

God's Timetable



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Daniel 9.*

Memory Text: “And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years” (*Jeremiah 25:11*).

Daniel, though “greatly beloved” (*vs. 23*) in heaven, identifies himself with his sinful people and asks God to bless them. He intercedes with the Lord for his countrymen still in Babylon.

While Daniel is praying, Gabriel appears and delivers what has been called “the crown jewels” of Old Testament prophecy. Sir Isaac Newton described Daniel 9:24-27 as “the foundation stone of the Christian religion,” because it predicted almost five hundred years in advance not only the time at which the Messiah would appear but also the duration of His public ministry, as well as His atoning death for sin.

In studying this chapter, it is important to remember the links between Daniel 8 and 9. (1) The same angel revisits Daniel (*Dan. 9:21*). (2) Daniel recalls the former vision (*vs. 21*). (3) The command to Gabriel in Daniel 8:16 to give Daniel understanding of the vision is repeated in Daniel 9:23. (4) The time element not explained in Daniel 8 is now the topic of Daniel 9:24-27.

The Week at a Glance: What is the essence of Daniel's prayer? How does Gabriel link what he says to Daniel with the previous chapter? Why is the day/year principle operating here? What is the starting date for the decree? What is the 70-week prophecy all about? What did Jesus accomplish for us at the Cross?

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, December 11.*

Daniel's Prayer (*Dan. 9:1-19*).

The first year of Darius was the year 539/538 B.C. Ten years had passed since the vision of chapter 8. During that time, Babylon, the conqueror of Israel, had fallen to the Medo-Persians, but the Jews were still in exile in Babylon.

Read through Daniel's prayer. Where are all the places in the prayer where we can see the need for obedience? As you read, keep in mind James 2:9 and 1 John 3:4. What does this prayer also tell us about the fruits of disobedience? Is disobedience any less serious today than it was in Daniel's time?

One thing that comes through clearly in Daniel's prayer is that Daniel made no attempt to excuse or hide the sins of his people. His confession didn't seem to water down anything; he expressed it as it was. In fact, the chapter is filled with various Hebrew verbs, all denoting different kinds of sin and rebellion. There's an important lesson there for us regarding our prayer life: We must never downplay the seriousness of sin. Hell will be filled with those who did.

If you read Daniel's prayer, you will see that he is asking earnestly for God's mercy for His people. Does he express anything at all that would indicate that God's people deserve this mercy? If not, on what basis does he ask God for it?

Daniel has nothing to offer the Lord for His mercy and forgiveness. All he can do is plead for it "for the Lord's sake" (*Dan. 9:17*), or because of the Lord's "righteousness" (*vs. 16*). This reminds us of Ellen White's words that "our great need is our only claim on God's mercy."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 317. We have, as sinners, nothing to commend us to God. Our only hope is in mercy and grace, as revealed to us at the Cross. Here, and here alone, is our only hope, that which Christ has wrought out for us by His life and then His death. If we could earn God's mercy, or God's grace, in any way, then Christ wouldn't have had to die in order to save us. We could have worked our way out of the sentence of eternal destruction. His death proves our utter inability to do anything to save ourselves.

Keeping in mind the above paragraph, go back through Daniel's prayer. In what ways do you see the gospel expressed there?

TEACHERS COMMENTS

Key Text: *Jeremiah 25:11.*

Teachers Aims:

1. To reemphasize that God hears and answers our prayers.
2. To understand the 70-week, or 490-year, prophecy.
3. To reveal God's love, mercy, and concern for His people in unveiling the future to them.

Lesson Outline:

I. Daniel's Prayer (*Dan. 9:1-9*).

- A. Babylon, the conqueror of God's people, fell to Media-Persia, but the Jews were still in exile.
- B. Daniel did not try to excuse or hide the sins of his people in his prayer for their deliverance.
- C. Daniel prayed for understanding of the vision of the 2,300 days.

II. Seventy Weeks (*Dan. 9:20-24*).

- A. Applying the day/year principle, 70 weeks equals 490 years.
- B. This time prophecy describes details pertaining to the first advent, ministry, and death of Christ.
- C. Using the day/year principle, the period from 457 B.C. until the coming of Messiah the Prince, in A.D. 27, equals 483 years.

