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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.
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 the Cross, of Jesus, 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.
How to Use This Teachers Edition

The teachers comments demonstrate different methods of teaching the adult standard edition Bible study guide. Five parts make up the teachers comments:

▶ **Key Text, Lesson Aim, and Outline:** The key text is taken from the standard edition guide. The lesson aim is designed to (a) help class participants understand and know about the lesson material, (b) evoke an appropriate feeling about the lesson material that complements the lesson content and helps to internalize it, and (c) help class participants apply the lesson material to their daily lives. The lesson outline may not always follow exactly the material that appears in the standard guide. It may reflect additional perspectives as it attempts to stimulate class discussion.

▶ **The Commentary** follows the traditional teaching methods of Sabbath School. It explains Bible passages and provides appropriate information leading to spiritual applications.

▶ **The Inductive Bible-Study Method** emphasizes careful, methodical discovery of the meaning in a text. The teacher encourages and supports the learner’s investigation and discovery, using distinctive approaches: (a) Study a text thoroughly and systematically before drawing a conclusion. (b) Look for textual meaning carefully and thoroughly, understand the passage in context, avoid misquoting the author. We must not develop opinions without biblical proof. (c) Share insights through group discussion as students examine a Bible passage together. (d) Apply the text to life today. (e) Allow the Holy Spirit to minister to class members during Bible study.

▶ **The Focus-on-Witnessing Approach** should be used in conjunction with other methods of Bible study to demonstrate how particular passages of Scripture can be used to encourage people to commit their lives to Christ and to nurture spiritual life once it has been awakened.

▶ **The Life-Application Approach** demonstrates how issues that grow out of Bible study can be shared in a small-group setting. This section uses an approach suitable for discussion in a small group in which interpersonal sharing and dialogue are key elements.

*Use a combination of teaching methods. Within one class period it often is possible to draw from all five methods demonstrated in the teachers comments. Some teachers will prefer to focus on one method of teaching, drawing heavily on the material in the teachers comments.*
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?

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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?
Key Text: 1 Corinthians 4:9

Teachers Aims:
1. To affirm a belief in the existence of populated worlds beyond our own.
2. To consider the intervention of angels in the affairs of humankind.
3. To ponder the implications of the great controversy on individual salvation.

Lesson Outline:

I. Forgiveness Upon Confession (Ps. 51:1-4)
   A. Sin brings against us a justified condemnation from God.
   B. Sin is to be confessed to obtain God’s forgiveness.
   C. Only God is able to wash away our sins and to clothe us with righteousness.

II. Michael’s Angels Versus the Dragon’s Angels (Rev. 12:7-13)
   A. The great controversy goes beyond earthly borders.
   B. The dragon works 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to ensnare the human race in sin.
   C. Victory over the dragon is won only through accepting Christ’s atoning sacrifice.

   A. Angels minister to humankind on earth.
   B. Both God’s and Satan’s angels have direct bearing on humankind (Gen. 19:15, 16; Rev. 12:7).

Summary: The great controversy, with its transcendent features, is a great mirror through which we see reflections of God’s love for humankind. Christ perfected this on the cross of Calvary, where He shattered the last shackles of death. Through the ministration of His Holy Spirit and His angels, Jesus helps us to overcome death and to triumph over Satan in this great conflict. Our destiny is, therefore, shaped by the choices we make regarding the two opposing forces in the battle zone.

Commentary

A question that looms large as we meditate upon life is: Are we alone in this universe? The possibility of intelligent life elsewhere has preoccupied humans through the ages. Scientists search the cosmos for evidence of either current or past intelligent life, while mystics profess to leap from meditation to fellowship with unseen beings. The Bible, however, clearly teaches that there are intelligent beings in the universe: some hostile and some friendly, but all intensely interested in our history and destiny. Throughout this
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 vss. 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?
quarter we will study human life in a cosmic, historic, and divine perspective. This week, we focus on the cosmic interest in our creation, redemption, and destiny.

I. Cosmic Interest in Creation

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). Into this perfect home of goodness and beauty, God placed humans made “in his own image” (Gen. 1:27). The birth of the human race caused two reactions: (1) Inhabitants of heaven and other unfallen worlds rejoiced at the inclusive nature of God’s love, which motivated Him to create Adam and Eve and place them on this earth as part of His extended family (Job 38:7); (2) Satan and his angels sought to make the earth their battleground against God and His law. If they could not prevail in heaven, they would prevail on earth. Their first recruits in this war were Adam and Eve. If Satan could have them, he could directly challenge God’s justice and love.

God’s justice demanded that Adam and Eve, as sinners, should die. Satan maintained that God could not be just and save sinners—an accusation that was of utmost interest to the entire universe (1 Pet. 1:12).

“This world is but an atom in the vast dominions over which God presides, yet this little fallen world—the one lost sheep—is more precious in His sight than are the ninety and nine that went not astray from the fold.”—Ellen G. White, Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 190.

II. Cosmic Interest in Redemption

With Adam and Eve’s fall, all humanity fell victim to sin (Rom. 3:23), and Satan made this world a battleground for the great controversy between Christ and himself. From that point on, the forces of sin and the power of righteousness have struggled to win the hearts and minds of humans. Satan makes every effort to get every person—especially with those who wish to follow God—to deny their Creator and to view His commandments as harsh and arbitrary. But Christ Himself entered the conflict by becoming a human, living in perfect obedience as a human, and dying for the sins of the world, thus making Redemption possible to all who believe in Him. We must choose between Satan’s perpetual deception and Christ’s eternal love and redemption.

Our struggle and victory are the objects of interest to the angels and unfallen worlds. “The whole universe is watching with inexpressible interest the closing scenes of the great controversy between good and evil. The people of God are nearing the borders of the eternal world; what can be of more importance to them than that they be loyal to the God of heaven?”—Ellen G. White, Prophets and Kings, p. 148.
“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?
III. Cosmic Interest in Human Destiny

The Cross defines human destiny, because it is the only means by which reconciliation with God is ensured (2 Cor. 5:19). Our redemption or destruction depends on our acceptance or rejection of what God has accomplished on the cross. Jesus’ death thus has universal significance. On the cross, He defeated Satan and his claim to this world. He also established the justness and the holiness of God’s law, while paying the wages of sin we were meant to

Inductive Bible Study

Texts for Discovery: Psalm 51:1-4; Zechariah 3:1-4; Romans 3:25, 26; Revelation 12:7-13

1 The Bible teaches that humankind is not the result of some random cosmic accident. It is the result of a deliberate creative act by a loving, personal God. As you reflect on the Creation story (Genesis 1 and 2), which part of it reveals the characteristics of God that you admire most? How do those characteristics reveal themselves in your everyday life?

2 The Bible also teaches that because of sin humankind has become embroiled in a titanic struggle between good and evil. Spend a few moments cataloging some of the results of evil that we have to live with. Then spend a few moments reflecting on how God provides the antidote for every inconvenience caused by being born on a sinful planet.

3 Just as we did not ask to be born, so we did not ask to be involved in the cosmic struggle between God and Satan; yet, here we are. Think of a word or phrase that describes how you feel about being drafted into this cosmic struggle. Think of a Bible text or saying that reflects your personal philosophy in this struggle.

