

Daniel's Comfort and Hope

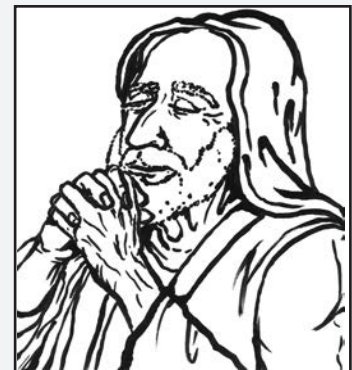


SABBATH—FEBRUARY 29

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Daniel 9:1, 2; Daniel 9:3–19; Daniel 9:24–27.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘Lord, listen to me! Forgive us! Lord, pay attention, and then do something! Don't wait! Do something now! Do it for your own good! My God, do something now, for your city and your people who are called [known] by your name' ” (Daniel 9:19, ERV).

IN DANIEL 9, we read one of the most beautiful prayers in the Bible. Daniel prays when times are hard. Prayer helps Daniel meet the problems that come his way. Remember when King Nebuchadnezzar is about to kill Daniel and his friends because none of the king's wise men can explain the king's dream (Daniel 2)? What does Daniel do? He prays. Later, King Darius makes a law that says no one can pray to anyone but the king. What does Daniel do again? He continues to pray. As he prays, his face is turned to Jerusalem (Daniel 6). As we think about the prayer in Daniel 9, let us remember something. Daniel cannot stop thinking about the 2,300 days in Daniel 8. Yes, Daniel understands most of the dream. But he cannot understand when the time message starts or ends in history. “It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings. Then the temple will be made holy again” (Daniel 8:14, NIV). Then in chapter 9, an angel gives Daniel more information about the 2,300 days. As before, Daniel prays. Then understanding comes to Daniel in answer to his prayer.



Prayer helps Daniel meet the problems that come his way.

TRUST THE BIBLE (Daniel 9:1, 2)

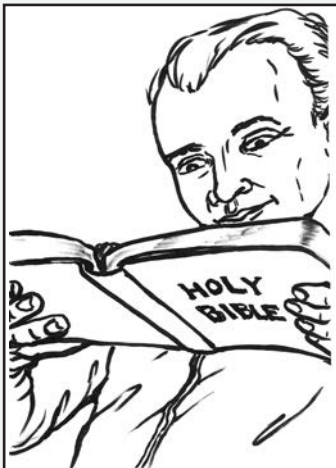
Read Daniel 9:1, 2. Daniel studies a Bible prophecy, or special message about time. This prophecy helps Daniel understand that something important will happen to his people. What Bible books is Daniel studying that help him?

Daniel's prayer shows us that he has studied very carefully the books of Moses and the prophets, or special messengers. Jeremiah's book shows Daniel that God's people will be prisoners in Babylon for 70 years (read Jeremiah 25:11, 12; Jeremiah 29:10). So, Daniel understands from reading Jeremiah that the time he lives in is important.

Daniel's prayer in Daniel 9 was in 539 B.C. In that year, the kingdom of Persia replaces Babylon as the top kingdom on the earth. So, almost 70 years have passed since Nebuchadnezzar beat Jerusalem and destroyed the temple. Jeremiah's book says that God's people will soon go home. Daniel trusts the Bible. Daniel knows that something big is about to happen to his people. Daniel believes that the Jews will go home soon.

Daniel's study of the Bible also shows him something else. He sees that his people's sins are very bad. God's people broke their Special Agreement with God. God punished them by taking them away from their land to Babylon (Leviticus 26:14–45). Daniel's understanding about what happened to Israel comes from his study of the Bible. His study causes him to pray to God to help Israel.

In these end times, we can learn an important lesson from Daniel. We need to study and live Bible truth now more than ever. Only the Bible can give us a clear understanding of what is happening on this earth, and why. Remember, the Bible shows us the story of the worldwide war between God and Satan. The Bible shows that God will destroy evil at the end of the war. Then He will start His everlasting kingdom. So, we need to study the Bible. The more we study, the more we will understand what is happening around us. We will understand better the work God gives us to do on earth. The Bible will help our hope grow stronger too.



We need to study and live Bible truth now more than ever.

DANIEL ASKS GOD FOR MERCY (Daniel 9:3–19)

Read about Daniel’s prayer in Daniel 9:3–19. Why does Daniel ask God for mercy?

Let us look at some important ideas in Daniel’s prayer:

First, Daniel never asks God to explain why the Jews suffer. Daniel knows the reason. As we see, Daniel spends a lot of time in his prayer telling God the reason: “ ‘We have not obeyed the Lord our God. We have not obeyed the teachings he gave us through [by] his servants, the prophets [special messengers]’ ” (Daniel 9:10, ICB). At the end of Daniel 8, you will remember that Daniel wants to understand something. He does not understand the dream about the 2,300 days (read Daniel 8:27).