III. Messiah Cut Off in the Midst of the Week (*Dan. 9:24-27*).

- A. Jesus begins His earthly ministry in A.D. 27.
- B. In the midst of the week, or the final seven years of the prophecy, Jesus dies.
- C. Jesus is the Lamb who was slain and took the sins of the world upon Himself.
- D. After Jesus' death, the new covenant promises salvation to both the Jews and the Gentiles.

Summary: "The angel had been sent to Daniel for the express purpose of explaining to him the point which he had failed to understand in the vision of the eighth chapter, the statement relative to time—'unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.'"—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 326.

COMMENTARY

I. Christ: The Central Figure of Prophecy.

Christians who attempt to understand Daniel's prophecies and other books of the Bible can be prone to forget Scripture's major point—all of God's Word points to and centers on Jesus' first and second comings.

It is possible to become so fascinated by the array of events and

A Heavenly Visitor (*Dan. 9:20-24*).

Before Daniel finishes his prayer, the Lord sends an answer. The angel Gabriel, whom Daniel calls “the man Gabriel” (*vs. 21, NKJV*) because he appeared in human form, makes a second visit to Daniel. He first appeared to him ten years earlier, in Daniel 8:16.

What was Gabriel’s mission at this time? *Dan. 9:22, 23*.

When Gabriel says in verse 23, “ ‘Consider the matter, and understand the vision’ ” (*NKJV*), he does not use the general word *chazon*, which refers to the vision as a whole, as in Daniel 8:1, 13 and in Daniel 9:21. Instead, he uses the verb *mareh*, which is used specifically for the vision of the 2,300 days—the only part of chapter 8 that Daniel did not understand. In chapter 8, Gabriel tells Daniel specifically that the vision, the *mareh*, of the 2,300 days was “true” (*Dan. 8:26*), but Daniel says that he didn’t understand that *mareh* (*vs. 27*); that is, the *mareh* about the 2,300 days. An Orthodox Jewish commentary—referring to Gabriel’s words in Daniel 9:23, *NKJV*, “understand the vision [mareh]”—points right back to Daniel 8:14, saying that “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].”—Hersh Goldwurm, *Daniel* (New York: Mesorah Publications, Ltd., 1979), p. 258.

“Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city” (*Dan. 9:24*). **How long a time period is indicated through the seventy weeks, and what does the phrase “seventy weeks are determined for your people” mean?**

What we have here is more internal proof of the day/year principle. The command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem occurred many centuries before Christ. If taken as literal time, 70 weeks is just a year and a few months, hardly enough time to reach down to Jesus. Application, however, of the day/year principle solves the problem: It covers the time span from the rebuilding of the city to the first advent of Jesus. In short, Jesus proves the validity of the day/year principle.

Meanwhile, the root meaning of the Hebrew word *chatak*, here translated “determined,” is “to cut” or “divide.” The extended meaning is “to determine” or “allot to.” This is the only occurrence of this root in the Hebrew Bible, though it appears in later Jewish writings predominantly as “to cut off.”

TEACHERS COMMENTS

the fulfilled prophecies that one forgets about the God to whom they point. Apparently Christ noticed this tendency during His own time when He said, “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me” (*John 5:39, NIV*).

The prophecies themselves contain the cure for this tendency, for they consider all other subject matter to be secondary to Jesus and His salvation. All the time periods mentioned in Daniel are centered on the major events of the salvation story. The 70 weeks, while clearly focusing on the restoration of Jerusalem and its life span, is determined and limited by Christ’s birth, ministry, and death. The remaining portion of the 2,300 days, while a period of momentous changes and upheavals in this world, is determined and limited by Christ’s ministry on behalf of our salvation in the next time period.

Is it that important then to focus on prophecies and their fulfillment? Is such a focus a distraction from “real” spiritual issues? No, and this is why we are aware that fulfilled prophecies and miracles are themselves great evidence of God’s power over and concern for the world and His people. The prophecies of Daniel and other biblical prophets serve a still greater purpose: to testify to the truth and reality of our own salvation. It is one thing to say that Jesus appeared and made all these claims about Himself. It is quite another to see that all of world history seems to arrange itself around Him.