4 In symbolic language, Zechariah 3:1-4 describes the transaction that takes place when we place ourselves under the protection of the Lord. What is represented by the “filthy clothes” (vs. 3, NIV)? The “rich garments” (vs. 4, NIV)? What religious word or phrase could be used to describe God’s action on behalf of His people?

5 While we are involved in the struggle between good and evil, God’s sovereignty will ensure His kingdom’s ultimate triumph. How can we help to vindicate God’s character while remembering that the struggle is more about God than about us?
“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?

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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?

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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 in 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?
Even for people who do not consider themselves religious, the notion that there is something beyond this world, something “up there” awaiting discovery, fuels the imaginations of even hardened atheists. Grown men wept at the connection, like the alien character in the movie E.T. when it was able to “phone home.” Millions of fans lined up for the first X Files movie, firmly believing that the real story is “out there.”

Those dreams of life beyond the stars not only fuel science fiction on the printed page and the cinema screen; they also have launched dozens, if not hundreds, of aerospace careers. Astronauts, the engineers behind them, and the politicians who fund their work all have caught the “space bug,” hoping, secretly perhaps, that the moon and other planets will offer more than just rocks as souvenirs. The Pioneer 10 space probe, launched in 1972, bears a gold plaque with identifying information that might tell E.T.’s present-day “cousins” just who sent the object into the galaxies.

Ironically, the Bible itself offers—in this “theater of the universe” scenario that frames the great controversy between Christ and Satan—a sense of a life beyond our world that far surpasses anything Hollywood has shown so far. Instead of a cute little space creature who stumbles upon us, a whole universe of beings could well be watching how that conflict plays out right here on earth. How we participate in this drama is being watched, and closely.

Do you know anyone whose idea of a good time is a marathon of Star Trek movies? Why not introduce them to a real tale of life beyond our world—and to where this drama will lead all of humanity?
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).*
of sin and ends with the restoration of all that was lost. The entire process from paradise lost to paradise regained is of intense interest to the universe; and the human race has become a lesson book on God’s love and justice to all created beings.

Life-Application Approach

Icebreaker: One of God’s faithful missionaries, Allen Gardiner, experienced many physical difficulties and hardships throughout his service to the Savior. Despite his troubles, he said, “While God gives me strength, failure will not daunt me.” In 1851, at the age of 57, he died of disease and starvation while serving on Picton Island at the southern tip of South America. When his body was found, his diary lay nearby. It bore the record of hunger, thirst, wounds, and loneliness. The last entry in his little book showed the struggle of his shaking hand as he tried to write legibly. It read, “I am overwhelmed with a sense of the goodness of God.”—Allen Gardiner, “God, goodness of,” eSermons, http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/g/god_goodness_of.htm (accessed February 22, 2005).

Thought Questions:
1 The struggle between God and Satan is being observed by other created beings of the universe. How is there victory in the death of someone like Gardiner? How do you think the universe views our difficulties in accepting the casualties of the great controversy?

2 War, in general, creates a sense of unity, patriotism, and vigilance in people. Yet, Seventh-day Adventist Christians living at the height of the war between God and Satan are lukewarm Laodiceans. Explain why. When we are faced with situations similar to Gardiner’s, our attitude is often Why me? What attitude adjustments need to be made individually and corporately?

Application Questions:
1 God has recruited you as His soldier. What do you think are the basic requirements He expects from you? How can a thorough knowledge of the great controversy better equip you to fight the good fight?

2 Thursday’s lesson says that 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. How can you live your life in a way that vindicates God’s goodness in this sinful world?
"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?
**Lesson 2**

*July 1-7*

**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 the answers to these questions 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?
**COMMENTARY**

Because God is just, His relationship to us is just. He condemns those who reject Him, and He accepts as part of His family those who accept Him. God’s judgment is an inevitable divine activity: “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). This week’s lesson dwells on judgment as condemnation, judgment as acceptance, and judgment’s relationship to the gospel.

**I. Judgment: God’s Condemnation**

Sin brings divine judgment, because God’s holiness and justice is incompatible with sin. The Bible speaks clearly of God’s judgment on sin. When Lucifer sinned in heaven and refused God’s countless pleas to repent, God’s immediate judgment cast Satan and his followers out of heaven (Rev. 12:9). A final judgment awaits them (Rev. 20:10).
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 saved and the lost, 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?
When Adam and Eve sinned, God judged them by expelling them from Eden and making them subject to death (Gen. 3:19, 23). The sins of Noah’s generation and of Sodom and Gomorrah brought swift judgment in a Flood and a destructive fire (Gen. 6, 7, 19:12-29). Enoch stated that the Lord will come in the last days to judge all the earth (Jude 14, 15), while Isaiah spoke of God as coming with eternal fire to consume the wicked (Isa. 66:15, 16).

Jesus spoke of the final judgment in which all humanity will be called to give account for every word and act not in harmony with God’s will (Matt. 12:36, Luke 9:26). Paul wrote that God had implanted in human conscience the concept of a final judgment (Rom. 1:32, 2:14-16), while the author of Hebrews wrote that the wicked can hope for nothing but utter destruction (Heb. 10:26, 27).

So, we see that judgment as God’s method of destroying sin is essential to His basic nature. Because He is righteous, no unrighteousness can stand in His presence. Therefore, “He comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth” (Ps. 96:13, NIV).

II. Judgment: God’s Acceptance

Upon what basis does God condemn some and accept others? Jesus said: “ ‘But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned’ ” (Matt. 12:36, 37; see also 2 Cor. 5:10, 1 Pet. 1:17). From these passages and others, it often is concluded that God’s acceptance of us depends on what we do. In support of this position, the parable of the separation of the goats and the sheep often is quoted (Matt. 25:31-40). This parable recognizes the significance of caring for what many people consider to be the least in society. But the most significant question the parable asks in view of the final judgment is one of relationship: “How is your relationship to Christ the Savior?” Does your life reveal that you have known your Savior?

III. Judgment and the Gospel

The gospel is the good news that we are redeemed by Christ’s blood. The Bible also pictures judgment as part of the gospel.

In what sense can judgment be a part of such good news? The judgment is good news in that it offers salvation for those who accept the redeeming provision of the gospel. It is also good news in that the judgment carries out condemnation and ensures the final defeat of sin, sinners, and Satan. Thus, God’s character is vindicated, and this earth is purified from sin and its effects.

The Cross is central to the vindication of God’s character in the cosmic conflict. As Jesus’ death drew near, He said, “ ‘Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out’ ” (John 12:31, NIV). The Son of God hung between
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?
The link between the gospel and judgment is further borne out in Jesus’ parable of the wedding garment. This parable tells of a wedding feast to which the king had invited many. Among them was a person without the proper garment, which the king himself

**Inductive Bible Study**


1. Some people see Christianity only in terms of judgment (it probably does not help that so many Christians are judgmental and critical). But this week’s lesson points out that justice and grace are just two sides of the coin we call “the gospel.” What person, in your experience, most closely reflected the ideal balance between justice and grace? What was the overall effect on your life? What prevents you from having that same balance in your own life?

