kingdom and occurs sometime *after* the 1,260 years of papal persecution, sometime after the late eighteenth, or early nineteenth, century but before the Second Coming.

Discussion Questions:

1 Daniel 7:22 says that judgment was given in “favor of the saints” (*NIV*). As a class, discuss what that means. What else in Daniel 7 shows us that the judgment is such good news?

2 Review the evidence that helps give us a positive identification of the little horn. How can we present this teaching in a way that's as least offensive as possible and yet, at the same time, doesn't compromise what the Scripture teaches?

New Church in the Neighborhood

Altanundral

Two years ago a new church was built in our neighborhood in Mongolia. It was big news in our town, and people visited the church out of curiosity. I went too, just to see what it was about. I had no religion; I did not even know whether there was a God.

The simple wooden church felt like a peaceful refuge, and the music, prayers, and sermons fed me. I decided to return.

I realized that my life was full of bad things, and I needed some peace. My husband is an alcoholic, and when he drank too much, he beat me. I worked in a factory, cared for my three sons, and kept house for my family. Church became a place of refuge for me. The pastor's sermons were practical and related to my life and experience. Once I started attending, I did not want to stop.

At first my husband objected to my church attendance. But I persisted, and I took my sons with me. I taught them to pray. One day my youngest son picked a tiny potato in our garden. He asked me to cook it for him. Then he put it on a plate and prayed, thanking God for that one small potato. It touched my heart.

Then I learned that I was pregnant. The baby was breech, and I needed to have a caesarian section. While I awaited surgery, I prayed, and the prayers brought me peace. I healed much more quickly than the doctor thought possible. I think that is because I entrusted my life to God.

Because of this experience, I realized how relevant God is in our lives. When my son was two months old, I returned to church and asked to be baptized.

My husband's attitude toward God continues to change. We invite him to join us when we pray. He is praying more and drinking less. I have learned that prayer really works.

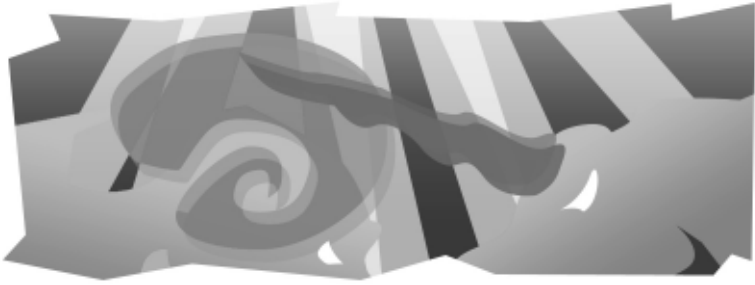


If this little church had not been built in our neighborhood, I might never have experienced God's love in such a personal and powerful way.

Your Thirteenth Sabbath Offerings in 2001 helped make this church a reality. Thank you.

Altanundral lives in Darhan, Mongolia.

Daniel 8



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Daniel 8.*

Memory Text: “And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” (*Daniel 8:14*).

Daniel 8, as we'll soon see, covers much of the same ground as Daniel 2 and Daniel 7: It shows a flow of history, beginning in antiquity and going up through the “time of the end” (*Dan. 8:17*), the first time the phrase appears in the book of Daniel (but not the last). Along with the overwhelming evidence from previous chapters that Daniel deals with end-time events, Daniel 8 comes right out and says it, a problem for those who want to limit the events of Daniel 8 to a historical period in Israelite history that ended in the second century *before* Christ—a view that for this reason (and others) is untenable.

Also, like Daniel 2 and 7, Daniel 8 is divided into two sections: a dream/vision and then an explanation of that dream/vision. In Daniel 8, the first 14 verses deal with his vision, in which Daniel sees a ram, a goat, and a little horn, followed by the cleansing of the sanctuary. The rest of the chapter is the explanation given him regarding the ram, the goat, and the little horn. Interestingly enough, the part about the sanctuary being cleansed is not explained here. And, as we'll see—though specifically told that the vision of the sanctuary being cleansed “is true” (*vs. 26*)—Daniel says that he doesn't understand it (*vs. 27*). That's because it wasn't explained, as were the other elements in the vision. This point becomes important later, when we study the next chapter, in which an explanation is finally given.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, July 29.*

Animals, Again

Read Daniel 8:1-14. On the lines below, give a summary of the vision. Concentrate especially on the sequence of events as presented to Daniel.

After Daniel is given this vision of the ram, the goat, the little horn, and the sanctuary being cleansed, notice what happens in verses 15 through 18. Daniel says that he sought for the meaning of what passed before him in vision. A “man’s voice” then calls out and tells the angel Gabriel to “make this man understand the vision.” Gabriel then approaches Daniel. Notice, too, how the angel prefaces his words. Twice (*vss. 17, 19*) he tells Daniel that the vision deals with “the end.”

Read the rest of the chapter. What interpretation does Gabriel give Daniel?

In reference to both Daniel 2 and Daniel 7, we said that Media-Persia and Greece were depicted as some of the great powers that would arise in world history. Here, now, there’s no guess: Gabriel comes right out and names them. (Unlike the other two visions, Babylon is not depicted here in Daniel 8; in a later week we will look at one reason why.)

After naming Media-Persia and Greece (*vss. 20, 21*), he gives an explanation of the little-horn power that arises next. Though we will look at it in more detail tomorrow, notice how this little-horn power is destroyed (*vs. 25*)—language very similar to how Daniel 2 described God’s supernatural intervention that brings the end of the world (*vs. 34*).

Thus, the events of Daniel 8 could be summarized like this:

Media-Persia
Greece
Little horn
Sanctuary cleansed

Daniel 8 is another place in the Bible that shows us that God ultimately is in control. How does this reality give you some hope amid whatever trials you are now facing?

The Little Horn

In our survey of Daniel, we've seen that it has dealt with five kingdoms, four of which have been named for us: Babylon (*Dan. 2:38*), Media-Persia (*Dan. 8:20*), Greece (*Dan. 8:21*), God's eternal kingdom (*Dan. 2:44; 7:14, 18, 22, 27*). The only one not specifically named is the one that, in all three visions, arises after Greece and exists until the time of the end. Below is a chart with all the earthly kingdoms depicted, those named and the one not named:

Daniel 2	Daniel 7	Daniel 8
Babylon	Babylon	—
Media-Persia	Media-Persia	Media-Persia
Greece	Greece	Greece
Next kingdom	Next kingdom	Next kingdom
Supernatural destruction at end	Supernatural destruction at end	Supernatural destruction at end

From what you have studied so far, what is the identity of that little-horn power in Daniel 8? What reasons can you give for your conclusion?

The obvious answer, of course, is Rome (both pagan and papal). Here are just a few of many reasons why:

Looking at the parallels between the visions, one can see it was Rome in Daniel 2, Rome in Daniel 7; thus, obviously, it's Rome in Daniel 8.

The little-horn power comes up after Greece and extends to the time of the end, when it is supernaturally destroyed. What power, rising after Greece, still exists today?

Notice, too, that Media-Persia is depicted as "great" (*vs. 4*), and that Greece is depicted as "very great" (*vs. 8*). In contrast, the little-horn power is depicted as "exceeding great" (*vs. 9*). Though people can argue over whether "exceeding" great is more than "very" great, "exceeding great" is certainly more than just "great." Thus, this little-horn power is, at least, greater than the Medo-Persian Empire. Again, what power, coming up after Greece, existing until the end, could be depicted as greater than Media-Persia other than Rome?

We saw last week how that little-horn power in Daniel 7 was, clearly, papal Rome. We have here the same symbol in Daniel 8. Both, too, are described as persecuting powers, as well.

Study some of the attributes of the little horn. In what ways can we, as individuals, manifest the same spirit as the little horn?

The Little Horn (Cont.)

The evidence we've seen so far is overwhelming that the little-horn power arising after Greece in Daniel 8 is the same power that arises after Greece in both Daniel 2 and Daniel 7, and that's Rome, beginning as pagan Rome and then changing into papal Rome.

The two phases are seen in the imagery of all three chapters. In Daniel 2, as we saw, the iron that arises after Greece (the brass) extends to the end, though the form changes in the feet, when it becomes mixed with clay. While the emphasis here is political more than religious and the focus is on the various nations themselves, this change in Rome coincided with the rise of the papacy, both in time and location. If nothing else, in Daniel 2 we see the idea of Rome changing form at some point in history.

In Daniel 7, as we saw, the fourth beast came first, followed by the little horn, another phase of the same power.

Review the details of the little horn in Daniel 7. What are the religious elements that are revealed there in this phase of Rome?

In verse 8, after describing the breakup of Greece into various kingdoms, the little horn is depicted as coming from “‘up among them’”; that is, one of “‘the four winds of heaven’” (*vs. 2, NIV*), its immediate antecedent. Right after this, the two phases of the little-horn's activity are revealed, as well.

What is the directional activity of the little horn as depicted in Daniel 8:9? Contrast that directional activity with what the little horn does in verses 10-12. What difference do you see?

In verse 9, the little horn moves horizontally across the face of the earth, depicting military or political expansion (*compare with Dan. 8:4*). In the next few verses, the activity is depicted as vertical, heavenward, in an attack on the “host of heaven,” on the “Prince of the host,” even against the sanctuary itself. Though, obviously, the little horn does not reach literally into heaven itself, what this does depict is the religious nature of its attack. Thus, here in Daniel 8, as well, we are given two phases of the same power: first the pagan phase then the distinctly religious activity of the papal phase.

Sanctuary Cleansed

In review, what we have studied in Daniel 8, so far, could be summarized like this:

Media-Persia
Greece
Rome
Sanctuary cleansed

As shown earlier, everything in Daniel 8 had been interpreted by Gabriel except for the cleansing of the sanctuary. Though no specific explanation was given, a powerful hint is found in the chapter.

The vision of Daniel 8:14 ends with the sanctuary being cleansed after a depiction of the little-horn's activity in a certain historical period; after the depiction of the little horn (vs. 22-25), the explanation ends with a specific event (vs. 25, final clause). What is that event, and how does it help us come to some understanding about what the cleansing of the sanctuary involves?

If we were to parallel the vision of Daniel 8 with its explanation, it would look like this:

Vision	Explanation
Ram	Media-Persia
Goat	Greece
Little horn	Rome
Sanctuary cleansed	Supernatural demise of little horn

Whatever else the cleansing of the sanctuary involves, it results in the supernatural destruction of this last earthly empire, which is what happened in both Daniel 2 and 7, when God sets up His eternal kingdom. Thus, the idea that limits the cleansing of the sanctuary to some mere human event, such as the removing of enemies from the temple precincts in the second century B.C., falls apart. It's obvious from the context, especially when viewed in parallel to Daniel 2 and Daniel 7, that this cleansing of the sanctuary is an event of major importance. Indeed, the mere fact that it's linked with the rise and fall of three of what the Bible depicts as major world powers in and of itself testifies to the importance of the cleansing of the sanctuary.

What things in your own life need to be cleansed? What's the only way that can happen?

Judgment in Heaven

Below is a chart summarizing what we have looked at so far in the past few weeks. What does this tell us that the cleansing of the sanctuary is?

Daniel 2	Daniel 7	Daniel 8
Babylon	Babylon	_____
Media-Persia	Media-Persia	Media-Persia
Greece	Greece	Greece
Pagan Rome	Pagan Rome	Pagan Rome
Papal Rome	Papal Rome	Papal Rome
_____	Judgment in heaven	Cleansing of sanctuary
Second Coming	Second Coming	_____

As we see all the way through here, there are parallels between the chapters. And not only are the nations depicted in parallel to one another, the judgment scene in Daniel 7—which transpires after a distinct time period regarding Rome (the 1,260 years)—directly parallels the cleansing of the sanctuary, which in Daniel 8 occurs after Rome, as well. In short, this heavenly judgment in Daniel 7—the judgment that leads to the end of the world—is the same thing as the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8. We are given here two different depictions of the same thing: the judgment, also known as the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8.

According to this chart, where is this judgment, time wise, in relationship to the Second Coming?

The crucial point is the parallel between this massive judgment scene in Daniel 7 and the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8. The judgment scene in Daniel 7 is simply another way of expressing the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8, just as the depiction of the bear in Daniel 7 is another way of expressing the ram in Daniel 8. Each depiction adds to the other, elaborating on each other, together giving us a lot of information about the specific event. What’s undeniably clear is that it is a pre-Advent event; that is, this is a judgment that occurs before the Second Coming. Indeed, it’s this judgment itself that leads directly to the Second Coming.

What things in your life can be solved only by the second coming of Jesus; what things can be solved here and now? Why is it so important to know the difference between the two?

Further Study: Look at the parallels here between Daniel 7 and 8, this time with the approximate dates for the events depicted in the two chapters:

Daniel 7	Daniel 8
Babylon (Ends early mid-sixth century B.C.)	_____
Media-Persia (From early mid-sixth century to early mid-fourth century B.C.)	Media-Persia
Greece (From early mid-fourth century to mid-second century B.C.)	Greece
Pagan Rome (From mid-second century B.C. to fifth–sixth century A.D.)	Pagan Rome
Papal Rome (Phase of depicted persecution: From sixth century A.D. to eighteenth–nineteenth century A.D.)	Papal Rome
Judgment in heaven Second Coming	Cleansing of sanctuary Destroyed without hands

What’s clear from the chart is that because the judgment in Daniel 7, which occurred after the 1,260 years, is the same as the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8, then the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8 occurred after the 1,260 years, as well. This fact, then, puts the cleansing of the sanctuary sometime *after* the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century, yet *before* the second coming of Christ. Though these points help narrow down the time of the pre-Advent judgment, they still don’t give us an exact date. More information is needed; that’s why, as we’ll see, more information is given.

Discussion Questions:

- 1 As a class, go over the main points of this week’s lesson. Be sure everyone understands the parallels between the chapters. Try to answer whatever questions that arise as best as you are able.
- 2 The last verse of Daniel 8 teaches that certain aspects of the vision were unknown to Daniel. What lesson is there for us regarding the need to press on ahead in faith despite there being things we don’t yet understand?

The Raised Spear

J. H. Zachary

John Kiok is a Masai, a member of a semi-nomadic cattle-herding culture in eastern Africa. Several years ago when Kiok accepted Jesus as his Savior, he dedicated his life to sharing his faith with other Masai. When a small group of believers from the village of Nchoroi [n'CHO-roy] invited him to come and teach in their village, Kiok went.

Each evening 200 people gathered to hear the message of Jesus. However, the paramount chief of the region did not want a new religion in his territory. One night during the meeting the chief angrily confronted the pastor, waving his large spear menacingly over his head as he approached the crowd of listeners who were seated on the ground. Most of the listeners fled into the darkness when they saw the chief approaching. The chief, still brandishing his spear over his head, stared at Kiok and demanded, "Who are you and what are you telling my people?"

Kiok prayed for wisdom and protection, and then he calmly answered the chief's question. "I am a Masai. I am telling these people about the living God, the God who made the mountains, the trees, your animals—even you and your family."

"You have just one chance," the chief threatened. "Leave now. If you preach one more time, I will kill you with my spear."

"Sir," Kiok said quietly, "the people have come every day this week to hear about God. They want to know about the God who created them. I still have a week of meetings, and I want to invite you to come to listen and learn about this God too."

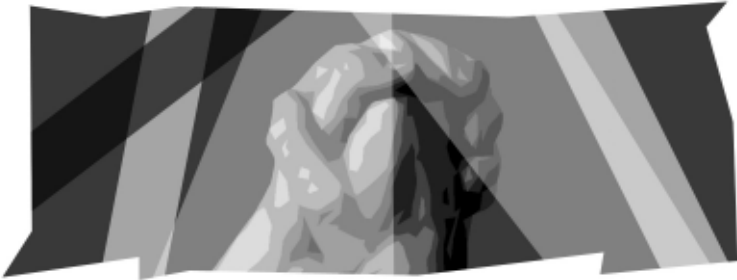
"I promise you, I will kill you if you preach another night!" the chief said. Then he turned and strode away.

The village elders told the chief that they had given Kiok permission to speak to the people about God. They told him that many who were listening were changing their lives for the better. They urged the chief to go see for himself.

The chief allowed the meetings to continue, and the chief saw the positive changes among his people. He listened to their testimonies of what Jesus was doing in their lives. In time the angry chief asked Kiok to study the Bible with him as well, and in time he and his family were baptized into God's family. Today the chief and his people worship in a small chapel in their village.

Until his death, J. H. Zachary was coordinator for outreach among Jewish and Muslim people in the North American Division.

Daniel 9



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Dan. 9:1-23.*

Memory Text: “We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments” (*Daniel 9:5*).

Before continuing here, make sure you understand the charts we've looked at the past few weeks. They form an immovable foundation for where we are going next. The crucial point that should be understood now is that the judgment scene in Daniel 7 and the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8 are the same event and that this event takes place sometime after the 1,260-year period that depicted a phase of papal persecution of the saints.

Meanwhile, considering the time frame for this event, the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, what's the only possible sanctuary that's being cleansed here, the one on earth or the one in heaven (*see Matt. 24:2; Luke 21:6; Heb. 8:1, 2*)? The answer is obvious.