II. Useful Quotes About Christ as the Central Figure of Prophecy.

“The parable of Matthew 18 [vss. 21-35] is a story of the pre-Advent judgment. There is only one issue that matters in the judgment—‘What think ye of Christ?’ How we relate to Christ is what truly matters.”—Jon Paulien, *What the Bible Says About the End-Time*, p. 91.

“Jesus announced that He had been sent from heaven to reveal God’s redemptive will through His life and teachings (*John 12:49, 50*). His presence radiated the saving power of God’s kingdom among the Jews. As the promised Messiah, He claimed to fulfill the Hebrew Scriptures and their messianic prophecies. To the surprise of the rabbis, Jesus taught that the Hebrew Bible was not primarily Israel-centered but Messiah-centered. . . .

“Jesus presented Himself as the great Reality to which the symbolic rituals and prophetic types of Israel’s temple services pointed. He claimed to have been sent as the promised Lamb, Priest, Prophet, and King, all in one Person.”—Hans K. LaRondelle, *Light for the Last Days* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press®, 1999), p. 8.

“It was the Cross and resurrection that conquered Satan. Christ’s defeat was transformed into victory, his death into eternal life. . . .

“This Lamb who was slain is the same one who is the ruler of

The Purpose of the 70 Weeks *(Dan. 9:24)*.

What was to be accomplished in the 490-year period? *Dan. 9:24*.

Six purposes are mentioned in this verse. They describe primarily the results of Christ's life and work here on earth:

1. *To finish the transgression.* Transgression refers to the break in relationship between God and humankind. Through His sacrifice on the cross, Jesus brought to an end the broken relationship and restored us to God.

2. *To make an end of sins.* Gabriel here announces that the Messiah would take care of humankind's failures. He would take their sins on Himself and thereby make an end of them.

3. *To make reconciliation for iniquity.* "Iniquity" is sin as in a perversion of what is right. Through the atoning sacrifice on the cross, Jesus Christ took care of sin in all its forms.

4. *To bring in everlasting righteousness.* Through the Fall, humanity has become unrighteous. The Messiah, says Gabriel, will bring in a righteousness from God that will be everlasting for those who make it their own through faith that results in obedience.

5. *To seal up vision and prophecy.* The idea of sealing here doesn't mean "in the sense of 'shutting up,' but of 'confirming,' or 'ratifying.'" The fulfillment of the predictions connected with the first coming of the Messiah at the time specified in the prophecy gives assurance that the other features of the prophecy, notably the 2300 prophetic days, will be as precisely fulfilled."—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 852.

6. *To anoint the Most Holy.* Temples were anointed to inaugurate their services (see *Exod. 40:9*). The anointing foretold in this verse points to the inauguration of Christ's priestly ministry in the heavenly temple after His ascension (*Heb. 9:21*).

Thus, what we see here is clearly a prophecy, not only about the time of Jesus but about what His work will accomplish. And though this is a prophecy about His first coming, and though this prophecy applies in a direct manner to the Jewish nation as a whole, it gives inklings of the Second Coming, as well, because all that Jesus did at the First Coming finds its ultimate fulfillment in the Second. Perhaps that's also why this prophecy is so clearly tied to the cleansing of the sanctuary, an event that leads directly to the second coming of Christ.

Look up the texts below, in light of this prophecy regarding the Cross. What do they, along with Daniel 9:24, teach us about what Jesus has done for us at Calvary? After reading all the texts, write out a paragraph that explains what Christ did for us. *Isa. 53:5; Rom. 5:11, 17; 2 Cor. 5:19; Phil. 3:9; Heb. 2:9.*

TEACHERS COMMENTS

the kings of the earth, who shares the throne with God the Almighty, and who shares both the throne and the kingdom with his loyal followers. The victim is the victor. The Lamb wins! Christ is victorious!”—C. Freeman Sleeper, *The Victorious Christ* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1996), p. 66.

“The judgment—the crisis—is concentrated in Christ Himself: it is not an unveiling of all things in general, but of one’s relationship to Christ in particular. For that reason He was ordained to judge . . . and in that way He will judge the living and the dead. Love sets the criteria for judgment, the love of God that appeared in Christ.”—G. C. Berkouwer, *The Return of Christ*, p. 158.