2. While the Bible declares that the judgment will ultimately reveal only two classes of people, we should resist the temptation to categorize people into one of those two groups now. Irreparable harm has been done by crusaders wanting to force the issue. Cite three examples of how Jesus dealt with known sinners. How should His example be translated into modern settings?

3. One of the great ironies of the gospel is that we are saved by faith but judged by works. How have you reconciled those two concepts? What are the practical implications of this Bible truth? Which Bible texts offer you the most encouragement that everything will turn out all right?

4. Jesus’ words, “‘Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me’” (Rev. 22:12, NIV), indicate that some kind of deliberative process takes place prior to the execution of justice. What does this process reveal about God? Is it designed to be redemptive or exclusionary? Who benefits most from this process? Read 2 Peter 3:9.

5. Unpack the symbols of the parable of the wedding banquet (Matt. 22:1-14). How can we know whether we’re properly attired for God’s wedding banquet?
“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.

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
had provided free to all. This person, however, felt that his own garment was good enough to enter the feast, indicating that he cared nothing for the king’s. Acceptance of the garment was essential for the entry to the feast. Rejection of the garment meant receiving the king’s judgment: “‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth’” (Matt. 22:13, NIV). Thus, we learn that “only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God’s presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul. . . .

“This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us.”—Ellen G. White, Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 311.

To wear the robe of Christ’s righteousness or not to wear it marks difference between the judgment of acceptance and judgment of condemnation.

Witnessing

One of the hardest points to get across to secular people is the idea of the basic sinfulness of humanity. The idea that we, at our core, are bad, sinful, even evil, is a concept that many people find hard to accept.

On the other hand, all one has to do is take a look at the world around us, and indeed, this Christian doctrine should seem patently obvious. Someone once said that while we might need faith to believe in a lot of Christian teachings—like the Second Coming, the millennium, heaven—what we don’t need faith to believe in is the basic sinfulness of humanity. All one has to do is read the newspaper!

Sure, we are sinners. And we run, we dodge, we hide, we gloss over our faults and sins, hoping that the neighbors won’t notice and, perhaps, that God becomes a little absentminded.

But it is all to no avail. We might be able to fool our neighbors, friends, relatives, and maybe even ourselves. But the Bible says that there is a record of our sins, God keeps it, and judgment is upon us. The good news—the great news, in fact—is that Jesus is both Judge and Chief Defense Counsel. If we only put our trust in Him, He will plead His sacrifice as payment for our sins. Sure, though we all face judgment, because of Jesus we have assurance and surety in that judgment.

This week, think about someone who needs to know the good news and let them know that, though they aren’t angels, there’s a God who loves and cares for them, a God who will forgive their sins and stand in their place in the judgment.
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?
Life-Application Approach

**Icebreaker:** “Out of parental concern and a desire to teach our young son responsibility, we require him to phone home when he arrives at his friend’s house a few blocks away. He began to forget, however, as he grew more confident in his ability to get there without disaster befalling him. The first time he forgot, I called to be sure he had arrived. We told him the next time it happened, he would have to come home. A few days later, however, the telephone again lay silent, and I knew if he was going to learn, he would have to be punished. But I did not want to punish him. I went to the telephone, regretting that his great time would be spoiled by his lack of contact with his father. As I dialed, I prayed for wisdom. ‘Treat him like I treat you,’ the Lord seemed to say. With that, as the telephone rang one time, I hung up. A few seconds later the phone rang, and it was my son. ‘I’m here, Dad!’

‘What took you so long to call?’ I asked.

‘We started playing and I forgot. But Dad, I heard the phone ring once and I remembered.’


**Thought Question:**

More than four out of every five Americans agree that “we all will be called before God at judgment day to answer for our sins,” says a poll conducted for the Times Mirror company.—National and International Religion Report, quoted in *Signs of the Times*, August 1993, p. 6. While we are aware of the judgment and the need to be accountable to God, we sometimes act with complete disregard for the consequences of our actions. How do you explain such behavior in spite of the strong belief in the final judgment?

**Application Question:**

Like the child in the Icebreaker, we oftentimes obey God, not out of desire but out of fear of the consequences. What motivates you to make important choices in your life? What effect does the judgment have on the choices you make? Would you continue to choose to live a Christian life if you knew for sure that there is no heaven? Explain.
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:

1 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?

2 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?

3 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?
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.
Key Text: Daniel 2:44

Teachers Aims:

1. To discuss the relevance and the importance of the prophetic messages in Daniel.
2. To help the class participants review and apply the end-time prophecies in Daniel 2.
3. To emphasize the link between the prophecy of Daniel 2 and our time.

Lesson Outline:

I. God Is in Charge (Dan. 2:44)
   A. God is all-powerful and all-knowing.
   B. God loves each of us unfailingly.
   C. God’s plans will triumph amidst serious satanic counterfeits.

II. History in Panorama: The Statue of Daniel 2 (Dan. 2:26-45)
   A. Head of gold: Babylon
   B. Chest of silver: Media-Persia
   C. Thighs of brass: Greece
   D. Legs of iron: Rome
   E. Feet of iron and clay: divided nations of Europe

Summary: Daniel 2 expresses much about its author and outlines the plan of redemption that God has for this world. Daniel’s God is the same God we serve today. We can be sure that, through the coming of Christ in His indescribable glory, He will set up an everlasting kingdom.

COMMENTARY

The authenticity of Daniel is beyond question. First, it is part of the inspired Scriptures. Second, Jesus advised His disciples to pay heed to Daniel’s prophecy as end-time events drew near (Matt. 24:15, Mark 13:14). If Jesus accepted Daniel as an inspired authority, should we do less? This week we begin a series of studies on Daniel as it relates to God’s plan of history and His way of concluding that plan. This particular lesson concentrates on Daniel 2 as it speaks of the Lord who is trustworthy, the Lord who controls history, and the Lord of the final judgment.

I. The Lord Who Is Trustworthy

Daniel 2 begins with Nebuchadnezzar and his forgotten dream. The king believed the dream had an important message for him, but
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).
none of Babylon’s wise men could assist him. There was, however, Daniel, who knew that in moments of calm or crisis there is only One who is trustworthy. So, he turned to God before he went to the king (Dan. 2:20-23). Prayer preceded the revelation and interpretation of the king’s forgotten dream. Daniel’s remarkable appeal teaches us to remember that because God is in control, all is safe. Four facts stand out in this prayer: (1) Wisdom and power are God’s; (2) God controls “times and seasons,” as well as the movements of nations and powers; (3) “He reveals deep and hidden things,” (vs. 22, NIV) and those who walk with Him need not fear darkness; (4) He is a God who answers prayers.

Our God is trustworthy, indeed!

II. The Lord of History

“In the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will.” —Ellen G. White, Prophets and Kings, p. 500. The “play and counterplay of human interest and power” is what we see in Daniel 2.