Finally, look at what the Lord has used to frame the important teaching of the cleansing of the sanctuary—and that's massive world empires, things as immovable, unchangeable, and verifiable as are possible in this world. The Lord isn't asking us to base our faith on sketchy, shadowy things; instead, He's framing these great truths around world history, as firm a foundation as possible. God, obviously, wants us to believe these truths; that's why He makes it easy for us to do just that.

This week we now move to Daniel 9, the final link in this amazing sequence of prophecy and history.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, August 5.*

Unfinished Business

Read Daniel 9:1. What major difference appears here in contrast to the three previous chapters we have studied so far?

The answer, to some degree, also helps explain what we noticed in Daniel 8: that unlike the previous two chapters, Babylon was not depicted. Daniel began, instead, with Media-Persia. It seems that already, in Daniel 8, the Lord was pointing toward the future, toward the next kingdom that would arise, which was Media-Persia.

It's also important to notice something about the previous chapters. As we saw, Daniel 2 was a dream/vision and an explanation of that dream/vision. Everything was explained.

In Daniel 7, the same thing: a dream/vision and an explanation of everything that he was shown.

In Daniel 8, however, a difference arises: There was a dream/vision and an explanation. However, as we saw, not everything was explained.

Review Daniel 8. Again, what was the one thing not explained to Daniel in chapter 8?

Unlike the sister visions that preceded it, Daniel 8 ends with Daniel saying that he didn't understand the "vision." What vision? Obviously, it was the part of the vision that dealt with the 2,300 evenings and mornings of verse 14. After all, everything else was explained; in some cases some of the powers depicted in Daniel 8 were even named (*vss. 20, 21*). In none of the previous visions did Daniel come away saying that he didn't understand something, even though in some cases the explanations weren't as precise as in parts of Daniel 8. Only in Daniel 8 does he say there was something that he didn't understand, and that's obviously the "vision" of the 2,300 days, the only part of the chapter not specifically explained.

Thus, we leave Daniel 8 and enter Daniel 9, with only one thing not clear to Daniel at this point: the vision of the 2,300 days in Daniel 8:14.

A prophet not understanding everything given in a prophetic dream or vision? Does this teach us anything that could help us better understand the nature of Ellen G. White's prophetic gift?

The Exile of the Jews

As we see, Daniel is now under the reign of the Medes and the Persians, a direct fulfillment of the earlier prophecies of Daniel 2, 7, and 8.

There is, however, a great problem for Daniel. His people are still in captivity, the temple is still in ruins, and his nation has not been restored.

Read Daniel 9:2. What promise and prophecy is Daniel getting some hope from?

Despite all the hopes of national greatness, the Jewish nation was taken into captivity by a pagan power. From a logical perspective, it should have been the end of the Jews, and Judah, forever. However, the Lord wasn't through with His people. Though the prophets warned about judgment, doom, and destruction, they also gave the Jews the great hope of redemption and restoration.

Read Jeremiah 29:10-12. What hope do you believe Daniel derives from this prophecy? See also Jer. 25:11, 12.

According to His promise, the Lord did, indeed, restore His people to the land when He said He would. This is recorded most clearly in 2 Chronicles 36:18-23.

Read those verses in Chronicles. What do they tell us about God and His promises?

The fulfillment of those promises was still a few years off when the events of Daniel 9 happened. The 70 years, beginning in 605 B.C. with the conquest of Jerusalem and the exile of Daniel and of the other captives, almost were completed. Yet, nothing was happening. His people were still exiled, Jerusalem was still in ruins, and the temple was not even close to being rebuilt. Though Daniel witnessed the rise of the Medo-Persians, as predicted, more needed to happen, great events that from a human perspective would seem impossible. In this context, we can understand better the prayer that follows.

Daniel was deriving hope from a promise of God. Which promises of God are the most meaningful to you? How does prayer sustain you as you wait for these promises to be fulfilled?

“We Have Sinned”

Read Daniel’s prayer in Daniel 9:3-19. On the lines below, summarize the essence of what Daniel was praying for.

Numerous points jump out from Daniel’s prayer:

1 Daniel acknowledges the sins of his people; there was no excuse on his part to justify their actions. What can we learn from this for ourselves?

2 Daniel makes it clear that his people’s sin involved turning away from God’s Word. What lesson is here for us, as well?

3 Even amid all the punishment, sorrow, and judgment, all of which was deserved, Daniel appeals to God for mercy, grace, and restoration. What hope does this offer us regarding our own mistakes?

If you read Daniel’s prayer, you’ll notice that one thing is not there. You’ll notice that Daniel isn’t asking the Lord one simple question: *Why did all this happen to us?* And that’s because he knows why all this happened: The people disobeyed the Lord. Daniel asked no questions in his prayer. He is not seeking for light, wisdom, or understanding. In the context of what he is talking about, he understands the issues: Israel sinned, was punished, and now he pleads for the promised restoration.

The point is that nowhere in this prayer is Daniel seeking for understanding. The last time, at least as recorded in Scripture, that Daniel needed understanding was in regard to the 2,300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14, what he specifically said he didn’t understand at the end of the last chapter (*Dan. 8:27*).

What, if anything, stands out in Daniel’s prayer that has special significance for you in your own walk with the Lord?

“Skill and Understanding”

Read Daniel 9:20-22 and look at what happens. After Daniel prayed, the angel Gabriel appeared to him. This, however, wasn’t Gabriel’s first appearance to Daniel.

When was the last time Gabriel was seen in the book of Daniel? See *Dan. 8:16*.

Remember, too, that in Daniel 8 Gabriel was commanded to make Daniel understand what he had seen in vision. And, as we saw, he did just that, with the exception of the vision of the 2,300 days.

Now, however, Gabriel appears again to Daniel, who refers to him as the one he had seen “in the vision at the beginning” (*vs. 21*). Though he doesn’t say which specific vision that was, the only other time Gabriel appears in Daniel is in chapter 8, so it’s certainly logical to assume that’s the vision Daniel is referring to.

In Daniel 9:20-23, what does Gabriel say to Daniel that he came to do?

As we saw yesterday, nowhere in Daniel’s prayer did he ask for “understanding.” The last time he needed understanding was about the 2,300 days. Now, the same angel interpreter appears and specifically says that he has come to give him “understanding.” Understanding about what? The 2,300 days obviously, the last time Daniel needed any understanding.

In fact, the Hebrew root verb (*bin*), translated “understood” (*Dan. 8:27*), is the same root word that appears in Daniel 9:22, wherein Gabriel says that he came to give him skill and “understanding” (from *bin*). Thus, Gabriel comes to Daniel and gives him the “understanding” (*bin*) that he didn’t have at the end of Daniel 8!

Also, notice what kind of prophecy Daniel 8:14 was; it was a time prophecy. Right after Gabriel comes to Daniel and offers to give him understanding, what kind of prophecy does he give him (*see Dan. 9:24*)? Of course, a time prophecy. Clearly, the vision of Daniel 9 is linked to part of the vision in Daniel 8, the 2,300 days. While Daniel 2 and 7 had a vision and complete explanation, Daniel 8 had a vision and a partial explanation. In Daniel 9, there was no vision but only an explanation—an explanation of what wasn’t explained in Daniel 8.

“Understand the Vision”

As if the information from the previous few days weren't enough to link Daniel 9:24-27 with Daniel 8:14, the Lord has given us even more evidence to make that link.

In Daniel 8:1, 2, Daniel three times makes reference to the “vision” of the chapter; each time it comes from the same Hebrew word, *hazon*: “In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision [*hazon*] appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first. And I saw in a vision [*hazon*]; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision [*hazon*], and I was by the river of Ulai” (*Dan. 8:1, 2*).

Daniel then describes what he sees in the *hazon*: the ram, the goat, the little horn, and so forth. *Hazon*, therefore, refers to the general vision of chapter 8.

In contrast, when he talks specifically about the 2,300 days, Daniel uses a different word for vision, *mareh*. “And the vision [*mareh*] of the evening and the morning which was told is true. . . . And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision [*mareh*], but none understood it” (*Dan. 8:26, 27*).

Thus, we have two words for “vision” in Daniel 8: *hazon* for the whole vision, *mareh* for Daniel 8:14, the vision about the 2,300 days and the sanctuary being cleansed, the part that Daniel didn't understand (*Dan. 8:27*).

Now these two words appear again, in Daniel 9, when Gabriel appears to Daniel. “Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision [*hazon*] at the beginning . . . touched me. . . . At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision [*mareh*]” (*Dan. 9:21-23*).

Consider what *mareh*? There's only one: the *mareh* of the 2,300 days that Daniel specifically said he didn't understand. In fact, the word translated “consider” comes from *bin*, which also links this to the *mareh* of Daniel 8:26, which Daniel needed understanding (*bin*) about.

Clearly, the explanation of Daniel 9:24-27 is linked to the 2,300 days of the previous chapter. Gabriel came to give Daniel understanding about the *mareh* of the 2,300 days!

Review the links between Daniel 8 and Daniel 9. Be able to defend the position that these two chapters are indeed tied together with each other.

Further Study: Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 345–347; *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 553–556.

Daniel 8 ends with the *mareh* of the 2,300 days not explained. Gabriel, the same angel interpreter in Daniel 8, appears in Daniel 9 and tells him to understand the *mareh*. The only *mareh* Daniel didn't understand was the *mareh* of 8:14 and 8:26, which was a time prophecy. Then, immediately after telling him to understand the *mareh*, a time prophecy, what does Gabriel give Daniel? Another time prophecy.

No wonder Adventists see a powerful link between the two chapters and two prophecies. We're not alone either. The following quote comes from an Orthodox Jewish commentary on the book of Daniel. Below is the extract on the phrase "consider the *mareh*" in Daniel 9:23, though this commentary translates it "gain understanding of the vision." What do these Jews do with the 70-week prophecy?

"This refers to Daniel's vision in chapter 8 in which the part which disturbed him so (v. 14) is characterized in vs. 16-26 as a *mareh*." —*Daniel*, Art Scroll Tanach Series (Brooklyn, New York: Mesorah Publications, Ltd., 1988), p. 258.

Thus, these Orthodox Jews do with the 70-week prophecy exactly what we do: that is, they link it to the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14.

Discussion Questions:

- ❶ As a class, review the material studied this week. Make sure that everyone understands the links between the two chapters.
- ❷ If you read Daniel's prayer, you'll notice that time and again he prays in the first person plural, "we" have done this, "we" have done that. Why do you think Daniel, who is depicted in Scripture as such a faithful, holy character, includes himself as one of those who brought this calamity upon his own people? What message is there for us, as well?

One Powerful God

Sarah Lovett

My family worshiped several gods, offering flowers and incense, then praying to their pictures. But these gods did not hear our prayers.

My brother became possessed by a spirit and did many cruel and dreadful things. Everyone feared him. One day he burned my clothes and books—everything I owned. When I discovered what he had done, he struck me repeatedly with a hammer until I lost consciousness. After spending weeks in the hospital, I went to live with my sister.

I yearned to find a god who could help my family. Then one day a man stopped to give us a pamphlet and urge us to try Jesus, the living God who can hear and answer our prayers. Hope burned in my heart that this Jesus might be the true and all-powerful God.

Later an evangelist visited our village. I invited him to come to our house to study the Bible. I invited our neighbors to hear what he said, and soon I began worshipping with this evangelist's followers. I went with the believers to other villages to pray and preach.

After some time the evangelist asked me to marry him. We then continued to work together for God.

One day we met an Adventist pastor who shared his faith with us. What he said and the Bible verses he read to us made so much sense that we wondered why we had not realized these things before. We studied the Bible with him and could not deny the truths we were learning.

Alfred and I were baptized, joined the Adventist Church and began working as Global Mission pioneers. We returned to the people we had led to Christ and shared our new light with them. Many have accepted these truths and followed us in baptism. In just three years some 250 people have joined us in the Adventist Church.



Alfred works with the men, and I work with the women. What a joy to work for the true, the living, the all-powerful God!

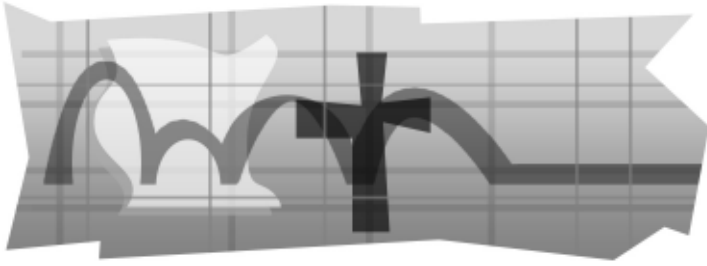
Thank you for your mission offerings that support lay evangelism around the world.

Sarah and Alfred Lovett (left) are Global Mission pioneers working near Nagpur, India.

Ad

Mission Ad

70 Weeks



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Dan. 9:24-27; Ezra 4:7-16; 7:6, 7, 11-17.*

Memory Text: “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy” (*Daniel 9:24*).

So far, these few points should be clear: The judgment in Daniel 7 and cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8 are the same event, and it occurs after the 1,260 years.

Second, Daniel 8 ended with the vision of the 2,300 days not explained. Daniel 9 picks up with the end of Daniel 8: Gabriel offers Daniel the explanation he lacked in the previous chapter. Thus, Daniel 8 and Daniel 9 are one: a vision and a partial explanation (*Daniel 8*) and then the rest of the explanation (*Daniel 9*).

This week we continue with Daniel 9, focusing on the amazing 70-week prophecy, which provides powerful evidence not only for the inspiration of Scripture but for the Messiahship of Jesus, “the Messiah the Prince” (*Dan. 9:25*), who—as the center of the prophecy, forms the foundation for the 2,300-day prophecy, as well.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, August 12.*

70 Weeks

As we saw last week, the vision of Daniel 8:14 was a time prophecy, the 2,300 days. Now, in Daniel 9, Gabriel returns and gives him another time prophecy, this time of 70 weeks (*Dan. 9:24*).

Do a little math. Which prophecy is longer, 2,300 days or 70 weeks?

We are presented with two time prophecies juxtaposed with each other, the 2,300 days and the 70 weeks, the 70 weeks being the smaller of the two.

70 weeks

2,300 days

Read the beginning of Daniel 9:24. How does Gabriel first introduce the 70 weeks? What verb does he use?

Though various translations are used for the verb (root is *chatchak*), such as “determined,” or “decreed,” the basic meaning is that of “cut off,” which is how most Hebrew lexicons define it (unfortunately, the word doesn’t appear anywhere else in the Bible, so we can’t see how it is used elsewhere in Scripture). In Ugaritic, a language similar to Hebrew, scholars have noted that the parallel word in that language for *chatchak* means “cut off,” as well. Thus, the basic rendering of the text is “70 weeks are cut off.”

Cut off from what? What else other than from another time prophecy? What other time prophecy? Obviously, the *mareh*, the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14, the longer of the two prophecies.

Thus, we are given two time prophecies: 2,300 days and 70 weeks, and the 70 weeks is to be “cut off” from the 2,300 days.

Suppose you mention to a neighbor that you have five free hours on Sunday. On Sunday the neighbor, after making a direct reference to your five free hours, says that he needs some help to paint a room. “It will take only an hour,” he adds. What’s the immediate implication, and how does that help us understand the link between the two time prophecies of Daniel 8:14 and 9:24?

The Messiah the Prince

Read carefully and prayerfully Daniel 9:25. What two specific events are directly related to the time element given there? Of those two events, which comes at the beginning of that time element, and which comes at the end?

Here, in this one verse, 69 of the 70 weeks are accounted for. The prophecy begins with the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, and 69 weeks later it ends with “the Messiah the Prince.” Thus, we have two historical events to work with: the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (which would have been of obvious import to Daniel) and “the Messiah the Prince.”

When you understand that the Hebrew word for “Messiah” is translated in Greek as “Christos,” or Christ, to whom then is this prophecy referring to? See Matt. 1:1, 16; 16:16; Acts 3:13-15, 18; 5:30, 31.

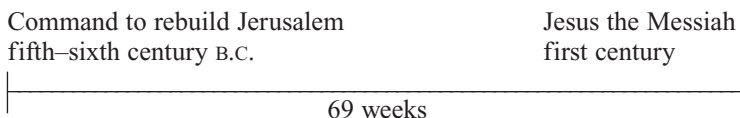
Thus, we can see here a crucial point: This prophecy is centered on Jesus. The first 69 weeks of the prophecy are used to bring us to Jesus, “the Messiah the Prince.” We can say, then, that the prophecy has its foundation in Christ Himself. To the degree, then, that we can have confidence in the messiahship of Jesus, is the degree that we can trust the prophecy itself.

What’s crucial to remember, too, is that Seventh-day Adventists hardly are alone in seeing this as a prophecy of Christ. Christians of many denominations have long understood this prophecy as being one of the most powerful evidences for the messiahship of Jesus Christ. After all, we have Daniel, living 500 years before Christ, giving us a time prophecy concerning Christ.

Review other Old Testament prophecies that point to Christ. How should these strengthen your faith in Him and what He has done for us? Put together a study on those prophecies to share with an unbelieving neighbor or friend.

The Decree

Daniel 9:25 begins with the command to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem and ends with the Messiah, 69 weeks later. And though people might disagree on exact dates, we know for sure that the command to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem was in the sixth or fifth century B.C. and that Jesus lived and died in the first century A.D.



What immediate evidence do you see here for the day-year principle? Why can the 69 weeks not be taken as literal time?