“The great majority of his [Jesus’] symbolic actions announce that the messianic age has dawned. Jesus, in fact, not only proclaimed the parables’ message; he lived it and embodied it in his own person. ‘Jesus not only utters the message of the Kingdom of

Inductive Bible Study

Texts for Discovery: *Isaiah 53:1-6, Daniel 9, Romans 5:6-17.*

- 1 Daniel 9 begins with one of the most selfless prayers recorded in Scripture. This prayer is the result of Daniel’s understanding that one of Jeremiah’s prophecies (*Jer. 25:1-14*) was coming to an end. Before Daniel asked for anything, he confessed the sins that originally had caused his people to be taken captive. How would you characterize the sins mentioned by Daniel? What are some modern comparisons?
- 2 Read Daniel 9:19. What seemed to be Daniel’s primary interest in his prayer? What did Daniel expect God to do? How would God’s answer change Daniel’s fortunes? How would your life be different if God answered your prayers? How would society or the church be different?
- 3 The explanation of the dream in Daniel 8 is further validation of the year/day principle of prophetic interpretation. How does this prophecy concerning Jesus’ first advent make it easier to explain the prophetic signposts that point to Christ’s second coming? Are you ready to explain this to your non-Adventist friends? Why, or why not?
- 4 The prophecies of Daniel 7–9 remind us that human events are influenced by divine initiative. Events initiated by God centuries before reach their fulfillment in the “fullness of time.” What are the implications for us? What do we need to do today to ensure that God’s future plan is fulfilled?

Messiah the Prince (*Dan. 9:25*).

Daniel 9:25 states that from the “decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince” (NASB) would be 69 weeks, or 483 years. What date do we apply to this decree, and why?

Various dates have been given for this decree, including 538 B.C., 520 B.C., and 457 B.C. Let’s look quickly at all three.

For starters, suppose someone were to accept the 538 B.C. date as the starting point. From the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (538 B.C.) unto Messiah the Prince, Jesus, would be 483 years (we’re using the day/year principle, because the text demands it). Going 483 years from 538 B.C. reaches to what? 55 B.C.—a date that in no way fits the time of Christ’s earthly ministry.

Try 520 B.C. If that’s the starting point of the decree, and we go 483 years later, what date do we arrive at, and why is that date unworkable?

If, however, we go with the 457 B.C. date, the numbers bring us right to the time of Christ. This decree was given by Artaxerxes I, and it provided for the restoration of complete civil, judicial, and religious authority of Jews in their homeland (*see Ezra 7:11-28*).

It’s obvious that both the Jews and their enemies understood the decree to mean the rebuilding of the city. In Ezra 4:7-13 (the events in Ezra are not in chronological order), a group of Persian officers wrote to King Artaxerxes, complaining about the Jews who were rebuilding Jerusalem. In the letter, they stated two important points: (1) that the city was being rebuilt (*Ezra 4:12*) and that (2) the Jews who were rebuilding had come there because of the king. Said the letter, “the Jews which came up *from thee* to us are come unto Jerusalem, building the rebellious and the bad city” (*vs. 12, emphasis supplied*). In other words, the Jews who were rebuilding the city had come there because of King Artaxerxes, and the only decree issued by the king that sent the Jews back to Jerusalem was issued in the seventh year of his reign, the one shown in Ezra 7, a date that can be established as 457 B.C.

Starting with year 457 B.C., what date will you come to 483 years later? (Remember: There is no such thing as “A.D. zero”! so, when you reach zero in the time line of history, continue counting from A.D. 1.) Answer: A.D. 27. Why is 457 B.C. the only date that works? Dwell on this amazing prophecy. It would be equivalent to someone in the time of Martin Luther predicting the exact year Gerhard Schroder would be elected chancellor of Germany. What does this prophecy tell us about the power of God?

TEACHERS COMMENTS

God; he himself is the message.’ ”—Joachim Jeremias, *Rediscovering the Parables* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1966), p. 180.

III. What the Bible Says About Christ as the Central Figure of Prophecy.

“Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations’ ” (*Luke 24:45-47, NIV*).