The golden head of Babylon must give way to the silver chest and arms of Media-Persia, which in turn is overcome by the bronze belly and thighs of Greece. Then comes the iron rule of the Roman Empire, only to be broken into disunited Europe. What this image teaches is that no human power provides stability or continuity. Rather, human history is a picture of sin’s distortion, its ups and downs, and its inability to solve the human quest for eternal peace. For such peace, we need to look elsewhere. “While you were watching,” kingdom succeeding kingdom, Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar, “a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them” (Dan. 2:34, NIV).

That rock is God’s kingdom. Hence, Christianity takes history seriously and looks for its fulfillment in the establishment of that kingdom. Daniel shows the temporal nature of human powers and directs the king to look beyond. “In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever” (vs. 44, NIV).

History is dominated with conflict between kingdoms—the kingdom of Christ and human kingdoms dominated by Satan. This conflict provides the vantage point from which we should draw an important lesson. The Christian “should understand the nature of the two principles that are contending for supremacy, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy, to the great consummation. He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two
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?
II. The Lord of Judgment

Daniel 2 shows that God allows earthly powers to run their course. They will not, cannot, last forever.

Inductive Bible Study

Text for Discovery: Daniel 2

1. For more than one hundred forty years Seventh-day Adventist evangelistic meetings have featured, as their opening night’s lecture, a survey of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in Daniel 2. This often includes a discussion of end-time events, the Second Coming, and God’s control of history. Does this message still impress modern listeners? Which aspect of this amazing prophecy do you find most compelling? Most comforting?

2. Daniel 2 is an outstanding example of a Bible prophecy that inspires and enlightens believers. Imagine the impact that this prophecy had on believers of different periods. What lesson would believers during Daniel’s time have taken from it? How about believers during the time of Christ? Believers in the medieval church? Today’s believers? Is the message basically the same in all ages? Or are there different emphases in different ages?

3. The tension between religious and political power is one of the great themes of the Bible. Sometimes worldly leaders have opposed God’s people; sometimes worldly leaders are God’s people. Give three examples of each. What does the symbol of iron mixed with miry clay represent? What does it indicate in terms of the religiopolitical setting of the last days?

4. According to Daniel 2, the present union of religiopolitical power will continue to be the most significant influence on the world stage until Jesus comes and establishes His eternal kingdom. Is this something that can be resisted, or is it inevitable? What form would resistance take?

5. The kingdom established “without hands” (Dan. 2:34) is a symbol of God’s sovereignty. What do you see in today’s world—good or bad—that indicates God’s will is being accomplished in all the earth?
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?
God, in His own time and purpose, will wrap up history and bring to this planet His eternal judgment. From creation to recreation, biblical history testifies that God is in control, and in His own time, He will crush “‘all those kingdoms and bring them to an end’” (vs. 44, NIV).

As the book of Revelation pictures, the goal of human history is to reestablish God’s kingdom on earth. Then, God’s will and sovereignty, justice and love, will be universally acknowledged, and the cosmic conflict will be brought to a decisive end with the destruction of sin and Satan (Rev. 20:7-10).

**Witnessing**

Today, books generally arrive in stores fully formed, but when Charles Dickens was writing in the mid-1800s, those tales appeared in magazine installments. *The Old Curiosity Shop* was a tale by Charles Dickens published in serial form. Ships from London carried magazines with the chapters to New York. As the story’s popularity grew, it is reported that dockworkers greeted arriving ships with cries of “Is Nell well?” or “What news of Nell?”

The second chapter of Daniel tells a story that’s actually more gripping than most novels, even one by Dickens. Written 600 years before Jesus’ day, it dared to suggest what would yet happen. Even more, its predictions have largely come to pass, with an accuracy that would make a carnival psychic green with envy.

Yet, like the Dickens novels, the action of Daniel 2 unfolds in installments, in sequence. The timeline of this story lasts far longer than we might normally have patience for in any other book. Some could lose faith that we’ll ever see the conclusion.

But even that is predicted: In the end times, some will believe that “my Lord delayeth his coming” (Matt. 24:48) and miss out on His return.

For those sensitive to the leading of God the Holy Spirit, however, we can know that our Father keeps His promises. Jesus will return, the earth will become new, and heaven a reality. Someone who wants to know how Dickens’s stories turned out might well be truly thrilled to learn how the history of this world will finally, happily, wrap up.
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.

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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?

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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?
Life-Application Approach

Icebreaker: “Newscaster Paul Harvey told a remarkable story of God’s providential care over thousands of allied prisoners during World War II, many of whom were Christians. One of America’s mighty bombers took off from the island of Guam headed for Kokura, Japan, with a deadly cargo. Because clouds covered the target area, the sleek B-29 circled for nearly an hour until its fuel supply reached the danger point. The captain and his crew, frustrated because they were right over the primary target yet not able to fulfill their mission, finally decided they had better go for the secondary target. Changing course, they found that the sky was clear. The command was given, ‘Bombs away!’ and the B-29 headed for its home base. Some time later an officer received some startling information from military intelligence. Just one week before that bombing mission, the Japanese had transferred one of their largest concentrations of captured Americans to the city of Kokura. Upon reading this, the officer exclaimed, ‘Thank God for that protecting cloud! If the city hadn’t been hidden from the bomber, it would have been destroyed and thousands of American boys would have died.’ God’s ways are behind the scenes; but He moves all the scenes which He is behind. We have to learn this, and let Him work.”—John Nelson Darby, “God, sovereignty of,” eSermons, http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/g/god_sovereignty.htm (accessed February 22, 2005).

Thought Question:
Sunday’s lesson says “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.” Using examples both from the church and the secular world, explain how this promise can be applied in our own lives.

Application Question:
Gideon wasn’t the most trusting person. When God called him to His service, Gideon balked. He asked God to prove His identity. He questioned God. That was a bold move on his part. How do you think God perceives your questions and doubts? Are you comfortable having a healthy discussion with your God? Why, or why not?
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 that 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:

1. As a class, talk about your answers to Sunday’s final question.

2. 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?
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


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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?

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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?
Key Text: Daniel 7:22

Teachers Aims:
1. To affirm a belief in God’s existence and in His power to control the future.
2. To examine the significance of the pre-Advent judgment.

Lesson Outline:

I. World Empires (Dan. 7:3-7, 15-17)
   A. As in Daniel 2, Daniel 7 presents a scenario that foretells the rise and fall of four successive world empires.
   B. Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome are symbolized by a lion, a bear, a leopard, and a terrible beast, respectively.
   C. With laserlike accuracy, Daniel 7 unfolds the history of the world, spanning over twenty-five hundred years.

II. The Super-Villain (Dan. 7:8, 24)
   A. Daniel 7 explicitly reveals the distinctive traits of the “little horn.”
   B. The little horn demonstrates the spirit of antichrist depicted in 1 John 4:3.
   C. The little horn represents the Roman Empire, both pagan and papal.
   D. The little horn schemes to destroy God’s people.

III. Heavenly Court Session (Dan. 7:9)
   A. The heavenly court session leads to the final overthrow of the little-horn power.
   B. The investigative judgment takes place prior to Christ’s second coming and the final establishment of God’s eternal kingdom.
   C. We are assured of a share in this eternal kingdom through faith in Christ.

