

The Gospel, 1844, and Judgment

Daniel 9

Lesson #6 for August 5, 2006

Scriptures: Daniel 9:1-23

1. In our last two lessons covering Daniel 7 and Daniel 8 we have established the identity of certain kingdoms and determined the time periods involved. Are you comfortable with these charts? If not, why not?
2. In our next two lessons we will be looking specifically at the details of Daniel 9. We will attempt to show that Daniel 9 was given in response to a prayer of Daniel for a further explanation of Daniel 8. In early Adventist history, William Miller made a mistake in assuming that the sanctuary that was to be cleansed in Daniel 8 was this earth. Assuming that the charts are correct and the dates give us a general idea of the time period, what sanctuaries were in existence at the end of this time prophecy? The sanctuary in old Jerusalem had long since been destroyed. The only sanctuary recognized by heaven at this point in time was the heavenly sanctuary. **What would be required to cleanse a heavenly sanctuary?**
3. Some have considered the detailed working out of the time periods in Daniel 7-9 to be too complicated for an ordinary Bible student. Do you agree with this opinion? Assuming that we have correctly identified the kingdoms involved can these kingdoms be clearly dated from the details of ancient history? Absolutely!
4. **Read Daniel 9:1. Notice a difference in the way this chapter is introduced from the way previous chapters have been introduced. Daniel is now living in the days of the Medo-Persian empire. In the visions of Daniel 2 and Daniel 7, each vision was followed by a clear explanation. But when we come to Daniel 8 we notice that an important part of the vision was not explained. We have been able to identify the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. We know the dates when they conquered and the dates when they were defeated. Why would God wait many years to give Daniel this explanation of his former vision?**
5. But in Daniel 8 we have no details about the starting and ending date of the 2300 evenings-mornings of Daniel 8:14. This portion of the vision has not yet been explained. Approximately 12 years have gone by since the vision of Daniel 8 was given and the Babylonian Empire has collapsed. Darius the Mede is now ruling over the "kingdom" of Babylon. Daniel is thinking very seriously and praying hard about the fulfillment of the 70-year prophecy which he knew about from Jeremiah 29:10. While the "kingdom" of Babylon has collapsed and many changes are transpiring, he does not see evidence that the city of Jerusalem and the temple there are soon to be reestablished.
6. Back in the third year of Belshazzar's reign when he was given the vision recorded in Daniel 8, instead of receiving an answer to his prayer about the 70 year prophecy he gets another time prophecy with a period of 2300 evenings-mornings or 2300 prophetic years. His response is "I was depressed and ill for several days. Then I got up and went back to the work that the king had assigned to me, but I was puzzled by the vision and could not understand it." (Daniel 8:27, *Good News Bible*)
7. *Considering Daniel's familiarity with the prophecies he had been given of Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 and the early part of Daniel 8 do you think he was, at least, encouraged to see that*

God's prophecies were being fulfilled step-by-step?

8. Since Jeremiah wrote in Jerusalem (and later was forced against his will to go with his secretary Baruch down into Egypt, see Jeremiah 43:1-7) and we have no evidence that he ever went to Babylon, how do you think Daniel became aware of his prophecy?
9. To Daniel it must have seemed that the restoration of Jerusalem was going to be delayed for a long time. **Was Daniel puzzled about the apparent lack of progress toward the restoration of Jerusalem? Was he worried about the 2300-prophetic-year prophecy?**
10. Look at the prayer of Daniel in Daniel 9:3-19. What can we learn about prayer from this example?
11. In his prayer Daniel does several important things:
 - a. He clearly confesses his sins and the sins of his people. He identifies himself clearly with all Israelites in this prayer.
 - b. He reminds God of the powerful ways that he has dealt with their enemies in the past and delivered them from Egyptian captivity.
 - c. He admits that God has treated them very fairly, doing to them—even in his punishments—exactly what he predicted would happen if they disobeyed him.
 - d. Then Daniel shows his real friendship to God by turning to a theme that was familiar to Abraham, Moses and God's best friends down through the centuries. Read Daniel 9:16-19; compare Genesis 18:25; Exodus 32:11-14. **Daniel reminds God that Jerusalem and Judea are *his people* and *his country* that *his name* has been identified with their failures. He reminds God that other nations are despising him as well as the Israelites because of *Israel's* failures. In line with their understanding of the different "deities" that they knew about in their time, Daniel says, "Please, God, act so that these heathen nations will know that you are not just another idol 'god'. Remember this city and the country that bear your name. We know that you will do what is right. In order that everyone will know that you are God, do not delay! This city and these people are yours." (Daniel 9:19)**
12. Daniel recognizes from his study of Scripture that the most important issues in the great controversy involve a clear and correct understanding of God's character. At this point in history, God's name is being derided and smeared because of the misfortunes and misbehaviors of his people. **It is time for God to do something for his own name's sake.** How many of the other biblical heroes that we know about have reached this level of understanding of God?
13. **Review your own prayers. Do you pray primarily for personal needs and requests that will be of benefit to you, your family, perhaps your church? How often have you prayed about God's reputation? How often have you lived your Christian life primarily for the purpose of better representing God's character and his kingdom to those around you? Paul suggests that the worst sin of all is misrepresenting the truth about God. (Romans 1:18) Do we ever do this? As individuals? As a church?**
14. As you review those who have prayed like this in the past, God never fails to respond. And so here we see when Daniel prays this prayer, Gabriel is sent a second time. Daniel recognized him and also recognized that he was the same one he had seen in the earlier vision. Gabriel does not waste time but states specifically "Daniel, I have come here to help