The crucial issue facing us now is, What is that starting date, the date of the command to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem? Fortunately, as long as we believe that the 69 weeks end with Jesus, we can narrow down the known decrees to only one, the one given in 457 B.C., which was the command by Artaxerxes in the seventh year of his reign (see following daily sections).

Look up these texts (*Matt. 2:1, 19-22; 27:1, 2; Luke 2:1-7; 3:1-3; 23:1-7*). Notice all the historical figures tied in with events surrounding Jesus; through these (and others) we can reconstruct the dates of Christ’s life and ministry.

With this in mind, let’s look at some of the common dates used for the decree in Daniel 9:25.

Take, for example, 538 B.C. Applying the day-year principle to the 69 weeks (483 years) would bring “the Messiah the Prince,” Jesus, to 55 B.C., an impossible date for Jesus.

The same with another common date, 520 B.C. That starting date would bring Jesus to about 37 B.C., an impossible conclusion.

Finally, the only other common date is 444 B.C., which, if used, would place the beginning of Jesus’ ministry about A.D. 39 or 40 and His death sometime in the early A.D. 40s. And though that’s much closer than the other two options, New Testament scholars know that those dates don’t work for Jesus.

“Building the Rebellious and Bad City”

Daniel 9 gives us a prophecy of “the Messiah the Prince,” who we know is Jesus. Yet, it ties this important prophecy with a specific historical date: the command to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem. Would Scripture give us such an important prophecy without also providing the key to understanding it? Obviously not.

Read Ezra 4:7-16, which deals with events after the end of the Babylonian exile of the Hebrew nation. As you read, ask yourself these questions:

- ❶ To whom is the letter being addressed?

- ❷ What is the specific complaint against the Jews?

- ❸ According to the letter, who sent, or allowed, the Jews to return to Jerusalem in order to do what they were doing?

Look at what’s happening. Sometime after the Jews returned to Jerusalem, a group of Persian officers wrote to King Artaxerxes, complaining about the Jews rebuilding Jerusalem. In the letter they stated two important points: (1) that the city was being rebuilt (*Ezra 4:12*) and (2) that the Jews who were rebuilding had come there because of the king. Said the letter, “Be it known unto the king, *that the Jews which came up from thee to us are come unto Jerusalem, building the rebellious and the bad city, and have set up the walls thereof, and joined the foundations*” (*vs. 12, emphasis supplied*). In other words, the Jews who were rebuilding the city had come there because of King Artaxerxes. He must have issued the decree that allowed them to rebuild their city. The question is, What decree was that?

Despite rebellion and apostasy, God granted mercy and grace to the Hebrew nation, though from a human perspective all seemed lost. What should this tell us about never giving up on anyone, no matter how far he or she has fallen (including ourselves)?

457 B.C.

Yesterday we saw that the Jews who had returned to Jerusalem were rebuilding it. We saw, too, that it was because of King Artaxerxes that they had returned to the city. He must have been the one who issued the decree “to restore and to build Jerusalem” (*Dan. 9:25*), for that’s exactly what they were doing.

Interestingly enough, the Bible mentions only one decree issued by Artaxerxes that could fit these specifications, and that’s in the seventh year of his reign, which can be dated firmly to 457 B.C.

Read Ezra 7:6, 7, 11-17. What is going on here in this decree issued by Artaxerxes in regard to what the Jews are doing in Jerusalem?

The book of Ezra is not in chronological order, so the events in Ezra 4 came later than what was in chapter 7. And though nothing in this decree specifically talks about rebuilding the city, it was obviously understood to entail that, because, according to what we read yesterday, that’s exactly what the Jews were doing. Both they and their enemies understood that the decree, issued by Artaxerxes in his seventh year, by which the Jews “which came up from thee to us” (*Ezra 4:12*), must have included the command “to restore and to build Jerusalem.” This is even more obvious because nothing in their letter expressed any idea that rebuilding of the city by the Jews was somehow in contradiction with the decree of the king.

Thus, taken together, Ezra 4 and 7 make it clear that the decree, dated in the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes (*Ezra 7:7, 8*) is indeed the “commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem” (*Dan. 9:25*).

This, too, can be firmly dated at 457 B.C. (and though some argue for 458, the difference entails only a six-month discrepancy).

Also, if one believed that Jesus were “the Messiah the Prince,” this date would work perfectly. In other words, Jesus is our Surety in regard to this prophecy.

Why should Jesus be our Surety in everything regarding our faith?

Further Study: Look at this quote from a famous biography of scientist Isaac Newton, a fervent student of the book of Daniel: “Who cares whether Newton was correct in maintaining that the prophecy of the seventy weeks in the Book of Daniel referred to the interval of 490 years after Ezra’s leading the Jews from Babylon back to Jerusalem (457 BC) to the Crucifixion in AD 33/34?”—A. Rupert Hall, *Isaac Newton: Adventurer in Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 372.

“It would seem, therefore, that the rebuilding activity of the city of Jerusalem proper (Ezra 4:12) which occurred in the wake of these favors, suggests that the royal consent was implied in this decree to permit Judah to have a visible center from which the newly granted civil and judicial privileges of the state could be administered. Consequently, Artaxerxes’ ‘word’ or decree of 457 B.C. provides the best commencement date for Daniel’s 70 weeks prophecy and the longer time span of the 2300 day-years (Dan 8–9).”—*The Seventy Weeks, Leviticus, and the Nature of Prophecy*, Frank B. Holbrook, editor (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), p. 74.

See also LeRoy E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, for scores of quotes from scholars, using the 457 B.C. starting date. For why we choose 457 over 458, see Siegfried H. Horn and Lynn H. Wood’s *The Chronology of Ezra 7*.

Discussion Questions:

- ❶ As a class, review everything that we’ve studied so far until everyone in the class understands the material.
- ❷ Have people in the class talk about how this 70-week prophecy, or any other prophecy, has made a significant impact in their lives. What can we learn from what they say on how God can use prophecy to reach us? How much of a role do you think prophecy should play in our witnessing efforts? Is it possible to put too much emphasis on prophecy?

Blind, But He Can See

Tiago da Silva

Tiago had known since childhood that a genetic disorder would eventually rob him of his eyesight. But he refused to believe that day would come. However, when he was 12 years old his vision began to cloud. He could see colors and shapes but could not read letters. Within a few months his eyesight was gone completely.

His mother had repeatedly urged him to study Braille in preparation for his blindness, but he had resisted, feeling that somehow learning Braille would hasten the day when he would not be able to see. But when his classmates grew tired of reading his lessons to him, he could put off learning Braille no longer. Tiago fought discouragement and trusted in God to get him through the difficult transition from a sighted world to a sightless one.

When his classmates ignored him or avoided him, he cried to God for help. Tiago was especially thankful for a few close friends who never left him.

When Tiago was 15, a family who lived across the street invited his mother to attend a stop-smoking clinic in the Adventist church. Tiago's mother smoked, and Tiago urged her to stop. She told Tiago that she would go to the stop-smoking class if he went with her. Although they missed some meetings, she was able to stop smoking.

The neighbors then invited Tiago and his mother to attend evangelistic meetings that followed the stop-smoking seminar. Tiago knew nothing about Adventists, but he decided to go. They took the Bible study lessons offered at the meetings, and a teacher came to their house to correct them every day.

Tiago told his closest friend what he was learning at the evangelistic meetings and invited her to attend with him. Although she hesitated at first, she went, and afterward she enrolled in a Revelation seminar. After the meetings ended, Tiago and his mother began attending the Adventist church. Tiago's father goes with them when he is not working.

Recently Tiago decided to accept Jesus. He shares his testimony: "Young people have many barriers; my barrier is my blindness. But my faith is bringing me a new way of seeing life. If young people would study the Bible and accept the truths they find there, they would have a new way of seeing things too."

Our mission offerings help sponsor evangelistic outreaches such as the one that brought Tiago and his family to Jesus.



Tiago da Silva is a high school student living in Curitiba, Brazil.

1844 Made Simple



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Lev. 7:27; 17:10; Luke 3:1-22; Rom. 5:8; Gal. 3:13; 1 Thess. 5:9, 10; 1 Pet. 2:24.*

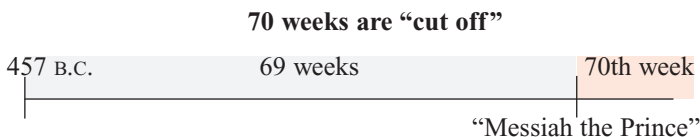
Memory Text: “And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent” (*Matthew 27:51*).

So far, we've seen that Daniel 8 ended with Daniel needing more explanation about the 2,300 days. Daniel 9 provides that explanation. Gabriel, the same angel interpreter in Daniel 8, points him directly back to the *mareh* of Daniel 8, the only part of the vision that he didn't understand. Gabriel immediately gives him another time prophecy, the 70 weeks, which is “cut off,” obviously from the larger time prophecy of the 2,300 days.

Unlike the 2,300 days, which doesn't mention a specific starting point, Daniel 9 does have one: the “commandment to restore and build Jerusalem,” which we saw last week was issued in 457 B.C.

Meanwhile, 69 of the 70 weeks of this prophecy reach to “the Messiah the Prince,” Jesus. Thus, Jesus Himself forms the center of this prophecy; He's the foundation, the focal point of the 70 weeks. It all rests on Jesus, “the chief corner stone” (*Eph. 2:20*).

So far, then, the 70 weeks look like this:



**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, August 19.*

Doing the Math

Last week we saw that the “commandment to restore and build Jerusalem” occurred in the reign of the Persian King Artaxerxes. That is, it was issued not during the time of Babylon but after, in the next kingdom of Media-Persia.

What kingdom did the prophecy of Daniel 8 start with? How does that answer provide another link between Daniel 8 and 9?

Daniel 9 gives us the exact starting point of the 70-week prophecy, 457 B.C. It then says that from that point, there will be 69 weeks until “the Messiah the Prince.” Sixty-nine weeks comes to 483 days; applying, then, the day-year principle means that, from the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince, 483 years would pass.

Do the math, counting 483 years from 457 B.C. What date do you get?

To get at the date, you need to subtract 457 from 483. That comes to 26, which would mean A.D. 26. However, we are dealing with a calendar here and not a straight number line, which goes like this: -2 -1 0 1 2 3. The calendar, of course, doesn’t have a slot for zero (there’s no zero year). The calendar, instead, goes like this: -2, -1, 1, 2, or, more specifically, 2 B.C., 1 B.C., A.D. 1, A.D. 2. Thus, with the zero year missing on the calendar, 483 years would extend one more year on the calendar, coming to A.D. 27 instead of 26.

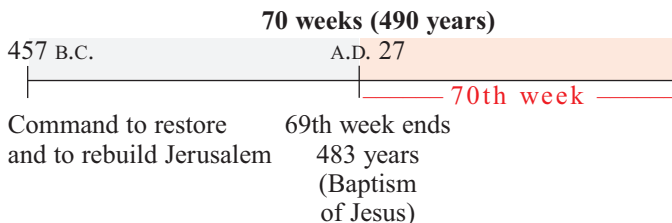
Read Luke 3:1-22. What major event is portrayed here, and how does this help us understand the meaning of the prophecy of Daniel 9?

The prophecy doesn’t talk about the birth of Jesus; instead, it talks about Him as the “Messiah,” the “Anointed,” the Christ; that is, Jesus in His official capacity. Luke puts John’s ministry in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, which can be dated to A.D. 27. Seeing that John baptized Jesus shortly after John’s own ministry began, we have this incredible prophecy, given more than five hundred years earlier, pointing to the ministry of Jesus.

What does the baptism of Jesus say to you about how closely Christ relates to humanity? What hope does His close tie to us offer us in our daily struggles?

Messiah Cut Off

So far, in our study of the 70-week prophecy (490 years), we've covered 69 weeks (or 483 of those 490 years). We've also looked at two distinct historical events that can be accurately dated. See the chart below:



Study the above chart until the events depicted on it are clear to you.

Read Daniel 9:26. It says that after the 62 weeks the Messiah will be “cut off”; that’s the 62 weeks that come after the first 7 (*see vs. 25*), which means that after this 69th week (A.D. 27) the Messiah will be cut off, but “not for himself.”

Look up these following texts (*Isa. 53:5; Rom. 5:8; Gal. 3:13; 1 Thess. 5:9, 10; 1 Pet. 2:24*). **How do they help us understand what this prophecy is talking about?**

Up until now, the prophecy covered the first 69 weeks. Verse 26 now introduces the last week, the final seven years of the prophecy—and it does so with an image of Christ’s atoning death. Not only was He “cut off” (a different verb from that used in 9:24), but He was cut off “not for himself,” giving the idea that His death was in behalf of others. We see here the substitutionary aspect of Christ’s sacrifice: His death wasn’t for Himself; it was for us.

It’s interesting, too, that the verb (*krt*) used for “cut off” is directly linked with the Levitical sacrificial system, with those who violated the covenant being “cut off” from the people. (*See Lev. 7:27; 17:10, 14; 20:6, 17.*) In Daniel 9:26 we see an image of the innocent Jesus being “cut off” for the sins of others.

What does it mean that no matter what you have ever done, no matter how bad you have been, the penalty for those actions has been paid by the One who was “cut off,” not for Himself—but for you?

In the Midst of the Week

Read Daniel 9:27. Twice it talks about the “week.” What week is it referring to?

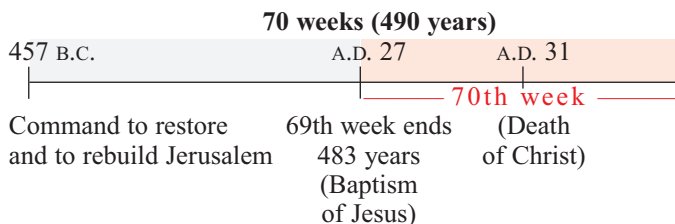
So far, we know that the prophecy is talking about Jesus, and that 69th week brought us to His baptism in A.D. 27. We saw, too, a direct reference in verse 26 to His atoning death. After all, that was the reason He came (*Mark 10:45, John 3:14*).

All that’s left of the 70-week prophecy is the final week, the 70th, the last 7 years.

What happens in the middle of the last week? What time period is it talking about?

Though verse 26 talked about Jesus’ death somewhat directly, verse 27 talks about it in the sense of what it accomplished: the end of the earthly sacrificial system, at least in the sense that they were of any more value (after all, some people today still offer sacrifices). This point was made clear in Mark 15:34-39, with the veil of the sanctuary rent in half, signaling the end of the earthly sanctuary service as a legitimate symbol of the ministry of Christ. The real sacrifice was, finally, offered; the old system had to give way for a new and better one. All that was equated with the old system—the sacrifice, the priesthood, and the sanctuary—have been replaced (*see Heb. 9:1-15*).

This occurred in the “midst of the week.” That would be three and a half years (half of seven). Through counting Passovers in John, we can show that it was three and a half years later, in the spring of A.D. 31, that Jesus was crucified. Thus, our chart now looks like this:



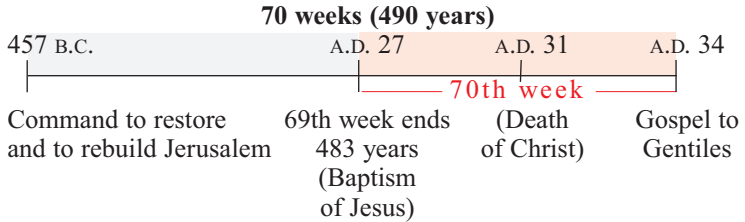
What a powerful prophecy for the messiahship of Jesus! Take whatever time you need until you understand what this prophecy is teaching. How is this amazing prophecy another revelation of God’s love to us? How does it help strengthen your faith?

The 70th Week

The last thing we need to look at in the 70-week prophecy is found again in Daniel 9:27: “He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week.” What week is that? Obviously, it’s the 70th week, the last one in the prophecy. If we begin with 457 B.C., then 490 years later bring the end of the 70-week prophecy to A.D. 34. Thus, the last week, the 70th week, ends at that date.

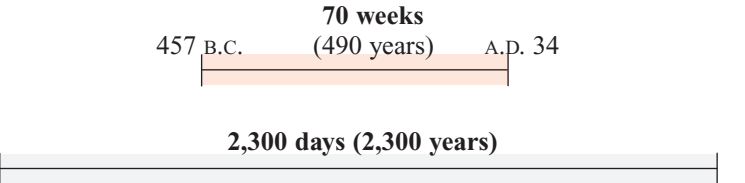
Daniel 9:27 talks about the “covenant.” What covenant could that be referring to? *Exod. 19:5, 34:10, Lev. 26:45, 1 Kings 19:10, Isa. 59:21, Jer. 50:5.*

Thus, the 70-week prophecy talks about an affirmation of the covenant that God made with Israel. He will “confirm the covenant with many” during that specific period, obviously referring specifically to the Jews who accepted Jesus at that time. Though the prophecy itself doesn’t give a specific event for that last year, A.D. 34, many believe it was the year that the apostle Paul accepted the gospel and became the great preacher to the Gentiles (*Acts 9*). In other words, Israel’s exclusivity came to a close, and a new era in salvation history was inaugurated at the end of the 490 years as the gospel went to all the world.



