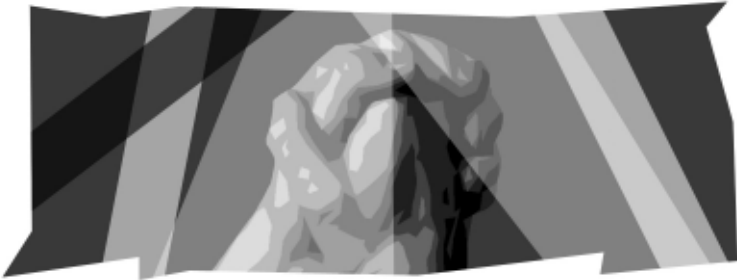


Daniel 9



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.