Summary: Daniel 7 provides a panoramic view of over twenty-five hundred years of history in advance. From the early neo-Babylonian Empire up to the present, this prophecy penetrates the veil of the future in which God will intervene decisively in the affairs of humankind.

COMMENTARY

Daniel 2 provides an outline of secular history from the time of the prophet to the establishment of God’s kingdom. Daniel 7 is almost parallel to Daniel 2, giving more details about the last earthly kingdom as it focuses on that kingdom’s religious nature and the claims it makes. That religious nature pictures the severity of the great controversy, the salvation of God’s people, and the assurance we
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)?

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From where does the little horn arise?

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

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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?
have of God’s victory. Thus, Daniel 7 also teaches that history is in God’s hands, and it moves toward the establishment of His kingdom. We will note this week the parallels between Daniel 2 and 7, the power of Rome, and the judgment in heaven.

I. Daniel 2 and 7

The dream of Daniel 2 was given to Nebuchadnezzar. The dream of Daniel 7 was given to Daniel. While the first dream deals with an image, the second dream provides a more graphic setting. Read Daniel 7:2. Winds symbolize the instability, the ferocious combativeness, and the passions of the ruling powers. The sea perhaps refers to the Mediterranean, which played a crucial role in ancient history for the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans. The sea is often used to symbolize Gentile nations. Animals symbolize nations rising in succession only to oppose God’s will and purposes (Isa. 27:1, 51:9, Ezek. 29:3).

Daniel 2 pictures Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, Rome, and its divided remnants until God intervenes to establish His kingdom. Daniel 7 uses a lion, bear, leopard, and an animal that defies zoological classification, “‘terrifying, and frightening and very powerful’” (Dan. 7:7, NIV). The prophet emphasizes this beast’s frightening nature. What does this beast represent? If Daniel 2 and 7 are parallel portraits, and if Daniel 2 traces history in terms of Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome, then the beasts in Daniel 7 must represent these same powers. Therefore, the last beast represents Rome.

II. Rome: The Terrifying Power

Daniel was anxious to know “‘the true meaning of the fourth beast’” (Dan. 7:19, NIV). While the angel gave his interpretation (see vss. 23-25), the most noteworthy point is that this system is identified by what it does religiously. Read Daniel 7:25.

History shows how pagan Rome and the little-horn power of papal Rome fulfill this prophecy. Pagan Rome crucified Christ and for decades persecuted and put to death thousands of early Christians. When pagan Rome gave way to papal Rome, the latter took upon itself not only ecclesiastical power but also political power and for centuries persecuted those who differed from its view. It was also the Roman Church that changed “the set times and the laws” by abolishing the seventh-day Sabbath, introducing Sunday worship, and making way for nonbiblical doctrines, such as Mariolatry, salvation by works, the adoration of the doctrine of idols, and purgatory. This work of the little horn, coming out of pagan Rome, did more to trample down the priorities of God’s kingdom than any other organized religious and political power in history.
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.
III. The Heavenly Judgment

The prophecy of Daniel 7 goes beyond the blasphemous, persecuting, and arrogant nature of the little horn. Even as this power marches across history, Daniel reminds us that history is ultimately in God’s hand and that the false religious system will come under God’s judgment. The description of this judgment is awesome and graphic (see vss. 9, 10, 13, 14). The Ancient of Days (God the Father) is there with a multitude of angels. The court convenes; and the Son of Man (Christ) appears with all His glory, power, and sovereignty. Without the Son, who revealed in His incarnate state the true character of God, the cosmic conflict cannot end. He is the arbiter of history. The Son, who took the form of a man, judges the man of sin, who claims to be the vicar of God. This judgment dooms the entire false religious system. Then the sovereignty and rulership of the universe are restored to their rightful owner (vs. 27).

Inductive Bible Study

Text for Discovery: Daniel 7

The prophecies of Daniel 2 and 7 use different symbols to give the same preview of the rise and fall of earthly kingdoms. Who was the original recipient of the dream in Daniel 2? Who received the vision of Daniel 7? What was the fundamental message God wanted to communicate to Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2? What is the fundamental message of Daniel 7? Are they essentially the same? What else is revealed in Daniel 7 that is not revealed in Daniel 2?

The first three beasts of Daniel 7 represent the rise and fall of secular kingdoms. The account of the last beast, and particularly the last king, introduces an element previously unmentioned: “‘the saints of the Most High’” (vss. 18, 22, 25, 27). What does this element indicate about the final struggle to take place before God’s kingdom is established? What great issues will be at stake in this struggle? How can we prepare for it as individuals, and as a group?

This week’s lesson outlines four characteristics about the little-horn power that identify it as papal Rome. These identifiers are powerful. How we communicate these historical facts, however, can be either persuasive or highly inflammatory. How would Jesus address these facts in a personal or in a public setting? What method would be most persuasive? Is there one right way?
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?
Certain factors relating to the scene of this heavenly judgment must be noted. First, it takes place in heaven. Second, it occurs before the establishment of God’s kingdom. Third, it deals with the judgment of a false religious system, implying the restoration of truth before God restores His kingdom on earth. Fourth, this restoration will involve the truths trampled down by the little horn, truths such as the Sabbath, the Ten Commandments, salvation by faith, the non-immortality of the soul, etc. Fifth, Christ actively participates in the heavenly judgment before He returns to earth to establish His kingdom. All these show that there is a pre-Second Advent judgment, which will sort out the true followers of Christ from the false.

Witnessing

One of the most popular broadcasters in America is a man named Paul Harvey. As these words are written, Mr. Harvey, at age 86, is still going strong with a daily newscast, as well as a feature called The Rest of the Story.

For these features, Mr. Harvey and his writers research an event in history or the life of a personality. They bring out a little-known detail, which can totally change your view of a subject. The broadcasts always conclude: “And now you know the rest of the story.”

Daniel 7 is very much like that. It fills in the details of the sweep of history that we read about in Daniel 2. It also tells us that a judgment shall take place and that no one will be exempt. This judgment must happen before God’s kingdom can arrive.

If one of the most basic yearnings of the human heart is for justice, then the fact that a judgment is now under way should be, must be, good news for those who seek this ultimate fairness.

Right now, today, in heaven, ten thousand times ten thousand” (see Dan. 7:10) are being judged. Those whose sins are covered by the blood of the Lamb, Jesus, are assured of forgiveness. Those hoping to make it on their own merit will sadly learn the rest of their own story.

No radio or television station will have to broadcast the results of this proceeding; they’ll be evident on their own. This week, in talking with family, friends, and colleagues, pray to be directed to someone looking for justice, real justice, and let them know it’s on the way!
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?
Life-Application Approach

Icebreaker: “Ancient cultures devoted much time and effort to teaching their children family history. It was thought that the past helps a child understand who he is. Modern society, however, has turned its back on the past. We live in a time of rapid change, a time of progress. We prefer to define ourselves in terms of where we are going, not where we come from. Our ancestors hold no importance for us. They lived in times so different from our own that they are incapable of shedding light on our experience. Man is so much smarter now than he was even ten years ago that anything from the past is outdated and irrelevant to us. Therefore the past, even the relatively recent past, is, in the minds of most of us, enshrouded by mists and only very vaguely perceived. Our ignorance of the past is not the result of a lack of information, but of indifference. We do not believe that history matters.