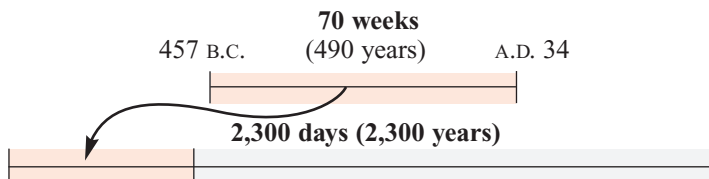
Review the above chart until you understand it well enough to explain it to others.

However fascinating the above prophecy, we must remember that it’s just part of a larger prophecy, the 2,300 days. That is, this 70th week was, as we saw, “cut off” from the larger *mareh* of Daniel 8. Thus, we have here two time prophecies, the 2,300 days, which didn’t have a specified starting point, and the 70 weeks, which did. We have, therefore, the following two time periods:



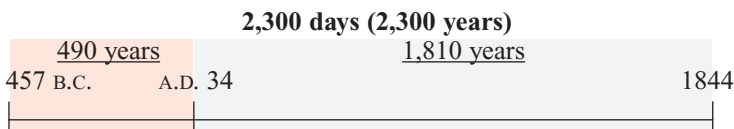
1844 Made Simple

As we've seen, the grounding of the 70-week prophecy is in Jesus, and because the 70-week prophecy is just part of the 2,300-day prophecy, that prophecy is grounded in Jesus, as well. The next step is obvious. The 70 weeks, which have a definite starting point, are "cut off" from the 2,300 days (see tomorrow on why it has to be "cut off" at the beginning as opposed to the end of the 2,300 days).



Do the math. If you use the 70 weeks as the starting point of the 2,300 years, what date do you come to?

If you count 2,300 years from 457 B.C. (remembering to delete the nonexistent zero year), you get 1844; or, if you count the remaining 1810 years from A.D. 34 (2,300 minus the first 490 years), you come to 1844, as well. Thus, the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14 can be shown to start in 1844.



Go back to week 5, Friday's study. We saw from the parallels between Daniel 7 and Daniel 8 that the cleansing of the sanctuary (the same event as the judgment scene in Daniel 7) had to occur after the 1,260-year period in Daniel 7 and yet before the Second Coming. How does the calculation done today fit in with that study?

What's so crucial, too, about the 2,300-day prophecy is that, being undeniably linked to the 70-week prophecy, it is inseparably tied in with Jesus. Again, one can't tamper with those dates in any substantial way without tampering with the dates of Jesus. Jesus Himself is the Surety of this prophecy. Obviously, then, the Lord deemed the 2,300-day prophecy important enough to, in a very real sense, base it on Jesus, on the greatest and most precise prophecy concerning His earthly mission, the 70-week prophecy of Daniel 9.

Review what we've studied this week. Be prepared to talk about it in class on Sabbath.

Further Study: Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 409–432.

However clear it is that the 70 weeks are cut off from the 2,300 days, why do we cut them off from the beginning and not the end? The answer is because that's the only way it works logically. If we cut the 70 weeks off at the end, the 2,300 days would terminate in A.D. 34, an impossible conclusion, given the context of Daniel 8, which—parallel to Daniel 7—links the 2,300 days to the time of the end, and that hardly happened in A.D. 34. Plus, too, if you cut them off from the end, the beginning of the prophecy would start about sixteen hundred years before Babylon, the first kingdom depicted in these prophecies. In other words, cutting them off from the end doesn't work at all, given the context in which they appear. Meanwhile, cutting them off at the beginning places the start of the prophecy in the reign of Media-Persia, which fits the context of the vision (Daniel 8 began with Media-Persia) and places their end after the 1,260 years yet before the Second Coming, which also fits perfectly with the context of the vision.

Discussion Questions:

- 1** As a class, go over what has been studied in the past few weeks. Make sure, as much as possible, that everyone understands what has been covered.
- 2** Why does the date 1844 for Daniel 8:14 show why the sanctuary being cleansed is the heavenly one, not the earthly?
- 3** Why do you think is it important for us, as Adventists, to understand this prophecy, considering that the event depicted in it, the cleansing of the sanctuary, occurred so long ago? What does it mean to us as a church today?
- 4** As a class, talk about the implications of the phrase, he was “cut off but not for himself.” What hope does that offer to us? For whom was He cut off, why, and what does that mean? Talk about this too: The 70-week prophecy, a prophecy of the gospel, is linked with the 2,300-day prophecy. What does that tell us about why the gospel should form the foundation of our understanding of the meaning of the 2,300-day prophecy?

The Empty Pantry

Charlotte Ishkanian

Worry lines etched Alberto's forehead. He had a family to feed, but he had no money. He was a brick maker, but no one was buying bricks. And those who had ordered bricks had not paid him. One day Alberto's wife told him that they would eat the last of their rice that evening. All day Alberto prayed that God would send buyers for bricks, but no one came. At dinner the family ate their rice and then asked God to provide food for the next day.

The next morning the family again prayed for food. Alberto decided to ride his bike 12 miles to ask his brother for a loan. Just over a mile from home, Alberto saw some money lying in the road. He stopped and looked around. No one seemed to be looking for it, so he picked it up. It was a 50,000 *meticaís* bill (about US\$2.00). Rejoicing, he started back home. On the way he saw another 50,000 *meticaís* bill on the ground.

His wife was surprised when he returned so soon and even more surprised when he gave her the 100,000 *meticaís*. "Did God send you a customer?" she asked.

"No, God sent us the money. I found it lying on the road." The couple called the children, and they thanked God for this gift. Alberto's wife set aside a tenth for God's tithe. Then she went to the market to buy corn, the cheapest grain available. She pounded it into flour and made porridge for dinner.

On Sabbath the family took their tithe to church. During a testimony time, Alberto shared what God had done for his family, and the church rejoiced over God's providence.

The following week some people who owed Alberto money for bricks came to pay their debts. With that money the family was able to buy the food and necessities they needed.

Alberto and his family love to tell others how God cared for them. Our mission offerings help spread the news that there is a God who cares.



Alberto Mutenga (left) and his family live in Chimoio, Mozambique. Charlotte Ishkanian is editor of Mission.

Day-Year Principle



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Exod. 34:22; Lev. 12:5; Num. 14:34; Deut. 16:10; Ezek. 4:5, 6; Dan. 8:17, 19, 26; 10:2, 3.*

Memory Text: “And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year” (*Ezekiel 4:6*).

As we saw, the parallel between Daniel 2, 7, and 8 shows how the judgment in Daniel 7, which leads to the second coming of Christ, is the same event as the cleansing of the sanctuary (obviously, the heavenly one) in Daniel 8:14. Also this event occurs sometime after the 1,260-year period of persecution (late eighteenth to early nineteenth century) yet before the Second Coming.

We saw, too, that the 2,300-day prophecy of Daniel 8 was the only part of the vision not explained and that Gabriel came to Daniel in chapter 9 with that explanation, the 70-week prophecy, which was “cut off” from 2,300 days. This 70-week prophecy, rooted in Jesus, formed the basis for the 2,300-day prophecy; it also provided the starting date for the 2,300 days, which brought that prophecy to 1844, a date that fits perfectly with what we were shown in Daniel 7 and 8.

Thus, we have the essence of the 1844 prophecy, firmly rooted not only in massive world historical empires but in the cross.

For the next few weeks we'll look more closely at some of the topics we only touched on regarding 1844; as we do, we'll seek to answer the most obvious questions that could arise as we study this prophecy so crucial to Seventh-day Adventists.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, August 26.*

Prophetic Time

Over the past few weeks, we looked at three time prophecies: the “time, times, and the dividing of time” (*Dan. 7:25*); the “two thousand and three hundred days” (*Dan. 8:14*); and the “seventy weeks” (*Dan. 9:24*). We have worked on the premise that these were not to be taken as literal time but as prophetic time and that in each of these cases the days were to be interpreted as years.

Thus we were dealing with periods of hundreds, even thousands, of years rather than just periods of a few years if they were understood as literal time.

The question is, What justification do we have in making this assumption that these were not literal but prophetic times and that we should use the day-year principle while interpreting them?

In Daniel 8:17, 19, 26, Daniel is told in one way or another that the prophetic vision he was given was for the “end.” In fact, he was specifically told that the vision concerning “the evening and the morning” (the 2,300 days) would be “for many days” (*Dan. 8:26*). Why do these facts help prove that the time prophecy in Daniel 8 isn’t literal?

Read Daniel 7:24-27. The little-horn power, which arises from pagan Rome (a power that ended more than fifteen hundred years ago), will exist until the end of the final judgment that brings the end of the world. What evidence do we have here that the time prophecy in verse 25 should not be taken literally, as well?

Clearly within both Daniel 7 and Daniel 8 themselves, given the context in which they operate (massive world empires that, beginning in antiquity and culminating in the end of the world, cover thousands of years of history), it hardly makes sense that the major time prophecies in them would be literal; that is, in the case of Daniel 7 covering only three and a half years and in Daniel 8 about six years and three months (or 2,300 literal days). These time frames hardly do justice to the magnitude of the events depicted in the visions.

Once, though, the day-year principle is applied, the time prophecies make more sense, fitting in much better with the scale of events in which they are depicted.

What evidence do you see that we are living in “the end” that Daniel talked about? How should this realization impact how we live? What in our lives, if anything, reveals that we truly believe we are living in the “end”?

Daniel 9 and Prophetic Time

Review the 70-week prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27. What internal evidence do we have that this can't be taken as literal time?

As we saw in an earlier lesson, regardless of the dates one used for the command to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem and for the ministry of Jesus, there were clearly more than seventy literal weeks between the two events. Taken literally, the prophecy becomes meaningless. How interesting, however, that if the day-year principle is applied, the prophecy works perfectly, bringing us right to Jesus. Thus, in a real sense, the ministry of Jesus, as revealed in Daniel 9, proves the validity of the day-year principle.

Some people, however, argue that the word for “weeks” in Daniel 9:24 means “weeks of years,” thus each of those weeks are seven years. Therefore, we have 70 “weeks of years,” which comes to 490 years.

The only problem, however, is that the word translated “weeks” in Daniel 9:24 never appears anywhere else in the Bible other than as “weeks.” It never means “weeks of years.”

Look up Exodus 34:22; Leviticus 12:5; Deuteronomy 16:10; and Daniel 10:2, 3, a few places in the Bible where that basic word translated “weeks” appears. What evidence within the texts themselves shows that a week, or weeks, was meant, as opposed to “weeks of years”?

In Daniel 10:2, 3 the same word appears as in Daniel 9:24, and it obviously doesn't mean “weeks of years.” (Daniel fasted 3 weeks of years, or 21 years?) Also, even if one accepted the error that the word in Daniel 9:24 means “weeks of years,” a week of years is still seven years, the same number of years as if you used the day-year principle. Thus, the day-year principle is so ingrained in the prophecy that a scholarly concoction devised to get rid of the principle only affirms it instead!

Notice how long the time periods we're dealing with are: 490 years, 1,260 years, 2,300 years. How should these long time periods help us understand what *patience* means and how we need to trust God when things don't happen as quickly as we would like?

Seventy Weeks and 2,300 Days

As we've seen, the 70-week prophecy makes no sense if taken literally. Once the day-year principle is applied, it brings us right to Jesus. Thus, the prophecy itself demands the day-year principle.

Daniel 9:24-27 demands the day-year principle. Now, because this prophecy was “cut off” from the 2,300-day prophecy, what does that tell us about the day-year principle and the 2,300 days?

The 70-week prophecy comes to 490 years. The 2,300 days, if literal, come to a little more than six years. Could 490 years be “cut off” from a little more than six years? Of course not. From 2,300 years? Of course. Hence here's more evidence that the day-year principle must be applied to the 2,300-day prophecy, as well. It makes no sense to apply the principle to the 70 weeks, which is only part of the 2,300 days, and not apply it to the 2,300 days, as well.

No wonder Adventists haven't been the only ones to use the day-year principle for the 2,300 days. One of the greatest Jewish scholars, Rashi (A.D. 1040–1105), translated Daniel 8:14 as, “And he said unto me, Unto 2,300 years . . .” Not only is this idea not an Adventist innovation, it has been used by other scholars on these same prophecies long before us.

Look up Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:5, 6. Though in and of themselves not proving the day-year principle, what evidence do they give for it?

Look up these texts, all found early in the Bible (*Gen. 5:14, 5:23, 9:29*). What link do they show between days and years in the Bible?

As we look at all these time prophecies, great prophetic periods that have all come and gone, what should this tell us about how we use the few precious moments allotted to us in life? What changes might you need to make in your own use of time?

More Proof

Read the question in Daniel 8:13 again. When you do, you realize that the word *concerning* does not appear in the Hebrew, nor does Hebrew grammar allow for it. Thus, the question isn't just about the activity of the little horn. Instead, the question is about everything depicted in the chapter, which includes the vision about the ram and the goat (Media-Persia and Greece), as well as the activity of the little horn (pagan and papal Rome). A literal translation would read, "How long the vision, the daily, and the transgression of desolation to give the sanctuary and the host a trampling." In other words, the question lists everything that happened in the vision. In fact, the word for "vision" in verse 13 is *hazon*, which, as we saw earlier, deals with the ram and the goat and the little horn; that is, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

The question, then, could be paraphrased like this, *How long will all these things, from the rise of Media-Persia, the rise of Greece, and finally to Rome's attack on Christ's heavenly ministry, be allowed to go on?*

Read the literal translation of the text given above. Why does this show that the 2,300 days cannot be taken as literal time? If literal, how could it cover all the events depicted in the question?

The point should be obvious: The 2,300 days must cover all the events depicted in the vision of Daniel 8; that is, Media-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the sanctuary cleansed. A literal 2,300-day period of time does not even begin to cover one of those kingdoms, much less all. On the other hand, with the day-year principle, the problem is instantly solved. Twenty-three hundred years, rather than a little more than six, cover the events in question.

If you read again the question in Daniel 8, it deals with long periods of history that involve persecution, apostasy, suffering, all within a long time frame (see vs. 23-25). In the end, though, what happens? And not only are we told what happens, through these prophecies we are told when they will happen. Why should these texts give us the hope that regardless of present circumstances, God will end it all and bring all things to His glory? How should this realization give you strength and courage to remain faithful regardless of your circumstances?

Day-Year Principle

Skim over the vision and the interpretation in Daniel 7. Why do all those symbols help us understand why the time element in the vision should be symbolic, as well?

Daniel 7 is a chapter filled with all sorts of symbols, or images, that are not to be taken literally. Thus, why should we take the prophetic time given in it as literal, when almost everything else is symbolic?

Read Daniel 8. In the same vein as the last question, what evidence do we have that the time period here should be viewed as symbolic, not literal, as well?

Daniel 8 is no more about flying goats (*vs. 5*) than Daniel 7 was about beasts with iron teeth (*vs. 7*). Instead, these were symbolic; in the same way, the time periods given were symbolic, as well.

In fact, of the three time periods we've been looking at—the “time, times, and the dividing of time” (*Dan. 7:25*); the “two thousand and three hundred days” (*Dan. 8:14*); and the “seventy weeks” (*Dan. 9:24*)—none is written in the common way that time is expressed. For example, instead of saying 2,300 days, why didn't Gabriel say that the sanctuary would be cleansed in “six years, three months, and twenty days”? In 2 Samuel 5:5, the text says that the king “reigned over Judah seven years and six months” as opposed to 2,700 days. It's the same with the two other time prophecies: None is expressed in the common way that time is expressed.

Read Luke 4:25 and James 5:17. Compare them with Daniel 7:25. Which ones were dealing with literal time, and how was that literal time expressed in contrast with the one expressing prophetic time?

Given what we've studied, why is the day-year principle so important to us as Adventists? What would happen to our whole prophetic foundation were this principle thrown out?

Further Study: Scholars also have shown evidence for the link between days and years in Hebrew poetry, where days are used in parallel to years, showing a semantic link between the two time periods:

“Are thy **days** as the days of man?
Are thy **years** as man’s days.” —Job 10:5

“**Days** should speak, and multitude of **years**
should teach wisdom.” —Job 32:7

“I have considered the **days** of old, the
years of ancient times.”—Psalm 77:5

In each of these cases, days and years were saying basically the same thing; that is, they were different words used to convey the same idea. Though these parallels don’t prove, in and of themselves, the day-year principle, they do show that in the Hebrew mind, days and years were linked.

Discussion Questions:

- 1** As a class, go over this week’s lesson until everyone is grounded in the validity of the day-year principle.
- 2** As a class, answer this question: Why does the Bible employ so many symbols? What might be the reason for the use of symbols?
- 3** What other evidence can one find in the Bible for the day-year principle?
- 4** Think about this: We have been here almost two thousand years since the death of Christ. How do these time prophecies, as understood through the day-year principle, help us realize that we are indeed living near the end and that we shouldn’t expect another two thousand years to pass before Christ returns? That is, how do these prophecies help us understand where we are in the history of the world and why we should know that Christ’s coming is near?

Jeofelo's Change of Plans

Jeanne Zachary

Jeofelo was determined to lead a better life than his parents. They had worked hard to feed their five children, and life in the Philippines was difficult for them. Jeofelo studied hard and did well in school. While in high school he joined a Christian youth group. A visiting church leader noticed his energy and alertness and invited him to participate in church services and to consider training to become a clergy.