Second, Daniel prays for mercy. Daniel asks God to forgive His people. Yes, God’s people sinned and did evil. But that is why Daniel asks God to have mercy on Israel. Daniel’s prayer for mercy shows us the Good News about Jesus. We are sinners. There is nothing good in us. We cannot save ourselves. We need God’s mercy to save us. We have done nothing to earn God’s forgiveness or mercy. But we must ask God for this gift anyway. Without His mercy, we will not be saved.

Read Daniel 9:18, 19. What other reason does Daniel give in these verses for why he wants God to answer his prayer?

Third, Daniel also asks God to honor His holy Name. Daniel does not ask God for help for selfish reasons. Daniel wants God’s Name to be honored on the earth.



**Without God’s mercy,
we will not be saved.**

PRAYING FOR OTHER PEOPLE (Daniel 9:5–13)

Read part of Daniel’s prayer in Daniel 9:5–13. In his prayer, Daniel continues to say “we” have done wrong. So, he includes himself as a doer in the sins that brought God’s punishment on the Jews 70 years ago. Why do you think Daniel does that?

Daniel’s prayer is an example of how we can pray for other people. The Bible is filled with many examples of these prayers. Our prayers for people move God’s heart. Our prayers can cause wonderful things to happen too. They can cause God to save His people from their enemies. Our prayers can move God’s heart to not punish His people too. Moses’ prayer helps God not to destroy His people after they sinned (Exodus 32:7–14; Numbers 14:10–25). Elijah’s prayer causes God to pour rain on the dry land after 3 1/2 years of no rain (1 Kings 18).

So, we should pray for family members, friends, and other people. Pray when you are in trouble too. God hears our prayers. He can help. Sometimes God may not answer our prayers right away. But we may be sure that God always remembers the things His children need (read James 5:16).

In his prayer, Daniel stands between God and the people. Daniel’s Bible study shows him that the Jews are filled with sin. They continue to break God’s law. They refuse to obey God’s warnings. So, Daniel prays for God to heal and forgive them. But Daniel also includes himself in the group who need God’s healing and forgiveness. In this way, Daniel shows us Jesus’ work to save us from sin (John 17). But there is one big difference between Daniel and Jesus. Jesus “never sinned” (Hebrews 4:15, ERV). So, Jesus does not need to confess personal sin as Daniel does. Jesus also does not need to ask for forgiveness (Hebrews 7:26, 27). At the same time, Jesus understands in a special way our experience. He understands our fight against sin: “Christ [Jesus] had no sin. But God made him become sin. God did this for us so that in Christ we could become right [holy; saved] with God” (2 Corinthians 5:21, ICB).



Our prayers for people move God’s heart.

THE SAVIOR'S WORK (Daniel 9:21–27)

Daniel's prayer for his people shows us that he is worried about two things: (1) Israel's sins and (2) Jerusalem's ruin. So, God answers these two problems. The Savior will save God's people. Also, God's temple will be made holy. The Savior will not only save the Jews. He will come to save everyone who believes in Him.

What does the angel Gabriel say will happen in Daniel 9:21–27? What work will happen during the 70 weeks? Why can only Jesus do it?

At the end of 70 weeks, the Savior will do six things. (1) He will “stop people from turning against God” (Daniel 9:24, ICB). The words written as “turning against God” come from the Hebrew word “**pasha**.” “**Pasha**” shows us the sins that a weak person does against a stronger person (Proverbs 28:24 shows us an example). Ezekiel uses the word “**pasha**” to show us humans who fight against God (Ezekiel 2:3). Jesus' death turns humans away from sin and back to God.

(2) Jesus will “put an end to sin” (Daniel 9:24, ICB). In Hebrew, the verb for “put” shows us that God forgives our sins. Yes, humans have not lived up to God's law after Adam and Eve sinned. But Jesus helps us win the war against sin.

(3) Jesus will “take away evil” (Daniel 9:24, ICB; also read Colossians 1:19, 20). Only Jesus can do that.

(4) Jesus will “bring in goodness [life free from sin or guilt] that continues forever” (Daniel 9:24, ICB). Jesus took our place on the cross. His death makes us right with God. Only our faith in Jesus can give us this gift.

(5) Jesus will “make the vision [dream] and prophecy [special message] come true” (Daniel 9:24, ICB). The Old Testament is filled with many special messages and promises about the Savior's work to save humans from sin. Jesus' death on the cross made all these Bible promises true.

(6) “The Most Holy Room in the temple will be anointed [made holy]” (Daniel 9:24, NIV). This verse shows us the start of Jesus' work to save us in heaven (Hebrews 8:1).



Jesus took our place on the cross.