“But history does matter. It has been said that he who controls the past controls the future. Our view of history shapes the way we view the present, and therefore it dictates what answers we offer for existing problems.”—David Crabtree, “The Importance of History,” The McKenzie Study Center (November 1993), http://www.mckueniestudycen ter.org/ society/articles/history.html (accessed February 22, 2005).

Thought Question:
In Daniel 7, God clearly foretells the fate of great empires spanning hundreds of years, sometimes with amazing clarity and precision. If God is ultimately in control, this leads to the long-debated question of free will. Did these ancient rulers really have freedom of choice? Their rise and fall had already been recorded by Daniel. What, if anything, could they have done to change their fate? How does history help illuminate the character of God?

Application Question:
Tuesday’s study says, “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.” This prophecy doesn’t require much faith at all. It appeals to logic and common sense. Daniel seminars have, for years, been an effective way of bringing people into our church. What are you doing with this incredible witnessing tool? Identify places and opportunities in your life where you can use this prophecy in conjunction with history as a tool of evangelism.
**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 century 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?
Daniel 8

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?**
Key Text: Daniel 8:14

Teachers Aims:
1. To verify the link between the chapters of Daniel 2, 7, and 8.
2. To help class participants understand the tie between the pre-Advent judgment and the cleansing of the sanctuary.

Lesson Outline:
I. The Vision as Daniel Saw It (Dan. 8:1-14)
   A. Daniel 8 presents the vision of the ram, the goat, the little horn, and the cleansing of the sanctuary.
   B. The little horn represents the Roman Empire, as seen in Daniel 2 and 7.
   C. Daniel 8 affirms that God is in ultimate control of the entire cosmos.

II. “Help This Man Understand the Vision” (Dan. 8:15-19)
   A. The little horn is both religious and political in nature.
   B. The pre-Advent judgment in Daniel 2 and 7 is the same as the cleansing of the sanctuary in chapter 8.
   C. The cleansing of the sanctuary precedes the supernatural destruction of the little-horn power.
   D. The pre-Advent judgment heralds Christ’s second coming.

Summary: Daniel 8 must be interpreted in light of the previous chapters in the book of Daniel and their interpretations. As in chapters 2 and 7, the worldly kingdoms are followed by the establishment of God’s judgment upon the world.

COMMENTARY
Daniel 8 parallels Daniel 2 and 7, except that Daniel 8 skips Babylon. Another difference is that Daniel 7 speaks of a heavenly judgment while Daniel 8 speaks of the cleansing of a sanctuary. These three chapters employ different imagery, but all point to the triumph of God’s purposes. This week’s lesson deals with Daniel 8: the vision of the ram and goat, the little horn, and its central message.

I. Daniel 8: The Ram and the Goat
Once again, God shows what He revealed in Daniel 2 and 7 from a different perspective. Now there are only two beasts: a ram and a goat. The ram is described as “great” (Dan. 8:4). Gabriel tells Daniel that the ram is the kingdom of Media-Persia, which would soon crush Babylon. Victory after victory in Syria; Asia Minor; and parts of Egypt, Armenia, and Ethiopia highlighted this kingdom’s great power. But the “great” ram met its end by the “very great”
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daniel 2</th>
<th>Daniel 7</th>
<th>Daniel 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Babylon</td>
<td>Babylon</td>
<td>——</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media-Persia</td>
<td>Media-Persia</td>
<td>Media-Persia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Greece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next kingdom</td>
<td>Next kingdom</td>
<td>Next kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supernatural</td>
<td>Supernatural</td>
<td>Supernatural</td>
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<tr>
<td>destruction</td>
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<td>destruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>at end</td>
<td>at end</td>
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</table>

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?
goat (vs. 8, NIV). The angel identifies this goat as Greece, and the large horn that grew in the midst of its head was its first king, Alexander the Great, whose empire stretched all the way to the Indus River in India. After his death, Alexander’s kingdom was split among four generals (vs. 22; compare Dan. 7:6—“four wings”). From one of these smaller kingdoms rose “a little horn” (KJV)—small at first, but it grew in power (Dan. 8:9). The angel does not identify this “little horn” but provides a description of its work (vss. 9-12, 23-25). Based on the succession of world powers in Daniel 2 and 7, this little-horn power that follows Greece must represent the empire that followed Greece. This would be Rome, both in its pagan and papal spheres, including that of the little horn of Daniel 7:8.

II. Daniel 8: The Work of the Little Horn

Daniel 8:9-12 says that the little horn trampled the starry hosts of heaven, meaning the persecution that destroyed the hosts of God’s saints (see also vs. 24). It also “‘set itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host’” (vs. 11, NIV), and it will “‘take his stand against the Prince of princes’” (vs. 25, NIV).

The power of the little horn is manifested in a more serious way: “‘It took away the daily sacrifice from him, and the place of his sanctuary was brought low’” (vs. 11, NIV).

Who is represented by this power? Some commentators suggest Antiochus Epiphanes, who invaded Jerusalem and stopped the temple services for about three years around 168 B.C. Others argue for the Roman destruction of the temple in A.D. 70. But the angel already has pronounced that this prophecy is for the end-time; and in Daniel 8:14 he says that this desolation of the sacrifice will last for 2,300 prophetic years. Hence, this power cannot be Antiochus Epiphanes or the Roman armies. Rather, we must look to the context of the end-time with which Daniel 8 is concerned. With the coming of Jesus also came the proclamation that the “kingdom of God is at hand” (Mark 1:15). A new era of hope in the Second Coming marked the life of the church (Matt. 24:10-14, Acts 1:9-11, 1 Thess. 4:15-18). Between the time of Christ’s ascension and the scattering of the Jews to many other lands, what is Jesus doing? The book of Hebrews tells us that upon His ascension, Jesus has assumed the work of the heavenly priesthood, thus fulfilling what was symbolized by the earthly sanctuary system (Hebrews 7–9). Thus, the taking away of the “daily” must mean a human usurpation of the ministry of Christ in heaven. This would be the papal assumption of the functions of the priesthood.

How has the papacy taken away the “daily” and cast down the sanctuary? By introducing various false doctrines that thwarted God’s sovereign role in salvation. By displacing Christ’s role as our High Priest and Mediator with the confessional and the intercession...
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.
of human priests. By introducing the Mass, thereby crucifying Christ afresh and setting aside His ministry in heaven. By making forgiveness of sin effectual through confession to a human priest and penance. By these ways, the gospel provision of salvation

**Inductive Bible Study**

**Text for Discovery: Daniel 8**

1. Using symbolic images, the vision of Daniel 8 presents another overview of the rise and fall of nations and the interplay between secular and religious institutions. One of the fundamental themes of these visions in Daniel is, “‘[God] changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them’” *(Dan. 2:21, NIV)*. We must remember, however, that what was foretold in a verse or two took centuries to come to fulfillment. What gives you staying power as you wait for God’s ultimate will to be fulfilled?