Jeofelo accepted the invitation and enrolled in a seminary. When he finally graduated, he basked in the pride of his family. Over the next four years he served several congregations.

One day he visited an optometrist to get a new pair of glasses. The young optometrist impressed him with her kindness. He wanted to get to know her better.

Jeofelo learned that the young optometrist was a Seventh-day Adventist Christian, but he did not care. He was determined to marry her. Finally she accepted, provided she would be free to retain her faith. The couple agreed that they each would retain their beliefs; their children would worship with their mother.

A friend gave Jeofelo a book called *From Sabbath to Sunday*. But he was determined not to read it.

One day while riding his motorcycle, he collided with a farm vehicle and was seriously injured. He spent weeks in the hospital and two months at home. While recovering, he saw the book lying on a shelf. With little else to do, he began reading it. He was impressed with the careful scholarship and began to check each point with the Bible. Finally he had to admit that Saturday was truly the Sabbath of the Lord. But he refused to follow what he had learned. He had worked too long and too hard to earn his clergy title.

Within the next two years Jeofelo wrecked two more vehicles. After the third accident he concluded that God was protecting him for a reason. He picked up his Bible and let it fall open. His eyes fell on Matthew 16:26: "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" (NIV).

Convinced that God was speaking to him, he asked his wife to call her pastor and invite him to study with him. Within a few months he gave up his title and accepted his position as a child of God.

Jeofelo is studying to become a Bible teacher; Jeanne Zachary lives in California.

Rome *and* Antiochus



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Isa. 55:11; Matt. 13:10-13; Luke 2:1; Luke 21:20, 21; John 11:48; John 16:12; 2 Pet. 1:19.*

Memory Text: “And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed” (*Luke 2:1*).

The subject of the sanctuary was the key that unlocked the mystery of the disappointment of 1844. It opened to view a complete system of truth, connected and harmonious, showing that God's hand had directed the great advent movement and revealing present duty as it brought to light the position and work of His people. As the disciples of Jesus after the terrible night of their anguish and disappointment were ‘glad when they saw the Lord,’ so did those now rejoice who had looked in faith for His second coming.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 423.

Indeed, the 1844 pre-Advent judgment is a crucial doctrine of the Adventist Church; not only does it explain the disappointment of 1844, it helps us understand who we are today and why we exist as a movement. With so much at stake, our enemy is constantly at work to undermine us, and if he can undo our belief in 1844, he will greatly succeed. Thus, it is important that we as Adventists be firmly rooted in this teaching, as well as be prepared to answer challenges against it.

This week we'll continue to look at more Bible texts that will help solidify us in our understanding of this key teaching, which, when properly understood, reveals to us in grander light the wonderful saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in view of what He has done for us at the Cross and is doing for us now in heaven.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, September 2.*

Rome in the New Testament

So far, we've been dealing with a span of empires, beginning with Babylon and ending with God's kingdom. We noticed that of the five kingdoms revealed, four were named. The only one not named was Rome, both in its pagan and papal stages, even though in most of the prophecies more time was spent describing Rome than any other kingdom.

Though Rome itself might not have been mentioned by name in the Old Testament, its existence and power dominated the New. The Gospels, the book of Acts, and the Epistles all unfold in a Roman environment. Daniel mentions by name Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and God's final kingdom, while the New Testament openly names Rome, the power that arises after Greece and dominates the world during the time of Christ and afterward.

Look up these texts (*Matt. 22:17, Luke 2:1, Luke 3:1, John 11:48, Acts 25:21*). **Which empire is clearly depicted as the dominant power?**

Notice in Luke 2:1 that "all the world" should be taxed. Only a world power could tax all the world. How interesting, too, that Daniel 7:23 says that the fourth beast will "devour the whole earth"; that is, the fourth beast is obviously a world empire, such as Rome.

Read Matthew 24:15 and Luke 21:20, 21. What event is Jesus talking about here?

In the context of the destruction of Jerusalem, *by the Romans*, Jesus linked the Roman Empire to the book of Daniel. Jesus, therefore, not only points to Rome but places it within Daniel itself. Phrasing linked to "the abomination of desolation" spoken of by Jesus, in reference to Daniel, occurs three times in Daniel (*Dan. 9:27, 11:31, 12:11*). Thus, Jesus links the Roman Empire to Daniel, making it even more obvious that Rome is that great power that arises in Daniel 2, 7, and 8, after Greece and extends to "the end."

Though Daniel doesn't name Rome, the New Testament does. Thus, following the Protestant formula of the Bible being its own interpreter, we find all four empires depicted in Daniel named in the Bible.

Look at how clear and unambiguous these prophecies are. How could the Lord have made it any easier for us to believe? And yet, we so often struggle with faith. Why is that so, and what things can you do on a daily basis to help keep away doubt?

The Two Little Horns

In both Daniel 7 and Daniel 8, a little-horn power figures prominently. A comparison of their characteristics not only shows that they are the same power but helps fortify our position on just what that power is. A lot of information is given about these little horns, more details about them than any of the other major kingdoms depicted. This should tell us two things: (1) These little horns obviously symbolize an important power in the prophetic history of the world, and (2) the Lord wants us to know for sure just what power these represent.

Below we will look at similarities between the two little horns. As you study these characteristics and similarities, think about how these characteristics help affirm us in our interpretation of this power:

1. Both are depicted by the same symbol, a horn (*Daniel 7:8, 20; 8:9*).
2. Both are persecuting powers (*Dan. 7:21, 25; 8:10, 24*).
3. Both are self-exalting and blasphemous (*Dan. 7:8, 20, 25; 8:10, 11, 25*).
4. Both target God's people (*Dan. 7:25, 8:24*).
5. Both have aspects of their activity delineated by prophetic time (*Dan. 7:25; 8:13, 14*).
6. Both extend until the time of the end (*Dan. 7:25, 26; 8:17, 19*).
7. Both will be supernaturally destroyed (*Dan. 7:11, 26; 8:25*).

When you have two powers represented by the same prophetic symbol and who carry out the same basic actions in the same time slot in the flow of visions, it seems more than obvious that we are talking about the same power. Also, considering the descriptions of this power, the burden of proof lies heavily on those who interpret this power as anything other than Rome.

What Bible prophecies have been especially helpful in establishing your faith? Why not review them again? The more you go through them, the more they will encourage you. Why not share them with someone who might need some encouragement now?

The Rome Factor

However obvious the identification of that final earthly power, the question arises, Why wasn't it named? How much easier it would be and how much futile and false speculation would have been saved had it simply been named as were Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and God's final kingdom. As mentioned earlier (see lesson 3), some claim that Rome wasn't named because Daniel simply recounted history that already happened as opposed to predicting it before it unfolded. In other words, the accounts of the lions' den, the fiery furnace, and the dreams and visions were fables. As we've already seen, that's a false and bankrupt idea.

Read the following texts (*Dan. 12:4, 9; Matt. 13:10-13; Luke 10:24; John 16:12; 2 Pet. 1:19*). **What idea is conveyed here about the timing in which the Lord reveals certain truths to His people?**

As the above texts show, God doesn't reveal all truth to all people at once. Light is often given in a progressive manner; more and more truth unfolds in accordance with God's perfect timetable.

Maybe, then, Rome isn't directly named not because Daniel wasn't able to tell the future but because the Lord knew that Rome would be in sole control of the Scriptures for centuries and that had the leaders in Rome seen the empire distinctly named, *particularly in such a bad light*, they could have destroyed the Scriptures or the book of Daniel. As it was, not sure what it was talking about, they could give the text identities other than itself. Meanwhile, the Lord kept that identity hidden, knowing that He would at the right time raise up people, the Protestant Reformers, who would discover the true identity of the little-horn power. (Daniel does say that his words would be "closed up and sealed till the time of the end" [*Dan. 12:9*].) Many of the Reformers did, indeed, see Rome in that role!

In fact, Jews who lived during the time of the Roman Empire would often interpret these same prophecies like this: Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and—Edom. Why Edom? Because, afraid of the Romans, the Jews hid the interpretation, something that the Lord in His divine providence and foresight did hundreds of years earlier in Daniel itself.

What lessons can we learn here about how we need to deal delicately with people? In our zeal to be honest, how can we also be prudent and not say things, though perhaps true, that others might not yet be ready to hear?

The Date of Daniel

“In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first” (*Dan. 8:1*).

According to the above text, at what time in history did the prophet Daniel live?

As we’ve seen, the prophecies in Daniel provide powerful evidence not only for the existence of God but for the validity of the Scriptures as God’s Word. Thus, from the earliest days of the Christian church, opponents have sought to undermine, even destroy, confidence in the Scriptures, especially the prophecies. As we said earlier, one attempt was to claim that Daniel was not written in the time frame in which it places itself but many centuries later, a position we as Seventh-day Adventists emphatically reject. Unfortunately, we are among a small number of Christians who do so.

Read the following texts: Daniel 1:1, 2:1, 7:1, 8:1, 9:1. In what time frame does the book of Daniel date itself? What conclusion can one draw about the position of those who, despite this clear testimony, nevertheless insist that the book of Daniel was written many centuries later? See also *Isa. 55:11, Mark 15:28, John 17:17, Acts 1:16*.

Directly tied with this attempt to date the book of Daniel centuries after it dates itself is the attempt to link the identity of the little horn in Daniel 8 with an ancient Greek ruler named Antiochus Epiphanes. Most students today accept this interpretation; almost any modern commentary will use that interpretation. As we’ll see, it cannot possibly be correct. Many who accept this interpretation do so not realizing the rationale behind it, which is that Daniel was not written when it says it was but much later. Either way, because this view is prevalent, we need to look at it.

What are other ways in which our faith in the Scriptures can be undermined, either overtly or subtly? More important, what steps can you take to defend yourself against anything that can, bit by bit, weaken your trust in the veracity and inspiration of the Bible?

Antiochus

Read Daniel 8:5-8, the vision of the he-goat, and then Daniel 8:21, 22, Gabriel’s interpretation of the he-goat. According to the prophecy, what was the fate of the he-goat?

History bears testimony to the amazing accuracy of this prophecy. The he-goat, of course, was ancient Greece, and after the death of Alexander the Great, the empire split apart, for a time, into “four kingdoms” (*Dan. 8:22*) under four generals. One of the kingdoms was the Seleucid, which lasted from about 301 B.C. until about 146 B.C. Among these kings, one was named Antiochus Epiphanes. He was the eighth Seleucid king (175–164 B.C.); twenty more followed after him. Through the conquests of his predecessors, he, for a short while attained control of Judea, defiled the temple in Jerusalem for about three years, and persecuted the Jews. He died, apparently from natural causes, in a later campaign (164 B.C.) after being driven out of Jerusalem. He is the one who most interpreters believe is the little horn.

1. The Medo-Persian ram became “great” (vs. 4); the Grecian goat “very great” (vs. 8); the little horn became “exceeding great” (vs. 9). How does this description and comparison of empires automatically disqualify Antiochus as the little horn?

2. According to Daniel 8:17, 19, 26, the prophecy dealt with end-time things, and the little horn was the last power presented in the vision. Because he died in 164 B.C., why can Antiochus not be the little horn?

3. According to Daniel 8:25, the little horn would be “broken without hand,” a phrase we saw earlier that—through parallelism with Daniel 2:34, 45—depicted a supernatural, cataclysmic destruction. Why, given what’s written above about his demise, does Antiochus not fit again?

Despite the evidence (and there’s more) against Antiochus, Adventists are almost alone in the Christian world in our position opposed to that interpretation. What does this tell us about our need to stand firm in our beliefs, despite a majority of voices against our position? In what other ways do you have to stand firm for a position that is not popular?

Further Study: Another attempt to make the impossible fit of Antiochus centers around the argument concerning the origin of the little horn in Daniel 8:8, 9. “Therefore the he goat waxed very great; and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven. And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.” Arguing for Antiochus, some say that the little horn arose from one of the “four notable ones,” meaning the nations that arose after the death of Alexander the Great. That would be, they claim, Antiochus, not Rome.

The argument falls apart on a few grounds. First, the word *them* in the last phrase of verse 8 refers not to “four notable ones” but “four winds of heaven.” Immediately after, the text says that out of “one of them” came forth a little horn. One of what? The closest phrase is “the four winds of heaven,” the obvious choice. (Some argue that horns grow out of horns, not winds, though when was the last time anyone ever saw a horn grow out of another horn?)

Second, Hebrew grammar, with feminine and masculine nouns, works very well linking the “one of them” with the “four winds of heaven”; it doesn’t work at all linking it with the “notable ones.”

Finally, even if that argument about origins had some validity, the other factors would show the impossibility of the Antiochus interpretation.

Discussion Questions:

1 Why are these issues so important? What difference does it make? As a class, discuss this point: If, for instance, the little-horn power were Antiochus, then the whole prophecy of Daniel 8 would have been fulfilled and completed about one hundred fifty years before Christ. If so, what would that mean for us, as Seventh-day Adventists? Why do you think that the vast majority of the Christian world today holds to such an erroneous view of the little horn?

2 Discuss as a class the issue of what it means to hold doctrines that most other Christians don’t accept. Should this bother us? Discuss your answers.

Standing for God

Charlotte Ishkanian

In some parts of western Africa, choosing to convert to Christianity in these areas can be, literally, a matter of life and death. Amo* is a Fulani, part of a semi-nomadic tribe of cattle herders. One evening as he walked through his village, he heard someone speaking through a loud speaker. Curious, he approached the source of the broadcast and found a few people listening to a man talking about Jesus. Amo kept his distance, knowing that even being seen near a Christian could mean trouble. But the speaker's message drew him to listen, so he stood a safe distance away and absorbed the speaker's message. That message touched off a battle for Amo's heart.

Every night the Global Mission pioneer presented a message of God's love. When he spoke about the Sabbath, Amo was surprised, for he had discovered references to the Sabbath in his religion's holy book. He wanted to ask a religious teacher about it, but he feared the consequences. However when he listened to the pioneer describe the Sabbath, he was thrown into turmoil. He remembered that his holy book pronounces a curse on Sabbath breakers. But he knew of no faithful follower of his religion who kept the Sabbath. What should he do?

When the pioneer invited those who would follow God and keep His Sabbath to come forward, Amo stepped out of his hiding place and walked to the front of the crowd. He knew that his decision could cost his life, but he felt an unspeakable inner peace.

Your mission offerings help share the good news about Jesus in difficult areas such as Amo's country.

**Amo is a pseudonym. Charlotte Ishkanian is editor of Mission.*

The Sanctuary and the Little Horn



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Exod. 27:20; 29:42; Num. 4:7; 28:6; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:24-27; 8:1-5; 9:1-14, 24.*

Memory Text: “Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (*Hebrews 8:1, 2*).

In the past few weeks, we have seen the emphasis that Daniel 8 has placed on the little horn. Obviously, it's an issue of great importance, considering the prominence given not only to its description but also to its explanation later in the chapter.

This week we're going to look even more closely at the little horn, focusing specifically on its attack against the “prince of the host,” the “daily,” and “the place of his sanctuary.”

We're going to see, too, how central the idea of the heavenly sanctuary is to the chapter, for it's only in the context of the heavenly sanctuary and its services that we can get a better understanding of the little horn's assault.

This week's study also will help set the foundation for what will come later: a deeper look at the role of the sanctuary, and particularly its cleansing, in the context of the gospel and the entire plan of salvation, which, of course, leads into the great hope for all Christians everywhere: the second coming of Jesus.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, September 9.*

“Even to the Prince of the Host”

Read Daniel 8:9-12, which focuses on the activity of the little horn. What are the specific things, according to the text, that the little-horn power does?

In an earlier lesson (week 5), we noticed how the direction of the little horn’s activity had shifted, first from a horizontal direction (*vs. 9*), which depicted a military or political expansion, to a vertical one (*vss. 10-12*), which revealed a religious dimension. This, we said, showed the two phases of Rome, first pagan, then papal.

Look again at the description of the little horn’s activities in verses 10-12. These actions, obviously, aren’t to be taken literally but symbolically. Without attempting to understand each symbol, what kind of action is being portrayed here? What kind of attack is the little horn launching?

Look at some of the key words seen in this attack: “host” (*Neh. 9:6, Luke 2:13*); “heaven” (*Matt. 6:1, Heb. 9:24*); “prince” (*Isa. 9:6, Dan. 12:1, Acts 3:15, 5:31*); “daily” (*Num. 4:16, 28:24, 29:6*); “sanctuary” (*Exod. 25:8; Heb. 8:1, 2*); “truth” (*Job 9:2, John 14:6, 1 Tim. 2:4, James 5:19*). All these words, filled with religious and spiritual meaning, are what come under attack by the little horn. Thus, more than anything else, it’s the religious attack by the little horn that plays great prominence here, and that’s the focus of the vision. The Lord wants us to see the religious dimension of the little horn and that its activities are in a religious sphere. This activity is seen again in the explanation in Daniel 8:23-25, in which the little horn specifically is said to persecute “the mighty and the holy people,” as well as to stand up against “the Prince of princes.”

In your own experience, what are the ways that your faith and beliefs have come under attack? Which has been the greatest challenge to you? What has been your most effective means of defense?

The Sanctuary

Compare the kind of beast-symbols found in Daniel 7 and in Daniel 8. What great difference do you see between them?