THE 2,300 DAYS (Daniel 9:24–27)

You will remember that Daniel is surprised at the end of his dream about the 2,300 days. He cannot understand that part (Daniel 8:27). Ten years later, the angel Gabriel comes to help Daniel “understand” the dream (Daniel 9:23, KJV). Also, Gabriel explains that the Savior’s work will happen at the end of the 70 weeks. We must use the year-day rule in Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:5, 6 to understand how long the 70 weeks are in real years. Then we will see that the 70 weeks are really 490 years. When do the 490 years start? When King Artaxerxes gives the command for the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem. That happens in 457 B.C. (Ezra 7). The Bible shows us that the 70 weeks are “allowed” (Daniel 9:24, ERV) or “given” (NLV) by God to His people. What does that show us? It shows us that the 70 weeks, or 490 years, are part of a longer time message. They are part of the 2,300 years in Daniel 8. So, this information helps us to see that both the 2,300 years and the 490 years start at the same time. That is, they both start in 457 B.C.

The 70 weeks are divided into three parts: (1) 7 weeks, (2) 62 weeks, and (3) and the 70th week.

The seven weeks equal 49 real years. They show us the time when the Jews will rebuild Jerusalem. After these 7 weeks, there will be 62 weeks (or 434 real years). Then the Savior will come (Daniel 9:25). So, 483 years after Artaxerxes’s command, Jesus will be baptized in the year A.D. 27. Then God will pour His Spirit on Jesus to help Him do His work on earth during the 70th “week.”

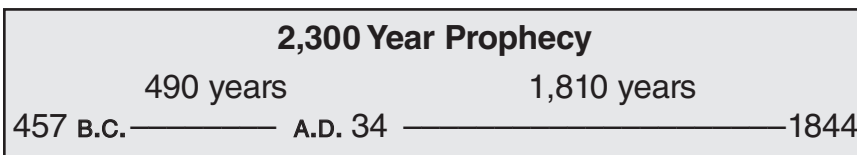
During the 70th week, many important things happen: (1) “the chosen one [Jesus] will be killed” (Daniel 9:26, ERV). This verse shows us Jesus’ death. (2) The Savior will “make an agreement with many people. That agreement will continue for one week” (Daniel 9:27, ERV). This verse shows us Jesus’ special work on earth for the Jews. It also shows us the work Jesus’ followers do after He goes back to heaven. This work happens from A.D. 27 to 34. (3) “The offerings and sacrifices [gifts] will stop for a half of a week” (Daniel 9:27, ERV). Three and 1/2 years after Jesus is baptized, animal gifts are no longer needed in the temple. Why? Because Jesus offers Himself on the cross as the perfect gift for our sins. The last week of the 70-week time message ends in A.D. 34. At that time, Stephen is killed with stones. Then Jesus’ followers start to take the Good News to the non-Jews too.

**70 WEEKS =
490 YEARS**

The year-day rule helps us to see that the 70 weeks are 490 real years.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Below is a chart. It shows the 70-week time message in Daniel 9:24–27. The chart helps us see how the 70 weeks (or 490 real years) connect with the 2,300 days (or 2,300 real years). We also can see that 70 weeks and the 2,300 days start at the same time. As we saw yesterday, the 2,300 years start in 457 B.C. So, if you count 2,300 years from 457 B.C., you get A.D. 1844. (Remember not to count the year zero.) If you subtract 490 years from 2,300 years (that is, 2,300 years minus 490), then you have 1,810 years left over. If you add those 1,810 years to A.D. 34 (the year that the 490 years end), then you also come to A.D. 1844. So, Jesus’ work to clean heaven’s temple in Daniel 8:14 starts in A.D. 1844.

Do you see that the 1844 date fits with what we learned about Daniel 7 and 8? That is, God’s work as Judge in Daniel 7 starts **after** the 1,260 years that the little horn hurts God’s people (Daniel 7:25). God’s work as Judge happens at the same time that He makes heaven’s temple clean. So, God’s work as Judge and His work of cleaning heaven’s temple both happen **after** the 1,260 years of attacks against God’s people. At the same time, God’s work as Judge and His cleaning of heaven’s temple happen **before** Jesus’ Second Coming. After that time, Jesus will set up His everlasting kingdom.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1 Bible thinkers have said that the 2,300-day time message and the 70-week time message are really one big prophecy, or special message about the future. Why do you think they say that? What proof can you find to show that this idea is true?
- 2 What can we learn from Daniel’s prayer for his people? How can it help us in our own prayer life?
- 3 Jesus died for our sins. His death is our only hope. How should this Bible truth make us more forgiving and loving? What does Luke 7:40–47 teach us?



Jesus’ work in Daniel 8:14 to clean heaven’s temple starts in A.D. 1844.