2. Another theme revealed in the visions of Daniel 7 and 8 is the role of force, violence, and coercion in the struggle between good and evil. What broad categories would you use to describe the principles on which God’s government is founded? What broad categories describe the adversary’s aims? One more question: When have people who claim to represent God used methods that are entirely ungodly? Be specific.

3. The little horn of Daniel 8 directs its actions both against God and against His saints. What form does the former take? What form the latter? In what ways might we, if not careful, reflect the actions of the little horn?

4. The cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary *(Dan. 8:14)* takes place beyond the notice of earth’s inhabitants. But that does not make it any less significant. The cleansing of the sanctuary leads to the ultimate destruction of the little-horn power. What does this say about the influence of heaven on earthly things? How could you better cooperate with heavenly forces?

5. Daniel confessed, “I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding” *(Dan. 8:27)*. What things about God, His prophecies, or His character leave you baffled? How did Daniel remain faithful? How do you?
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 (vss. 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ram</td>
<td>Media-Persia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goat</td>
<td>Greece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little horn</td>
<td>Rome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctuary cleansed</td>
<td>Supernatural demise of little horn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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?
through free grace and direct access to God through Jesus (Eph. 2:18, Heb. 4:16) were denied.

How long will this desecration of the heavenly sanctuary system last?

III. Daniel 8: Its Central Message

Such was the question in Daniel’s mind. The answer? “‘For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed’” (Daniel 8:14, NKJV). The angel concludes his interpretation with words that brought little comfort to Daniel: “‘The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given you is true, but seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future’” (vs. 26, NIV).

How far in the future? Twenty-three hundred years? As a nationalist, Daniel equated the removal of the “daily” with the desolate condition of the Jerusalem temple. Should God’s people wait for the

Witnessing

In the middle of a field in the Lithuanian countryside is the Hill of Crosses, where hundreds of thousands of Christian crosses have been placed by devout pilgrims from all over the world. It’s an incredible sight, as I discovered when a friend took me there. While it might not be the way you or I would choose to express our faith, the story of this hill is inspiring on its own.

After a peasant uprising during the mid-nineteenth century, the site first attracted the forest of crosses that would rise there again and again. Following Lithuania’s incorporation into the former Soviet Union, the atheistic authorities bulldozed the Hill of Crosses on three separate occasions. Each time, local and foreign pilgrims replaced the crosses. Finally, in 1985, the Communists relented and let the symbols stand.

Those atheists remind me, actually, of some Christians! Daniel 8 is abundantly clear: The heavenly sanctuary must be cleansed and shall be cleansed. There’s no option, no compromise, no “menu selection.” It’s going to happen, and it’s a part of God’s plan.

And just as the Soviet rulers didn’t fully grasp the significance of that Hill of Crosses for the people of Lithuania, some Christians don’t understand that this cleansing of the sanctuary is for the good. It’s work that has to be done, and in being done illustrates another aspect of God’s plan and care for each of us.

If you know Christian friends or neighbors who are in a time of spiritual crisis, let them know the good news that God has a plan and that He is sticking to it. You can point that person to a hopeful outcome.
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?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daniel 2</th>
<th>Daniel 7</th>
<th>Daniel 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Babylon</td>
<td>Babylon</td>
<td>Media-Persia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media-Persia</td>
<td>Media-Persia</td>
<td>Media-Persia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Greece</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pagan Rome</td>
<td>Pagan Rome</td>
<td>Pagan Rome</td>
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<tr>
<td>Papal Rome</td>
<td>Papal Rome</td>
<td>Papal Rome</td>
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<tr>
<td>————</td>
<td>Judgment in heaven</td>
<td>————</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Coming</td>
<td>Second Coming</td>
<td>————</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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?**
restoration of their captivity for so long? Did not Jeremiah prophecy that the captivity would be for only 70 years (2 Chron. 36:21)? The questions troubled and exhausted Daniel (Dan. 8:27). But God would not leave the prophet without understanding.

Life-Application Approach

**Icebreaker:** Movie director Alfred Hitchcock (1899–1980) told a parable in Guideposts (1959) about the unknown. “There once was a king who was granted two wishes. His first was to see the future. But when he saw all that lay ahead—the beauty and the pain—he immediately asked for his second wish; that the future be hidden. ‘I thank Heaven,’ the master of suspense proclaimed, ‘that tomorrow does not belong to any man. It belongs to God.’”—“The King and His Wish,” Sermons.org (Illustrations), http://www.sermons.org/sover-eignty.html (accessed February 22, 2005).

**Thought Questions:**

1. Imagine playing a game that you know you will win. In a sense, that’s how it is with us and the plan of salvation. Through the book of Daniel, we know the end—we know that God’s kingdom and His people are victorious. Why should this knowledge help give you courage through your daily struggles in life?

2. Media capitalizes on our curiosity of the future. Movies and books on the subject of traveling into the future and back have been constant bestsellers. What are the natural needs of humanity that create this curiosity? Does this in some way reflect an immature spirituality? Explain.

**Application Question:**

Take a look at a day in your life. From the time you brush your teeth in the morning to when you put on your pajamas at night, you are directly involved in every decision you make. You have control. Or do you? Do you not encounter strange happenings, unexplainable coincidences, things that you have no control over? What are the things in your daily life that you can control? What are the things that you can’t control? Why is it important to know the difference between them? Study the lives of Daniel, Joseph, Esther, Ruth, and Paul. In what ways did they also face things that they could and could not control? What lessons can you learn from them?
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:

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

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?
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?

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____________________________________________________________________

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?

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____________________________________________________________________

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?
Daniel’s study and prayer had cheered him with the news that Israel’s captivity in Babylon would soon end and God’s people would be returning to Jerusalem. Daniel knew the captivity would last for 70 years (Jer. 29:10). It began during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (605 B.C., Dan. 1:1), and now after the vision of Daniel 8, it is already the reign of Darius (c. 539 B.C.). With almost 66 years gone, the captivity indeed would be over soon. Yet, at the conclusion of Daniel 8, the angel shocked Daniel with the news that the sanctuary will lay trampled for 2,300 years.

What should the prophet make of this? The only thing he could do was pray. This week’s lesson deals with the essentials of that prayer (Dan. 9:3-9): its foundation, its appeal to God, and our relationship to Him and His response to us.

I. Prayer: Its Foundation

The Bible teaches that prayer is our response to God’s Word. “Ask,” He has said. So, we respond to His bidding—the foundation of our prayers. Thus, to a Christian, prayer is the second word, for the first word is always God’s. In Daniel’s case, what was God’s first word? Was God’s Word contradictory? Why should it take 2,300 years for the restoration of the sanctuary when Jeremiah had
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?
TEACHERS COMMENTS

clearly foretold that Babylonian captivity should end in 70 years (Jer. 29:10)? Daniel “perceived” this in “the books . . . according to the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet” (Dan. 9:2, RSV).

How did Daniel respond to God’s bidding? He sought clarity and understanding for the vision through prayer.