“ ‘Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of

Witnessing

Try a little survey. Guess how many times in an average day you pick up the telephone to talk to people: 5, 10, 20 or more times? Do not be surprised if your number is high—most people today do not hesitate to pick up their cell phones at a moment’s notice. (By the way, how many of those calls were to talk to others about Jesus—what He means to you and His plan of salvation?) Now, estimate how many times, on the same day, you sent a prayer to your heavenly Father. Compare the numbers; hopefully, the second number is higher. If not, you need to reassess your priorities!

Prayer is our lifeline to heaven. It keeps us in constant communication with Jesus. The two-way communication between heaven and our heart is what enables us stay close to our Savior. Make no mistake: He loves to hear from us—any time, day or night, in good times and in bad (like the little saying, “It’s late, but I’m still calling God. After all, He’s going to be up anyway!”).

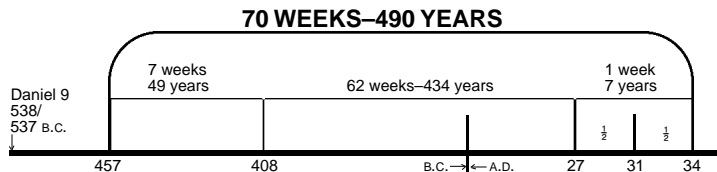
It is not unusual for many of us to contact God when we find ourselves in trouble. In fact, we are told that God is moved when we approach His throne through prayer. He understands our needs much better than we do, and He will answer our prayers according to His will, not because we deserve it but *because He is merciful and full of grace and love for us*. He gives His mercy to us as a direct result of His Son’s sacrifice on the cross.

“The prayer of the humble suppliant He [Christ] presents as His own desire in that soul’s behalf. Every sincere prayer is heard in heaven. It may not be fluently expressed; but if the heart is in it, it will ascend to the sanctuary where Jesus ministers, and He will present it to the Father without one awkward, stammering word, beautiful and fragrant with the incense of His own perfection.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 667.

Pray unceasingly; pray from the heart and with total honesty. Hold nothing back. Pray with others at every opportunity. Pray as though your life depends on it—it does!

“In the Midst of the Week” (*Dan. 9:24-27*).

Review the 70-week prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27. Look at the chart below while you study:



From the “ ‘command to restore and build Jerusalem’ ” (457 B.C.) to “ ‘Messiah the Prince’ ” (*vs. 25, NKJV*) was 483 years, or 69 weeks (7 weeks and 62 weeks; *see verse 25*). This comes out to A.D. 27 (eliminate the year zero, which will extend the number one year later), when Jesus began His earthly ministry.

Thus, this covers 69 of the 70 weeks. All that remains is the 70th week, the final seven years.

Meanwhile, in A.D. 31, “in the midst of the [last] week,” Jesus died, and the veil in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom (*Matt. 27:50, 51*), indicating the end of the earthly ceremonial system. All those countless animal sacrifices for all those long centuries, from Adam and Eve onward, now found their complete fulfillment in Jesus (*Heb. 10:4*). Here, in human flesh, the Lord took upon Himself the sins of the world, in order that every human being, no matter how sinful, could find forgiveness, healing, and the promise of eternal life (*Rom. 6:23, 1 John 5:11*).

The prophecy says that the Messiah will “confirm the covenant with many for one week.” What does that mean, and when does it end?

Our basic understanding of this, the end of the final week, is the covenant relationship between the Lord and national Israel. After that week (which comes to A.D. 34, and which we tie to the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7), the new covenant promises (*Jer. 31:31-34*) went to the church, which—composed of Jews (the natural branch) and Gentiles (the wild branch)—became an extension of Israel (*Rom. 11:17-21*) and continued with the work of teaching the world about the true God, the Creator and Redeemer.

The prophecy (*vs. 26*) says that the Messiah shall be cut off, but “not for himself.” For whom, then, was He “cut off,” and how does that answer capture the essence of the gospel?

TEACHERS COMMENTS

prophecy’” (*Rev. 19:10, NIV*).

“Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow” (*1 Pet. 1:10, 11, NIV*).