you understand the prophecy.” Then Gabriel urges Daniel to pay careful attention to his words.

15. The Hebrew of these passages links the lack of understanding at the end of Daniel 8 with the explanation and understanding that Daniel is given in Daniel 9:20-23. The same Hebrew word for understanding is used in both cases.
16. Review the material for Thursday, August 3. Notice that two different and distinct Hebrew words are used here to describe the two different parts of the vision. The overall vision is described as a *hazon*. This word is used on several occasions in the first verses of Daniel 8. (Daniel 8:1,2,15,17) But later when speaking specifically about the time prophecy of the 2300 evenings-mornings a different word is used for that part of the vision: *mareh*. (Daniel 8:16,26,27) It is significant to notice that when coming to the explanation in Daniel 9:21-23 only the explanation for the *mareh* is mentioned. Thus it is specifically pointed out that this explanation is regarding the 2300 days and not the entire vision of Daniel 8.
17. Daniel has been praying for the end of the 70 year prophecy given through Jeremiah. (Jeremiah 25:11,12; 29:10) Gabriel first puzzles him by giving a 2300 year prophecy. In Daniel 9 he is given a partial explanation of the parts not explained in Daniel 8. But later in Daniel 9 he’s going to add to that challenge by giving him a 490 year prophecy. (Daniel 9:24)
18. **When Daniel prays to understand when the 70 years will be over so his people can go back to Jerusalem and restore a correct worship of God there, instead of telling Daniel that in two or three years they would be allowed to return, why did God give these two long-term time prophecies?** Read Daniel 9:24: “Seven times seventy years is the length of time God has set for freeing your people and your holy city from sin and evil.” (GNB)
19. Review the stories of Ezra and Nehemiah. When the Jews were allowed to return to Jerusalem, did they correct all the errors and sins that had led them into captivity? The first conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar took place in 606 BC. The return of the first group of exiles under Zerubbabel was in 536 BC (70 years later). More than 80 years passed until the times of Ezra (457 BC) and Nehemiah (444 BC). Did the exiles apparently learn anything from their experiences? Was there any significant difference between the behavior of these exiles and the behavior of their ancestors just before the exile? If their behavior hadn’t improved any as a result of the exile, why did God bother bringing them back to Jerusalem? If God knew they would reject and crucify his Son, why did he continue to work with them?
20. We have no record of what the Jews did about their religious practice during the time they were in captivity. (Except for Daniel and Ezekiel) Did they persist in their love of some of these heathen ceremonies? It is quite apparent from reading Ezra 9 & 10 and Nehemiah 5 & 13, that the people who returned to Jerusalem quickly returned to the same heathen practices that had been their downfall before the exile. (Compare Hosea 4:13,14) **So this return to Jerusalem, while it pleased some of the Jews, certainly did not qualify as “freeing your people and your holy city from sin and evil.” (Daniel 9:24, GNB) So, was God more interested in giving the people back a certain piece of real estate or seeing them freed from sin and evil? Or even protecting his own name/reputation/character? What would be necessary for God to “free them from sin and evil”?**
21. Daniel, hoping that those who would return to Jerusalem would be as faithful as he had

been, looked forward to that return as a fulfillment of God's promise to them and the future cooperation on their part that would make them truly his people. But God, knowing in advance that they would be just as wicked and sinful as their ancestors, looked beyond the return to Jerusalem to a time when Christ would come to win the great controversy and make a real difference in the lives of those who came to trust in him.

22. Despite this victory by Christ, God also recognized that the end would not come with the life and death of Jesus, but would be delayed until some 2000 years later! So, he also gave Daniel a prophecy about "the time of the end"—beginning in 1844—at the end of the 2300 days-years.
23. So we see that what Daniel was really praying for would not come until many years later. A portion of God's answer would come 490 years after the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, but the final answer would await our day in "the time of the end".
24. In our next lesson we will deal specifically with the explanation that Daniel received in Daniel 9:24-27.

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Info@theox.org

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