Not only are the beasts in Daniel 8 sanctuary animals, they are among the animals used on the Day of Atonement (*Leviticus 16*). This provides the first link to the book of Leviticus, which spends more time dealing with the sanctuary service than any other book in the Old Testament.

Read again Daniel 8:10-12 (see also vs. 13, 14). What is the center of the little horn's attack?

It's clear that the sanctuary is under attack.

First, the little horn takes away the "daily." The Hebrew word translated "daily" (*tamid*) also means "continual," or "perpetual," and it is used numerous times in direct reference to the day-by-day ministry of the priests in the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary service. This, then, is an unmistakable reference, not only to the sanctuary service but to the daily ministry in that service (see *Exod. 27:20, 29:42, Num. 4:7, 28:6*).

In Daniel 8:11, it said that the "place" or the "foundation" of His sanctuary was cast down. That word *place* is found in numerous texts, all in reference to the sanctuary, or to God's dwelling place, which also has a link to the sanctuary (*Exod. 15:17, 1 Kings 8:13, 2 Chron. 6:2, Isa. 18:4*).

Then there are, of course, the references to the "sanctuary" itself, found not only in verse 11 but also in verses 13 and 14. These verses alone show clearly how the sanctuary, which was the earthly model of the plan of salvation, was under attack.

Given the time frame of this phase of the little horn, which arose around the fifth century A.D., why can this not be an attack on the earthly sanctuary?

Because the earthly sanctuary had been destroyed in A.D. 70, this was an attack on the heavenly sanctuary. The little horn, of course, would not get into heaven, so this, instead, would have been an attack on all that was symbolized by the sanctuary, which is the plan of salvation. Thus, the little horn attacks not only God's people but the plan of salvation, as well.

The Attack

Daniel, more than five hundred years before Christ, is shown in vision the essence of Rome's later attack on "the truth," which it cast "to the ground" (*Dan. 8:12*). Among other things, the little horn waxes great, even against the "Prince of the host," Jesus.

At the time of Rome's attack, where was Christ, and what was He doing? *Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:24-27; 8:1-5; 9:11-14, 24.*

The little horn, as we saw, waxed great, even to the "Prince of the host," who is obviously Christ. Its attack, too, centered against not just the people of God but against the sanctuary and its foundation and services, in this case, specifically, the "daily" service.

It's very important to keep in mind that Christ, "the Prince of the host," is now ministering for us in the heavenly sanctuary, which is under attack by the little horn. Again, the language was symbolic; the little horn didn't actually get into heaven, any more than it physically cast the "truth" or the "place of his sanctuary" to the ground.

Thus, this attack by the little horn was also an attack on the plan of salvation, which began with the death of Christ (symbolized by the death of the animals in the sanctuary service), and which was followed by Christ's high-priestly ministry (symbolized by the ministry of the priesthood in the earthly service). Everything symbolized by that sanctuary has come under attack by the little horn.

How did it do this?

Christ is now our High Priest, interceding for us in the heavenly sanctuary. A careful study of the Roman system shows how the entire structure of the church, with its priesthood, mediation, and mass, usurps everything that Christ has done for us or is doing for us now. Everything that we as believers would attribute directly to God and Christ has been commandeered by the Roman Church itself, which according to the text "magnified itself" (*Dan. 8:11, RSV*), even to Christ Himself (see Friday's lesson).

What is the role of the organized church in the plan of salvation? How can you be an active participant in helping the church fulfill its role? At the same time, what are the limits of what the church can do for you in your walk with the Lord?

The “Daily”: Part 1

As you read about the little horn’s attack in Daniel 8:10-12 on the sanctuary, it says specifically that the little horn took away “the daily.” Though many translations in English supply the word “sacrifice” or “burnt offerings,” the text does not say that. Though this addition shows that translators were able to see the clear link with the sanctuary, the added word is not warranted. The word “daily” (see Monday’s lesson) dealt not just with the daily sacrifices but with the entire daily operations of the earthly sanctuary.

What part of the “daily” service (translated as “always,” “continual,” “perpetual”) is depicted in each of these texts? Also, in what part of the sanctuary are most of these activities taking place?

Exod. 25:30

Exod. 27:20

Exod. 30:8

Lev. 6:13

In these texts, the word *tamid* (translated “daily” or “the daily” in Daniel 8:11) modified each of these activities. Thus, though the *tamid* included the sacrifices, it included the day-by-day ministrations of the priesthood, which, according to the book of Hebrews, was just an “example and shadow of heavenly things” (*Heb. 8:5*). Those heavenly things, of course, were the spiritual realities of Christ’s high-priestly ministry; all these earthly activities, these shadows, were simply symbols of Christ ministering in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. Again, this is what has come under attack by the little horn.

Also notice, too, that these activities centered around the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary. The bread, the lampstand, and the incense were all in the first apartment; the sacrifice, of course, was at the altar outside it.

The important point, which will be seen later, is that none of the activities had anything to do with the Most Holy Place, the second apartment, which the high priest entered only once a year, when the sanctuary was cleansed.

What kind of “daily,” or “continual” activities are so important for your own spiritual growth? Why is the fact that they are done “daily” so important for that growth?

“The Daily”: Part 2

The earthly sanctuary service was a model of the heavenly; the sacrifices and the ministry of the priesthood were types, figures, mini-prophecies, as it were, of the death and high-priestly ministry of Jesus.

What does Hebrews 9:1-14 teach about the relationship between the earthly service and the heavenly one?

Students of the sanctuary service know that besides the daily ministration in the first apartment, once a year the high priest entered into the Most Holy Place to perform the “cleansing of the sanctuary” (*see Leviticus 16*). Because this happened only once a year, it’s often called “the yearly,” to contrast it with “the daily.” Hence, the entire sanctuary service could be placed broadly in two categories: the daily, first-apartment ministry, and the yearly, second-apartment ministry, during which the sanctuary was cleansed.

We’ve seen, too, that the little horn attacks the heavenly sanctuary, which was an attack on the plan of salvation itself. This, we believe, refers to the entire Roman Catholic system, which has usurped the role and prerogatives of God and Christ in the plan of salvation (see Friday’s lesson).

Now, an important question: Why was just the daily service, *the tamid*, specified as the object of the little horn’s attack? Why did the vision emphasize only one aspect of the sanctuary service, as opposed to both?

Read Daniel 8:14. How does this text help answer the above questions?

The little horn was able to attack only the “daily” because the “yearly,” the second-apartment ministry, which occurred when the sanctuary was cleansed, wasn’t in operation then. Not until the end of the 2,300 years, 1844, was the sanctuary to be cleansed and the “yearly” began.

Thus, in Daniel 8, both phases of Christ’s high-priestly ministry appear: “the daily,” which comes under attack by the little horn, and “the yearly,” which commences at the end of the 2,300 days. Both are brought to view in this chapter.

Imagine if every time you sinned, you had to sacrifice an innocent animal. What kind of lessons would that teach you about sin? Contrast the death of a goat to the death of the Son of God. What does His death tell us about the cost of sin? How seriously do you take sin in your own life?

Further Study: Below are quotes, all taken from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1995). As you read, keep in mind Daniel 8:11, 12 and the little horn’s usurpation of what belonged only to God and Christ.

“The power to ‘bind and loose’ connotes the authority to absolve sins. . . . Jesus entrusted this authority to the Church through the ministry of the apostles.”—No. 553.

“As sacrament, the Church is Christ’s instrument. ‘She is taken up by him also as the instrument for the salvation of all,’ ‘the universal sacrament of salvation.’”—No. 776.

“It is in the Church that ‘the fullness of the means of salvation’ has been deposited.”—No. 824.

“Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation.”—No. 846.

“The Church is catholic: she proclaims the fullness of the faith. She bears in herself and administers the totality of the means of salvation.”—No. 868.

“There is no offense, however serious, that the Church cannot forgive.”—No. 982.

“Were there no forgiveness of sins in the Church, there would be no hope of eternal life. Let us thank God who has given his Church such a gift.”—No. 983.

“By Christ’s will, the Church possesses the power to forgive the sins of the baptized.”—No. 986.

“Through the liturgy Christ, our redeemer and high priest, continues the work of our redemption in, with, and through His Church.”—No. 1096.

“Baptism is birth into the new life in Christ. In accordance with the Lord’s will, it is necessary for salvation, as is the Church herself, which we enter by Baptism.”—No. 1277.

Discussion Questions:

- 1** How do these quotes help us better understand the little horn’s usurpation of what belongs only to God?
- 2** As a class, discuss the question at the end of Tuesday’s lesson. What is the role of the church in the plan of salvation; what are the limits in what it can do for us? Why is the church a means to an end but not an end in itself?

The Strange Illness

Irina Polushkina

Irina grew up in an atheist home in the Ukraine. Shortly after her second child was born, she began to suffer severe back pain. The pain increased daily, and Irina lost several inches in height as her spine deteriorated. Her doctor was puzzled and could do little more than give her pain medication. She would have committed suicide, but the sight of her children's sweet faces kept her alive.

Her brother visited her and was horrified to see that his once-beautiful sister had lost her hair, her teeth, and her fingernails. "You came too late," Irina told her brother. "No one can help me."

"No, there is one Physician who can heal you," he replied, "and that is God. You do not have to leave home to consult Him, for you can speak to Him through prayer."

Irina was surprised at her brother's words, for he had been a strong Communist. But she listened as he explained that Jesus had created the world and cared for her. He gave her a New Testament and urged her to read it and to pray.

Irina found the New Testament hard to understand. She could not kneel to pray, so she lay on the floor and prayed, "If You love me, turn Your face to me and let me be healthy again."

Slowly Irina began to recover, and after 18 months she was well enough to return to work. She and her husband continued searching for God. They tried several churches but did not feel comfortable in any of them.

When Irina enrolled in a sewing class, she sat next to a woman who talked about God. Irina was eager to hear all this woman had to say. After class Irina asked the woman, "How can I find the truth?" The woman advised her to let the Bible lead her to the true church, which would follow all of God's commandments.

The next week Irina stayed after class to learn more. Her new friend talked about the Sabbath. Irina had never heard of the Sabbath before. Irina accepted her new friend's invitation to evangelistic meetings in a house church. Though the church was small, the people welcomed her warmly. Irina took some literature home to study with her husband. The couple attended the meetings together, and today they are members of the Adventist Church.

Part of a recent Thirteenth Sabbath Offering helped provide a new church in Irina's city. She and her fellow Adventists say "Thank you!"

Irina Polushkina lives in Sumy, Ukraine.

The Pre-Advent Judgment



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Deut. 25:1, 1 Kings 8:32, Ps. 51:1-4, Matt. 22:1-13, Heb. 9:22-24, Rev. 20:12, 22:12.*

Memory Text: “And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (*Revelation 22:12*).

Last week we looked at the pre-Advent judgment mostly in Daniel 8; this week we'll look at it again but from the perspective of Daniel 7 and some of the fascinating insights given to us there. As with the Gospels, we are given here more than just one rendering; both chapters contain crucial truths that need to be understood together. Each one, however enlightening, needs what the other has and, taken together, they reveal to us much about this judgment.

What's important to remember is that these chapters are not just deep theology or prophecy or history; instead, they together send a message to us, a message of hope, a message of promise. Together they tell us that no matter how bad things are, they aren't going to last; that despite appearances, the God who outlines for us the history of the world from Daniel's time until ours and into the future will bring about a wonderful end in which evil will be punished and the just shall be saved. How important, amid our study of charts and graphs and historical events, not to lose sight of this crucial point. How important, too, that as we share with the world these truths, we always keep before the people not just beasts and little horns but the wonderful promise of eternal life in God's kingdom that's been assured to us through the blood of Jesus and His death in our behalf.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, September 16.*

“Until the Ancient of Days Came”

One point that we touched on earlier this quarter was the importance of the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8. We saw (see week 5) four events depicted in the vision (Media-Persia, Greece, Rome, sanctuary cleansed); with the first three of obvious major importance, and with the vision climaxing with the cleansing of the sanctuary, it's more than obvious that whatever the cleansing of the sanctuary was, it had to be of major importance, as well.

Thus, the question is, What is this cleansing of the sanctuary, which was of such importance that it would be linked with the great empires that Scripture uses to depict the history of the world?

Daniel 8 itself doesn't yield much, in and of itself, on the answer; fortunately, the Lord didn't give us just Daniel 8. We have the obvious parallel with Daniel 7, which, in a great way, helps unfold the mysteries of Daniel 8.

We earlier saw the parallel between the judgment in Daniel 7 and the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8. Read Daniel 7:9, 10, 13, 14, 18, 21, 22, 26, 27. What does this judgment (the same as the cleansing of the sanctuary) lead to? What is the result of this judgment? What one specific point is emphasized over and over?

Notice a theme reiterated in these verses: The saints will be given God's kingdom, an everlasting kingdom that will not pass away as did all the ones before it. Over and over, after the depiction of various kingdoms, especially the blasphemous and persecuting little horn, the final victory of God and His saints is shown. In other words, no matter how bad things get or how long things take, in the end, as a result of this heavenly judgment/cleansing of the sanctuary, evil will be eradicated, and God's eternal kingdom will be established.

In this context, how much easier now to understand why the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8 climaxes the vision of these earthly powers. No wonder, too, it's shown to be so important!

All the other kingdoms came and went or finally will be destroyed. In contrast, the saints will “possess” (vs. 18) God's eternal kingdom. What does that promise mean to you? What's the first thing you want to do when you get there?

Judgment and the Little Horn

As Adventists, we understand the cleansing of the sanctuary as a judgment that involves those who have professed to be followers of Christ (*see Matt. 22:1-13*). We see this especially because in the earthly type of the cleansing of the sanctuary, the Day of Atonement (*see Leviticus 16*), the judgment centered around God's people.

Nevertheless, the question arises, Why in both Daniel 7 and in Daniel 8 is the judgment/sanctuary cleansing depicted in the context of the little horn, at least the phase of the little horn shown in the vision? What does the little horn have to do with the pre-Advent judgment?

Read again the texts looked at yesterday. What is the difference in the fate of the little horn and the fate of the “saints of the most high”? *See especially Dan. 7:22.*

It's very clear: The little horn is punished, condemned, while the saints are vindicated, exonerated. This is typical of the Hebrew concept of justice and judgment: It involved not just the punishment of the guilty or the vindication of the righteous—but both. Both are crucial elements of justice in Hebrew thinking, and both are seen here in this depiction of the pre-Advent judgment.

Read Deuteronomy 25:1 and 1 Kings 8:32. How do these two verses reveal the principles seen in Daniel 7 and Daniel 8 together?

Of course, the judgment in Daniel 7 results in the end of the little horn, but that's only because the judgment results in the Second Coming, which brings about the end of the whole world anyway (at least as we know it now). The point is that the judgment, though expressed here in the context of the little horn, a symbol of evil, involved more than just the little horn. What we see here are two elements: evil punished, the saints vindicated. It hardly would seem like justice if it were any other way.

The righteous vindicated, evil punished. That's God's promise. How should that promise help you through times when, so often, it seems only the opposite happens?

Theodicy, Again

In the first week of this quarter we looked at a term, *theodicy*, which meant the vindication of God in the face of evil. It's the idea that despite all the evil in the world, we can trust that God is good and righteous and just.

We saw, too, that sin and evil began in another part of the universe and that sin and the questions it raised weren't limited only to earth. On the contrary, the earth is merely the place where they are being played out. We also looked at the fact that other intelligences in the universe also are involved, and interested, in the question raised about sin and rebellion.

Read Daniel 7:9, 10 and then answer the following questions:

- 1 What event is taking place here?
- 2 Where is it taking place?
- 3 Before whom?

Not only do we have a heavenly judgment scene here, a judgment that leads to the destruction of the little horn and the establishment of God's kingdom, this judgment takes place before a multitude of heavenly beings. "Ten thousand times ten thousand" is a way of depicting an uncountable multitude. Thus, what we see here is the onlooking universe watching God execute the judgment that leads to the establishment of His eternal kingdom.

Keeping in mind this judgment scene in Daniel 7, read Psalm 51:1-4 and Romans 3:4. How do these texts fit in with the judgment as revealed in Daniel 7?

The crucial point to remember here is that God is judging His people in an open way before the onlooking universe. And He's going to do it in a manner that, when it's over, it will be said that "you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge" (*Ps. 51:4, NIV*).

How open and transparent are you in all your dealings and judgments with others? If you're not, why not, and what does your answer tell you about the quality of those dealings? What might you need to change?

Pre-Advent Judgment

Read Daniel 12:1, Matthew 16:27, and Revelation 20:12. Each, in its own way, talks about judgment. What evidence can you find in these texts that shows why this judgment is *before* the Second Coming; that is, a pre-Advent judgment?

If, at the Second Coming, the saints receive the kingdom and the little horn is destroyed, there must have been some sort of reckoning *before* the execution of the sentence. After all, even corrupt earthly courts do as much! How fair would it be to sentence someone and then, only after the sentence, have a trial and investigate the facts?

If, when Christ returns, “my reward is with me, to give every man as his work shall be” (*Rev. 22:12*) and we all are to be judged by our works (*Eccles. 12:13, 14; 1 Cor. 3:13; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 20:12*), then it’s fairly obvious that there must be a judgment prior to the Second Coming. Or, as Adventists phrase it—a pre-Advent, or investigative, judgment. (After all, what kind of judgment prior to a sentence doesn’t entail an investigation of some kind?)