Life-Application Approach

Icebreaker: Have you ever had the opportunity to hold a large, perfect jewel in your hand? When you do, you cannot resist lifting it toward the light and turning it multiple ways so that you catch all the fire and brilliance found in it. Some of the loveliest jewels in the world are found in the Tower of London in England and belong to the British monarchy. These irreplaceable gems are known as the crown jewels and are considered the best of the best. Our lesson talks about a different set of crown jewels: prophecies that are the heart and soul of prophecy and can be referring only to Christ’s own time here on earth. Aren’t you humbled when you think of the price paid in order for these jewels of prophecy to be fulfilled?

Thought Question:

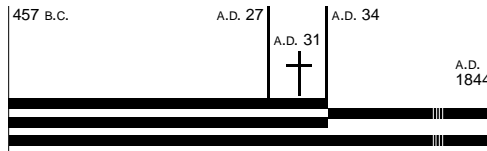
The 70-week prophecy is the ultimate confirmation of God’s prophetic accuracy. Why is that so? Without the promise of this prophecy, what would be the hope of our future? How is Christ’s second coming addressed by this particular prophecy?

Application Questions:

- 1 For every action there is a reaction; cause and effect, if you will. Applying this principle to the investigative judgment, what are the two guaranteed outcomes of Christ’s high-priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary?
- 2 Daniel gains much additional insight into his understanding of the 2,300-year prophecy during his second visit with the angel Gabriel. What additional critical piece of information is given to Daniel that helps bridge his gap of understanding? Why is that piece so important to the Christian’s salvation? Why is Daniel not given this information during his first conversation with Gabriel ten years earlier? What is the significance in the fact that it was Gabriel who brought the message to Daniel?

Further Study: Read the chapter entitled “The Kingdom of God Is at Hand” in Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 231–235.

In Daniel 8, the only part of the vision that Daniel didn’t understand was the *mareh* of the 2,300 days (*vss.* 26, 27). In Daniel 9, the same angel interpreter who appeared to him in Daniel 8 (*vs.* 16) appears to him again (*Dan.* 9:21) and promises to give him “skill and understanding” (*vs.* 22). The last time Daniel needed skill and understanding was in regard to the *mareh* of the 2,300 days (*Dan.* 8:26, 27). Gabriel, then, in Daniel 9:23 says to Daniel: “consider the [*mareh*]”—obviously the *mareh* of the 2,300 days that he didn’t understand. The *mareh*, of course, was a time prophecy, and the first thing that Gabriel gives to Daniel is another time prophecy, one that is “cut off.” Cut off from what? Obviously the larger time prophecy, the *mareh* of the 2,300 days.



- 457 B.C. Persian King Artaxerxes commands rebuilding of Jerusalem (Daniel 9:25, Ezra 7:11-16).
- A.D. 27 Baptism of Jesus; Jesus begins to preach and teach.
- A.D. 31 Messiah “cut off in the midst of the week” after 3½ years of ministry (Daniel 9:26, 27; Matthew 27:60, 61; Mark 16:33-39).
- A.D. 34 Stoning of Stephen; Gospel introduced to the Gentiles (Daniel 9:34, Acts 7:54-60, 9:15).
- A.D. 1844 End of the 2,300-year prophecy; investigative judgment begins.

Thus, we have two time prophecies placed closely together, one larger than the other and the smaller “cut off” from the larger.

With the starting point given in the decree to restore and

rebuild Jerusalem in 457 B.C., we arrive 2,300 years later at 1844.

Discussion Question:

We saw in lesson 8 that the judgment scene in Daniel 7 (which is the same thing as the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8) came after the 1,260-year period of the little-horn persecution. Because the little horn first came to prominence in the sixth century, 1,260 years would come to the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. The judgment would begin after that. How do these numbers fit in with the date 1844, arrived at from Daniel 8 and 9? How does the answer help confirm that our understanding of the prophecy is correct?

Summary: Daniel in his prayer identified himself with his people and petitioned God for them. In response God sent the angel Gabriel, who explained to Daniel that the Messiah would come at a specified time to reconcile humanity with God. How interesting, too, that this—the most crucial prophecy concerning Jesus—is just part of the larger prophecy, the one about the 2,300 years.