Read carefully, again, the judgment scene as depicted in Daniel 7 (if need be, look at some of the previous charts that parallel the chapters). Putting aside any of the numbers and dates, why is this so clearly a pre-Advent judgment? In fact, what evidence do you find in the texts that hint at an investigation? See also *Ps. 56:8, 69:28, Dan. 12:1, Rev. 13:8, 20:12*.

We can see, then, from Daniel 7 that there is, indeed, a massive pre-Advent judgment, a judgment that leads not only to the demise of the little horn but to the end of this world and the inauguration of the next, in which the saints live forever in God’s eternal kingdom. What’s depicted here is, obviously, an event of tremendous importance, an event in which the eternal destiny of untold numbers is involved. No wonder we deem the judgment-hour message as crucial to what we believe as Adventists.

The Heavens Purified

Read Hebrews 9:22-24 and then answer the following questions:

1. What two sanctuaries are being talked about here?
2. What parallel is being drawn between them; that is, what is the author saying that must happen to both sanctuaries?

These texts have baffled non-Adventist scholars because of the clear reference to the idea that the heavenly sanctuary itself needed to be cleansed. “One might conclude that the earthly sanctuary was cleansed because its heavenly counterpart also was to be cleansed.” —Craig Koester, *Hebrews*, Anchor Bible Series (New York: Doubleday, 2001), p. 427.

In fact, the Greek word in Hebrews 9:23 for “purified,” or “cleansed” comes from the same Greek word used in an ancient Greek translation of Daniel 8:14. Thus, those ancient Greeks who, before the time of Christ, translated the Old Testament understood the Hebrew in Daniel 8:14 to mean that the sanctuary was to be cleansed; years later, the author of Hebrews had the same idea, however different the immediate context: Just as the earthly sanctuary was cleansed, so must the heavenly. Indeed, the whole point of the earthly cleansing was to point to the greater one, the real one in the heavenly sanctuary.

Look again at Daniel 8:14. Considering the time frame of this prophecy, why must this cleansing of the sanctuary be the same cleansing that the author of Hebrews referred to?

In Jewish thought, the Day of Atonement, when the sanctuary was cleansed, was also the great day of judgment, the time when people had their last chance to repent before facing judgment. In fact, on the Day of Atonement Jews still sometimes say this blessing to one another: “May you be sealed in the book of life forever.”

Why is Christ’s righteousness covering you, by faith, your only assurance that, indeed, in the day of judgment you will be sealed in the book of life forever?

Further Study: In Jewish thought, what happens on the Day of Atonement, when the sanctuary is to be cleansed? Compare the quotes below with how Ellen White describes the pre-Advent judgment in *The Great Controversy*, as well as the images that are seen in the judgment scene of Daniel 7.

“God, seated on His throne to judge the world, at the same time Judge, Pleader, Expert, and Witness, openeth the Book of Records; it is read, even man’s signature [name] being found therein. The great trumpet is sounded; a still small voice is heard; angels shudder, saying, this is the day of judgment. . . . On the Day of Atonement, it is sealed who shall live and who shall die.”—Quoted in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, “The Day of Atonement.”

Some prayers uttered on the Day of Atonement read like this: “Justify me in the judgment. . . . O silence the accuser, and suffer the advocate to take his place . . . and in consequence of his pleading, declare, I have pardoned. . . . O blot out the transgression of the people that have been saved. . . . He, the Ancient of Days, sits as Judge. . . . In the book of life . . . may we be sealed by Thee.”

Discussion Questions

- 1 Think about all that God already has done for us, especially in the Person of Jesus. Yet, despite all this, in order to ensure that all the universe sees His justice and fairness in dealing with sin and rebellion, He allows Himself to be judged on how He judges. What does that tell us about the character of God and why He is so worthy of our praise, worship, and fealty?
- 2 If you believed that folks go immediately to heaven or hell at death, why would all this talk of a pre-Advent judgment, or any kind of future judgment, sound silly? What does this tell us about how interlocked many of our beliefs are?
- 3 Do you know people who are struggling with our understanding of pre-Advent judgment? Why not, as a class, plan a house meeting in which, after prayer and fellowship and food, you can share some of the things you have been learning?

The Bicycling Evangelist

Charlotte Ishkanian

Eulogio Masa is a farmer living in a village in northwestern Argentina. Several years ago he and his brother, Geraldo, traveled to the city of Tucuman to visit their brother, Francisco. Francisco had become a Seventh-day Adventist and invited his brothers to visit his church. They accepted and were so impressed with the message they heard that they stayed in Tucuman for six weeks to study the Bible. Before they returned home, both brothers were baptized.

Eulogio and Geraldo shared their new understanding of the Bible with their families. No Adventists lived in their area, so the families met in their homes to study and worship. In time they built a little church on their land, making everything by hand. They formed bricks from mud and dried them in the sun. Their burrow pulled the wagon carrying the bricks to the building site and hauled the water to make mortar. When the church was finished, the brothers called a pastor to dedicate the church and baptize their families.

The brothers shared their faith in surrounding villages. When Geraldo died, Eulogio carried on alone. He pedaled his bicycle over dirt roads and along narrow paths to bring God's love to others.

He found some people in the village of Babilonia, 13 miles from his home, who wanted to learn more about God. Eulogio rode his bike there every Sunday to study the Bible with them. One woman believed, but her husband was not interested. When he became sick and the doctors could not help him, his wife urged him to pray. He prayed, and God healed him. He and his wife were baptized together. A congregation sprouted in Babilonia that now reaches out to its neighbors.

Eulogio continues to ride the dirt roads of northwestern Argentina, telling people that Jesus is coming soon. He has led at least 50 people to Jesus and raised up three churches. "As long as God gives me strength, I will share this great news," he says.

Our Sabbath School mission offerings help supply lay evangelists with materials to share God's love with others.



Eulogio Masa (left) is a lay evangelist living in Mama Puka, Argentina. Charlotte Ishkanian is editor of Mission.

The Gospel *and* Judgment



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Leviticus 16; Rom. 8:1, 34; Heb. 6:20; 7:25; 9:24; 1 Pet. 1:2, 18, 19.*

Memory Text: “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (*1 John 2:1*).

As Adventists, we believe that since 1844 we have been living in the antitypical day of atonement. This means that the earthly day of atonement was simply a model, a type, of this true day of atonement. In the same way that the animal sacrifices were symbols of the Cross, the earthly Day of Atonement was a symbol of the real one, the one inaugurated in 1844 by Christ's work of judgment in the heavenly sanctuary.

This, of course, is good news. After all, what is atonement other than the work of God saving us through Christ's blood? The law can't atone; obedience can't atone; character can't atone. Atonement comes only one way, through the Cross.

If, then, we are living in the day of atonement, shouldn't that be good news? Shouldn't any “day” dedicated to atonement, to God's work of saving us, be something we should be thankful for? Shouldn't we be rejoicing in the hope of living in the day of atonement?

Of course. The judgment is good news because it forms an inseparable part of “the good news”; it is the climactic application of the Cross in our behalf. This week we'll look at the gospel and the judgment, because it's only through the lens of the gospel that we can fully see just what the judgment means for us.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, September 23.*

We Must All Stand

As we saw in week 2, the Bible is clear that there is a judgment and that this is a judgment by works, a judgment where our works come under scrutiny. (After all, what is a judgment without such a scrutiny?) Remember, Jesus said that we shall give an account of “every idle word” (*Matt. 12:36*). *Every* idle word? And is this not the same Lord who said that the “hairs of your head are all numbered” (*Matt. 10:30*), who knows when a sparrow falls to the ground (*Matt. 10:29*), and who said in His Word that He shall bring “every work into judgment, with every secret thing” (*Eccles. 12:14*)? *Every* work? *Every* secret thing? Thus, the whole idea of a scrutiny of works, an investigation in judgment, is biblical.

But more important is the question, How could any sinner stand when *every* idle word, *every* secret thing, comes into judgment? It’s a pretty frightening thought, standing before God in a judgment when everything you have ever done comes under review, especially before a God who, in His holiness, is a “consuming fire” (*Deut. 4:24*). What person, no matter how obedient, righteous, or faithful, has the kind of record that could put him or her in good stead with such a God?

Read Romans 8:34, Hebrews 6:20, 7:25, 9:24, and 1 John 2:1. How do they answer the above question?

The good news of the judgment is that Jesus, in His righteousness, gets us through the judgment because He stands there in our place. This is what His intercession, His high-priestly ministry, is all about. Otherwise, all of us would be lost because none of us, no matter our works, has enough righteousness to stand before a Holy God. Unless we are clothed in a perfect righteousness that none of us possess or could ever earn, we would have to stand in our own works, our own righteousness; and because we are all sinners, we would all be condemned.

“Man cannot meet these charges himself. In his sin-stained garments, confessing his guilt, he stands before God. But Jesus our Advocate presents an effectual plea in behalf of all who by repentance and faith have committed the keeping of their souls to Him. He pleads their cause and vanquishes their accuser by the mighty arguments of Calvary.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 471. How does this quote from Ellen White help you better understand your only hope in the judgment?

Blood and Judgment

Central to our theology as Seventh-day Adventists is the sanctuary, both the earthly as a model of the plan of salvation and the heavenly as the place where Jesus is now ministering in our behalf the merits of His atoning death. We as Adventists believe—based on (1) the earthly sanctuary model, (2) the book of Hebrews, and (3) the prophecies in Daniel—that since 1844 Jesus has been in the Most Holy Place, where the judgment, clearly seen in Daniel 7, is now taking place.

Much of our understanding for this comes from the earthly Day of Atonement, in which once a year the high priest entered the Most Holy Place of the earthly sanctuary. This is found most clearly in Leviticus 16.

Read Leviticus 16. How many times is the word *blood* mentioned? What does the blood symbolize? See also *Heb. 9:12-14*.

Central to the Day of Atonement ritual was blood, a symbol for the blood of Jesus, shed in our behalf at the Cross. Also, because the Day of Atonement is the day of judgment, then judgment and atonement are closely linked. And, because atonement is, indeed, good news, judgment should be, as well. And it is, but only because of the blood, which represents the life and death of Jesus in our behalf.

Read Leviticus 17:11; Luke 22:20; Romans 5:9; Hebrews 10:19; 12:24; 13:20; 1 Peter 1:2, 18, 19. What do they tell us about the central role of blood in the plan of salvation?

Blood is a symbol of life; shed blood means death. All this was a symbol of Christ's life and death for us. And, because blood was shed and then ministered on the Day of Atonement, this tells us that, central to the Day of Atonement, are the life and death of Jesus—in our behalf! That's why the judgment, for Christians, is good news. We have a Substitute who stands in the presence of God "for us" (*Heb. 9:24*), now and especially in the judgment.

Imagine your case before God on Judgment Day—without a Substitute! What hope would you have? Why, then, must you have a Substitute stand in your stead in the judgment?

The Garment

Early in the quarter (week 2) we looked at the wedding parable in Matthew 22 as evidence for a pre-Advent judgment. Yet, there's more to this parable than just the timing; instead, it's a powerful revelation of what it means to be covered by the righteousness of Christ in the judgment and what it means not to be covered.

Read the parable (*Matt. 22:1-13*). **What ultimately made the difference between whether the man stayed or left?**

What does the garment symbolize? *See Isa. 61:10, Zech. 3:1-5.*

In this parable we see a clear example of someone who heeded the invitation to the wedding but not the conditions. He refused to accept what the owner offered him: the robe of Christ's perfect righteousness and, thus, upon investigation was found wanting.

Notice, the parable said that both the good and the bad came. It didn't say whether the man without the garment was good or bad. In one sense it made no difference: Before God in judgment, we all—"good" or "bad"—without a garment stand condemned. What the guest needed at the wedding is the same thing that we need in the judgment, something covering us; otherwise, we will be cast out where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. That covering, symbolized by the garment in the parable, is the righteousness of Jesus, credited to His followers by faith—and it is their only hope now and in the judgment.

Whether through the imagery of the blood, or the garment, the point is the same: We need something other than ourselves to get us through the judgment. And the good news is that, through the sacrifice of Jesus, we have all that we need: the righteousness of God Himself (*see Rom. 3:21, 22; 10:3; 2 Pet. 1:1*) credited to us by faith.

Ponder this question carefully: Have you accepted the invitation to the wedding but not the conditions? What are those conditions? Be prepared to talk about these conditions in class on Sabbath.

No Condemnation

Read Romans 8:1. What message is found in this text that is especially important for us, who face judgment?

The good news of the judgment is that we don't have to stand in our own righteousness. We can stand in the righteousness of Jesus. That we are judged by works doesn't mean that we are saved by them; we are saved, instead, only through the righteousness of Jesus, which is credited to us by faith, a faith that is always manifested by works. This righteousness covers us the moment we, through a complete surrender of ourselves to Christ, claim it for ourselves, and it stays with us (though not unconditionally) right through the judgment. After all, what good would being covered by that righteousness do any of us if we did not have it when we needed it the most, which would be in the judgment?

How does James 2 help us understand the role of works in the judgment?

But how do I know that I will have enough works to show that I have faith? That's a logical, but wrongly premised, question. It reflects that attitude of those who said, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" (*Matt. 7:22*), or of the Pharisee who said, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (*Luke 18:11, 12*).

Instead, our attitude should be that of the publican, who smote his breast saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner" (*Luke 18:13*). Those who have ever glimpsed the righteousness of Christ know that they must throw themselves on the mercy and grace of God and that their works—whatever they are, however much done out of a pure and loving heart—are never enough. This is why they have to live by faith, trusting in God's promises that He will save them because of Jesus and Jesus alone. It's the realization of the inadequacy of our works that drives us to faith and to the promises of salvation through Christ. And it's that faith—the faith that believes God's promises—that transforms the life, a transformation revealed in works.

Judged by Works; Saved by Faith

Follow the train of thought below, looking up the various texts. How does this help you understand what a judgment by works means for us who are saved by faith?

A professed follower's life comes up before God: Every work, every secret thing, every idle word comes into review (*Ps. 135:14, Eccles. 12:14, Matt. 12:36, Rom. 14:10-12, 2 Cor. 5:10, Heb. 10:30*). Who could stand before such a scrutiny? No one (*Rom. 3:23, Gal. 3:22, 1 Tim. 1:15, Rom. 3:10*). However, for the true followers of Christ, Jesus stands as their Advocate, their Representative, their Intercessor in heaven (*Rom. 8:34, Heb. 6:20, 7:25, 9:24, 1 John 2:1*). And though they have nothing in and of themselves to give them merit before God, though they have no works that are good enough to justify them before the Lord, their lives—however faulty, however defective—nevertheless reveal their true repentance and faith (*Matt. 7:24-27, John 14:15, James 2:14-20, 1 John 4:20, 5:3*). How they treated others, the poor, the needy, prisoners, how they forgave as they were forgiven, the words they spoke, the deeds they did (*Matt. 7:2; 12:36, 37; 18:23-35; 25:31-46*)—while these things never could justify them before God, while they never could answer the demands of a broken law, they reveal those who have accepted Christ as their Substitute—and His righteousness alone, which covers them like a garment, gets them through the judgment (*Leviticus 16; Zech. 3:1-5; Matt. 22:1-14; Rom. 8:1, 34; Heb. 9:24; 1 John 2:1*).

Or, as Ellen White so clearly expressed it: "But while we should realize our sinful condition, we are to rely upon Christ as our righteousness, our sanctification, and our redemption. We cannot answer the charges of Satan against us. Christ alone can make an effectual plea in our behalf. He is able to silence the accuser with arguments founded not upon our merits, but on His own."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 472. The futility of our works for salvation should cause us to lean totally on the mercy and merits of Christ. Then, out of love and thankfulness for the assurance of salvation that's ours through Christ, we serve Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and body, a service that's expressed in works. How else could it be?

How well do your works reflect your faith? Or, is that the problem: Your works only too well reflect your faith? What things do you need to repent of and change in order to reflect more fully the righteousness of Jesus, which is yours by faith?

Further Study: Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, “Joshua and the Angel,” vol. 5, pp. 467–476.

In the context of the saints in judgment, Ellen White writes: “Their only hope is in the mercy of God; their only defense will be prayer. As Joshua was pleading before the Angel, so the remnant church, with brokenness of heart and earnest faith, will plead pardon and deliverance through Jesus their Advocate. They are fully conscious of the sinfulness of their lives, they see their weakness and unworthiness, and as they look upon themselves they are ready to despair. The tempter stands by to accuse them, as he stood by to resist Joshua. He points to their filthy garments, their defective characters. He presents their weakness and folly, their sins of ingratitude, their unlikeness to Christ, which has dishonored their Redeemer.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 473. Again, in the same context: “Now he [Satan] points to the record of their lives, to the defects of character, the unlikeness to Christ, which has dishonored their Redeemer, to all the sins that he has tempted them to commit, and because of these he claims them as his subjects.

“Jesus does not excuse their sins, but shows their penitence and faith, and, claiming for them forgiveness, He lifts His wounded hands before the Father and the holy angels, saying: ‘I know them by name. I have graven them on the palms of My hands.’”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 484.

Discussion Questions

- 1 As a class, talk about your answers to the question at the end of Tuesday’s lesson.
- 2 Why do you think for so many people in the church, has the pre-Advent judgment been a cause of much fear and concern? Why must we keep the Cross at the center of our understanding of the judgment?
- 3 What can you do as a class to help all the members of your local church better understand the good news of the judgment?
- 4 What could you do for someone who is very discouraged about his or her walk with the Lord? How can you use what we’ve studied this week to give that person encouragement not to give up?

Sharing the Light

Thomas Alai

Thomas Alai lives in Papua New Guinea. One day he looked up from his work to find a friend standing near his desk. He had come to sell him a Bible. Thomas had planned to spend the 20 *kina* (about US\$6.50) in his pocket for beer, but instead he bought the Bible.

He opened the Bible and found a list of topics and Bible references. He began reading the Bible by topic. When he came to the Sabbath, he was puzzled. But as he read the verses listed, he was convinced that the Sabbath was God's appointed day of worship. Thomas asked an Adventist woman at work where to find the Adventist church, and the next Sabbath he attended worship.

He knew immediately this was where God wanted him. After church he told his wife where he had been. "I want to change my life," he said. She had heard that line before and was not convinced. However as weeks passed, she realized that her husband was indeed changing. While she did not attend church with him, she was glad he had found God.

An elderly church member told Thomas that he was working in a town not far away where only four Adventists lived. The man was teaching his neighbors the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, and the people wanted to know more. He asked Thomas to help him. So Thomas began visiting the village to help his friend teach the people.

The people told Thomas that the Protestant pastor in town did not want Adventists in his territory and planned to make trouble for them. Thomas prayed that God would intervene and calm the man down. One evening the Protestant pastor entered the home of one of his members. Thomas was there showing pictures to explain the Bible prophecies to a group of people. The pastor said nothing but sat down to watch the presentation.

After the presentation ended, Thomas was surprised to learn that the visitor was the Protestant pastor. Thomas approached the pastor and said, "I'm sorry, Pastor. I did not know you were here, or I would have greeted you properly." The pastor simply nodded and thanked Thomas for the presentation. He showed no signs of anger.

Thomas has continued meeting with the people, and several of them have been baptized. The believers meet in a simple shelter made of sago palm leaves. Thomas reports that some 45 people have asked for Bible studies in preparation for baptism.

Our mission offerings help start work in new areas around the world.

Thomas Alai lives in Lae, Papua New Guinea.

The Meaning of the Judgment Today



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Job 1:7-11; Ps. 73:1-17; Matt. 5:16; John 14:2; Acts 1:11; 1 Cor. 4:5, 9; Eph. 2:8-10; 3:10; 1 Thess. 4:14-18; Rev. 22:12.*

Memory Text: “Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (*Revelation 14:7*).

So far, we've covered a lot of ground in our study of the 1844 pre-Advent judgment. We have, we believe, firmly established the biblical basis for this judgment. Using everything from the earthly sanctuary model to the prophecies of Daniel to the life and death of Jesus and to the book of Hebrews, we've seen that, as Adventists, we are on solid biblical ground with our teaching on the 1844 judgment.

That being said, another question arises—So what? Here we are, in the twenty-first century; what does a judgment that began in 1844 mean for us today? What does it say to us as Seventh-day Adventists now? Why is it important for us to know and believe this teaching? What does it reveal about God and about the salvation He offers?

Sure, with our pioneers, the 1844 judgment helped answer the question of the Great Disappointment; it helped them understand what had just happened in regard to the Millerite prophecies. But that was then; this is now. How do we, today, relate to this prophecy, which began its fulfillment in a time when most of our great-grandparents weren't even born yet? This, our final week, looks at some of these questions.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, September 30.*

Judgment and Justice

Our world reeks of injustice; in every land, in every government, in every city, town, and village unfairness, inequity, and injustice, time and again, rear their ugly and evil heads. Probably no human being alive hasn't been stared down by the horrific visages of injustice and unfairness. To live in this sinful world is to face injustice; otherwise, it wouldn't be a sinful world.

Of course, the greatest injustice occurred at the Cross: Jesus, the sinless One, faced the punishment due all sinners. Thus, whatever injustices we suffer, we have the assurance that God, in the person of Christ, faced even worse.

Read Psalm 73:1-17. What's the point being made, and how does it relate to our understanding of the sanctuary and judgment?

Perhaps one of the most important points of the 1844-sanctuary doctrine is its teaching that there will be a judgment, a just judgment in which evil will be condemned and righteousness vindicated. Our judgment-hour message not only tells us about this judgment but tells us when it takes place. In other words, what the 1844 message says is that God's justice will not delay forever. He has promised to bring judgment, and "the hour of His judgments is come" (*Rev. 14:7*). The 1844 judgment is part of our message to the world that God's justice is coming; that we can trust Him and that evil will be recompensed and goodness vindicated, no matter how hard it is for us to see it now. In fact, the message tells the world that this judgment already has begun and that one day we will see the final results. For now, we just have to live by faith, awaiting the day of final justice and vindication.

Have you lately treated someone unfairly? If so, what can you do to make amends? Why should you make amends?

Vindication and God

We have, through the course of this quarter, touched on a crucial theme tied directly to the great controversy: the vindication of God in the face of evil. We even learned a fancy theological term for this idea: *theodicy*.

In this context the judgment is so important, because it tells us so much about the character of God. It tells us that God is willing to work openly in His dealing with sin, rebellion, and apostasy. We can trust God even when things seem really bad; that no matter how terrible the world is, our God can be trusted, for all His works and dealings will be open to the scrutiny of all the universe. We studied this in particular in week 12, for there we saw the whole idea of the judgment taking place before the onlooking universe. It's a theme worthy of more study, for in many ways it helps explain so much.

Look up the following texts. How do they, in their own way, teach the idea of the vindication of God?

Ps. 19:9

Rom. 3:26

1 Cor. 4:5

1 Cor. 13:12

What the pre-Advent judgment tells us is that, even now, the Lord is working openly before the onlooking universe. They, right now, are seeing the righteousness and fairness of God's judgment. In Adventist theology, we understand that our day will come, too, when we shall "know even as also I am known" (*1 Cor. 13:12*). We are, after all, told that "we shall judge angels" (*1 Cor. 6:3*); thus, the idea is that all things will be open to us, to our scrutiny, as well. In short, what the pre-Advent judgment tells us is that this process has already begun and that one day—just like the onlooking universe now—we will have all our questions answered, all issues about pain, suffering, and sin resolved, and so we, too, along with all God's creatures, will see the justice and righteousness of God in all His dealing with sin, evil, and rebellion.

What are some of the questions that you want to ask God? What are some things that you, right now, just can't understand? What does the promise mean to you that one day these will be answered and in a way that will cause us to praise the righteousness and goodness of God?

The Second Coming

Review the judgment scene in Daniel 7. Notice something important: This pre-Advent judgment is portrayed as the last *event* in salvation history before the second coming of Christ. It is, according to the text, the event itself that ushers in the Second Coming. The result of this judgment leads to the second coming of Jesus.

What do these texts have in common? What event are they all talking about? *John 14:2, Acts 1:11, 1 Thess. 4:14-18, Rev. 22:12.*

What other texts can you find that talk about the same event?

Jesus Himself, while on earth, talked about His second coming over and over again. The early church lived with the expectation of His soon return. Since then, through long and painful centuries, Christians have awaited the return of Jesus. Each generation lives with the hope and expectation that theirs might be the one to be alive at the Second Advent.

We're still here, though, and with each passing year it has been easier and easier for people to lose the hope of His return.

Here's where the 1844 judgment comes in, for it's a powerful indicator of the times we are living in. It's a message from God, to us, saying basically, *Trust me, I am coming as I have said. It can't be too far off.*

The 1844 pre-Advent judgment is, we believe, that last prophetic time element given to the world. It's God's way of telling us that final events are here, and His coming will be soon. As we saw in an earlier study, all the kingdoms predicted by Daniel came and went, just as predicted. He proved that we can trust Him regarding future events; thus, we can trust Him now that this pre-Advent judgment will, indeed, lead to the Second Coming, and because we know when this judgment began, we can know that the Second Coming is near.

As a class, talk about the signs of the times that we are living in. How do they portend the second coming of Jesus? At the same time, why is the revelation of the judgment the most stable, unchanging, and certain sign that heralds His return?

The Assurance of Salvation

Perhaps the greatest and most important point about the 1844 pre-Advent judgment is that it is a message of assurance. It's the promise that as long as we remain faithful to the Lord—living in humble faith, repentance, and obedience to Him and His commands—we have a faithful High Priest ministering in our behalf, a faithful High Priest who, indeed, stands as our Substitute in judgment (see last week's lesson). Though we are sinners, though we have violated God's law, though we deserve death, we have the assurance that we will be vindicated in judgment because we have Jesus standing there in our place. This is the most important message of the 1844 pre-Advent judgment.

Some Christians have no concept of a pre-Advent judgment because they believe in “once saved, always saved,” the idea that once they have accepted Jesus as Savior, then they are saved, regardless of the other choices they make in life, even completely turning away from Jesus unto a life of sin. Look up the following texts. How do they refute this false and dangerous doctrine? *Ezek. 18:24, Matt. 24:13, Luke 8:5-15, Rom. 11:16-21, 1 Cor. 9:27.*

As Adventists, we (along with many other Christians) reject the idea of once saved, always saved. It's obvious that followers of Christ can, through their own choice, fall away. And it's in this context that we can understand better the meaning of the pre-Advent judgment, for it is here in the judgment that once and for all our decisions for or against Christ are finalized. The judgment is not a time when God decides to accept or reject us; it's the time when God finalizes our choice as to whether or not we have accepted or rejected Him, a choice that always is made manifest by our works. The good news of the judgment is that we have the assurance that if we stay faithful to Jesus, if we claim His righteousness for ourselves, He stands in our stead, and when our name comes up in judgment, we are sealed forever in the salvation that He freely has offered us. Thus, and only in this sense—once their names come up in judgment, true Christians are, indeed, once saved, always saved.

If someone were to ask you, How do you know you are saved? what would you respond, and why? Share your answers in class on Sabbath.

Judged by Works

As certain as the Bible is that we are saved by faith and not by works (*Rom. 3:28*), it's just as certain that we are judged by our works (*Eccles. 3:17, 12:14, 2 Cor. 5:10, 1 Pet. 1:17*). Indeed, it's the realization that we are now living in the time when those works are being judged that Christians should be motivated to greater works, not in order to be saved (that's impossible) but because their works are a visible demonstration to the world and the universe of the reality of Christ's salvation in their lives.

Read Ephesians 2:8-10. How is the role of faith and works presented here in a balanced manner?

As we saw in last week's lesson, our works, while they can't save us, reveal that we are saved, reveal that we have indeed given our lives to Christ. At the same time, our works also do more: They, too, are part of the whole package regarding the question of theodicy and issues surrounding the nature and character of God.

Read Job 1:7-11, Matthew 5:16, 1 Corinthians 4:9, and Ephesians 3:10. From what you can piece together from these texts, what do they tell us about the role of our good works?

In the end, what the judgment tells us is that, in a special way, our works are coming under scrutiny before the onlooking universe. If we love God, if we are rejoicing in the salvation He has given us, we will want to send a message to the world and to the universe that, indeed, we love and serve the Lord who has done so much for us. Good works testify to the reality of the faith that we have in Christ; and though they don't save us in the judgment, good works reveal that, though we are sinners, Christ has done the right thing in bringing us into "his kingdom that . . . shall not be destroyed" (*Dan. 7:14*).

What kind of message do your works send to anyone who might be watching them? What changes do you need to make in order to send a better message?

Further Study: Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, “God’s Law Immutable,” pp. 433–450.

Another important point about 1844 relates to the Adventist Church itself. As Adventists, our foundation was erected on the understanding that, while our spiritual forefathers, the Millerites, got the event wrong, they got the date, 1844, right. Thus, not just our heritage but the biblical foundation upon which our early pioneers worked stemmed from the 1844 foundation. Hence, it’s important for us, as a people, to understand the biblical reasoning that leads to 1844. That we have grown since the early days in our understanding of this message is unmistakable; that we have a better grasp of what it means is unmistakable, as well. At the same time, however, by being firmly rooted in the biblical basis of 1844, we have the assurance that the prophetic foundation upon which our church was founded is, indeed, a foundation rooted in the Word of God itself. In short, it’s important for us to be grounded in the 1844 teaching because it affirms the biblical basis upon which we, as a church, with our distinctive message, exist.

Discussion Questions:

- 1 What do the answers to Wednesday’s final question tell us about how well we understand the plan of salvation?
- 2 Though the 1844 judgment helps us to understand where we are in prophetic time, we are now in the twenty-first century. The year 1844 was a long time ago, and with each passing year that date gets further away. How should we deal with this ever-growing passage of time? As you think about your answer, consider some previous time prophecies: the 1,260 years, the 2,300 years, the 490 years, and so forth. How do these very long time periods help us keep things in perspective? That is, though 1844 was a long time ago, was it that long ago, at least in contrast to other prophetic times in which God’s people had to wait?
- 3 As a class, take what you have learned this quarter and put together a seminar for the whole church, in order to help everyone understand the solid biblical foundation of our 1844 message and what it means for the church today.

Visitors' Day Dilemma

Penieli Kitomary

Penieli Kitomary was a lay pastor in a charismatic church in Tanzania. He had raised up two churches and was starting a third congregation. Following his members' urging, Penieli enrolled in a seminary near the campus of Tanzania Adventist College (now University of Arusha).

Someone at the Adventist university invited Penieli to attend the Visitors' Day worship on campus, but he declined, feeling unprepared to confront Adventist beliefs. He warned his church members not to accept an invitation to the Adventist church either.

During that week Penieli remembered a debate he had heard on the Sabbath. This doctrine intrigued him, and he decided to visit the Adventist church to learn more about this Sabbath issue. When he arrived, he found several members of his church who had also decided to attend the Adventist worship.

Penieli was pleased with the welcome he received and the invitation to stay for the afternoon program. He enjoyed the choir and the message. He could find nothing to refute what he heard and wondered why people feared this church so much. He left the church with many questions.

When Penieli talked to the deacons, he realized that some of them had attended the Adventist church and had questions, as well. Several believed in the Sabbath and were willing to accept it. Penieli wanted to know more. He visited the chaplain at the Adventist school and asked many questions. Then he reported to his congregation on what he had learned.

"Bring the chaplain here," the members said. The chaplain met with the believers and spent several hours answering questions and explaining Adventist doctrines. The group invited the chaplain to return, and then several members visited the Adventist church.

Other members of the charismatic church urged the new believers not to visit the Adventist church. When they could not convince them to stay away, some even went with the new believers to protect them from Adventist heresy. The chaplain explained that the Sabbath and every other Adventist teaching comes from the Bible. At the close of the meeting, he invited those who wanted to follow God's will to stand, and Penieli and several of his church members stood up. Following evangelistic meetings, the new believers asked to be baptized. Penieli continues to pastor them, teaching the new doctrines that he loves.

Your mission offerings each week help fund the witness of your church around the world.

Penieli Kitomary is a lay pastor living near Arusha, Tanzania.

Beginnings and Belongings, written by the late Arthur Ferch, gives us an inspired account of the miracle that created us; we'll also get, in hints and symbols, the earliest revelations of the miracle that saves us: the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. All this is found in the book of Genesis, a book about Creation and Redemption, and the focus of our study.

Lesson 1—Foundations

The Week at a Glance

SUNDAY: Genesis and the New Testament (*Matt. 19:3-8, Luke 17:26-30, Acts 7:1-15*)

MONDAY: The Mighty and Merciful God (*Gen. 1:1, 7:11*)

TUESDAY: Close Encounters (*Gen. 2:7, 3:8*)

WEDNESDAY: Foundations (*Acts 7:2-17*)

THURSDAY: The Just Shall Live by Faith (*Rom. 1:17*)

Memory Text—Psalm 11:3.

Sabbath Gem: As Christians, our principles are found in and through the person of Jesus Christ, the One in whom “we live, and move, and have our being” (*Acts 17:28*). Yet, we know about Jesus through the Bible. So, the Bible, in essence, works as the foundation for our lives and our faith. Thus, in a sense, Genesis serves as the *foundation* of the Bible.

Lesson 2—“In the Beginning . . .”

The Week at a Glance

SUNDAY: “In the Beginning, God . . .” (*Gen. 1:1, Exod. 20:11*)

MONDAY: The Creation (*Gen. 1:1, 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24; compare Ps. 33:6-9*)

TUESDAY: The Creation Days (*Gen. 1:4, 5; Exod. 20:8-11*)

WEDNESDAY: The Chicken or the Egg? (*Gen. 1:2*)

THURSDAY: The Creation of Humanity (*See Gen. 1:24; 2:7, 19*)

Memory Text—Psalm 33:6, 9.

Sabbath Gem: The Bible tells us that we are here only because a loving, benevolent Creator-God purposely created life on earth in a process that took six literal, contiguous 24-hour days. As we'll study this week, in the creation of the world, particularly humans, it doesn't appear that God left anything to chance.

Lessons for the Visually Impaired The regular *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* is available free each month in braille and on audiocassette to sight-impaired and physically handicapped persons who cannot read normal ink print. This includes individuals who, because of arthritis, multiple sclerosis, paralysis, accident, old age, and so forth, cannot hold or focus on normal ink-print publications. Contact Christian Record Services, Box 6097, Lincoln, NE 68506-0097.