II. Prayer: The Appeal to God

Repeatedly Daniel used the phrases “the Lord my God,” “O Lord,” or “Lord God,” thus leaving no doubt as to whom one should pray. Three Hebrew words for God are used here. First, Yahweh: the LORD. He is the self-existent, eternal One, who is faithful. Second, El: God. He is mighty and powerful. The key word is power, as revealed to Abraham: “ ‘I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless’ ” (Gen. 17:1, RSV). Third, Adonai: Lord. God is the Sovereign Ruler of the universe.

Put these three words together, and we have the image of a God who is faithful, who is powerful, and who has purpose for us individually and collectively. To this “ ‘great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands’ ” (Dan. 9:4, NIV), Daniel turned in prayer. He is the God of righteousness (vs. 7), of mercy and forgiveness (vs. 9), and of law (vs. 10). He is the God of majesty, holiness, and infinity—and yet approachable, caring, and loving. He is the God of heaven—and of earth.

Daniel knew his God—personally, intimately, and experientially. Therefore, his prayer is direct, with no shade of fear or hint of hesitancy. Rather, it is like a friend conversing with a friend or a child asking a parent for clarification.

III. Prayer: Relationship and Response

Prayer is not a game of “you scratch my back, and I’ll scratch yours.” God is not a pagan deity itching for our apologies or shouts of misplaced praise. Terrible in His judgment and tender and gracious in His concerns, He waits for us to come to Him with transparency, boldness, and trust. And as we come, Daniel’s prayer suggests we should do three things.

First, acknowledge our sinfulness. “ ‘We have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled’ ” (Dan. 9:5, RSV). The word sinned suggests missing the mark. The words done wrong point to the deliberate falsehood in rearranging the moral guideposts. Acted wickedly speaks of moral failure. Rebelled is a deliberate rejection of God’s commandments. Neither did Israel listen to God’s servants (vs. 6). In 17 verses (vss. 3-19), the prophet refers 14 times to the sinfulness of Israel, thus revealing the gravity of sin, the need for confession, and the importance of repentance.

Second, acknowledge our predicament in the face of God’s holiness. Prayer is speaking to God as to a friend, but that does not make God our equal. To Him belongs “ ‘righteousness’ ” and to us
“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?**
This week’s lesson is a reminder that, while we’re sometimes allowed to preview the great themes of the future, our primary responsibilities are in the present. Few Bible passages match this imperative for purposeful living: “He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Mic. 6:8, NRSV). How are justice, kindness, and humility revealed in your personal life and in the lives of your congregation?

In Daniel 9:2, Daniel turns his attention from prophetic timetables that stretch to the “‘distant future’” (Dan. 8:26, NIV) to a prophecy that he and his people believed would be fulfilled in their day: the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Is prophecy always fulfilled as we expect it? What might hinder or alter the way God’s prophecies are fulfilled?

Most of Daniel’s prayer in Daniel 9 features Daniel’s confession of the sins of his people. Not until the last few verses does Daniel state his request: “‘O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act!’” (Dan. 9:19, NIV). What do we miss when our prayers consist primarily of an endless list of requests? What more might God want to hear?

While Daniel was still praying, Gabriel appeared in order to help him understand the prophecy that had left him baffled (see Daniel 8). Just as Solomon prayed for wisdom and received riches and honor (1 Kings 3:5-14), so Daniel prayed for forgiveness and received understanding to interpret the puzzle of the 2,300 days. What does this teach us about prayer?
“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.
of faith and prayer. Hear Daniel’s persistence: “‘O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, give heed and act; delay not, for thy own sake’” (vs. 19, RSV). Such determination brought an end to his perplexity (vss. 20-27). The mystery of the 2,300 days would soon be made clear.

Witnessing

Even after some things are officially “over,” not everyone gets the message: The winner of a marathon may hit the finish line at approximately two hours and thirty minutes; others will straggle in hours later.

The Second World War, in Asia, ended in the autumn of 1945. Yet, 29 long years later, a lone Japanese soldier was still holed up in the Philippine jungle, surrendering nearly three decades after his country had been pacified.

In reading about the fate of the Jews in chapter 9 of Daniel, we see that they were, indeed, suffering the national consequences of their choices. But they also had faith that God’s plan for them was “for good and not for evil, to give [them] a future and a hope” (Jer. 29:11, TLB).

Their captivity would end, Daniel was told, but not in the way they expected. Instead, the prophecy of the 70 weeks would lead to a total vindication of God, salvation for His people, and happiness evermore.

Yet, like that lone Japanese soldier in the jungle, the news hasn’t reached everyone. Those who don’t know God or His Son almost certainly don’t know about this plan for ultimate good. Many Christians have been deluded by popular teaching to “leave behind” the clear message of the Scripture and hope for some kind of rapture to be their deliverance, lifting them out of trouble while the rest of the world suffers unspeakable horrors.

Someone finally got the word to that jungle-bound holdout: “The battle is over! You can go home, and in peace!” Aren’t there many around us today, this moment, who need to hear those very same words?
“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.
**Icebreaker:** “The African impala can jump to a height of over 10 feet and cover a distance greater than 30 feet. Yet these magnificent creatures can be kept in an enclosure in any zoo with a 3-foot wall. The animals will not jump if they cannot see where their feet will fall. Faith is the ability to trust what we cannot see, and with faith we are freed from the flimsy enclosures of life that only fear allows to entrap us.”—John Emmons, “Faith,” eSermons, http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/f/faith.htm (accessed February 23, 2005).

**Thought Questions:**

1. The lesson says, The Lord isn’t asking us to base our faith on sketchy, shadowy things; instead, He framed these great truths around world history, as firm a foundation as possible. Obviously, God wants us to believe these truths; that’s why He makes it easy for us to do just that. Telling us His great plan within the framework of history makes it almost impossible to deny its validity. Why did God make this prophecy so clear? Why doesn’t He make it as easy to live a Christian life every day? Or has He?

2. Daniel was given a vision he desperately wanted to understand. But for some reason the meaning of the vision was not revealed to him for a long while. Why do you think God left Daniel hanging before He gave him the explanation? Think of times in your life when you were left hanging. Looking back, do you think those times were a deterrent or a catalyst to your spiritual life? Share with the class times when hindsight and memories of God leading in the past have played a pivotal role in your decision-making process.

**Application Questions:**

1. Share with the class experiences in your life or the lives of others that illustrate the following quote: “Little faith will bring your soul to heaven, but great faith will bring heaven to your soul.”—Unknown, “Faith,” eSermons, http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/f/faith.htm (accessed February 23, 2005).

2. Have you ever felt impressed that the Lord was calling you to do something that took every ounce of faith you had to accomplish? How can you use Daniel’s experience as an inspiration in your own test of faith? What practical things can your home church do to be more supportive to people going through hardships in their spiritual life?

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*.”  

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:

1. As a class, review the material studied this week. Make sure that everyone understands the links between the two chapters.

2. 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?
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.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
70 \text{ weeks} \\
\hline
2,300 \text{ days}
\end{array}
\]

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?
**Key Text:** Daniel 9:24

**Teachers Aims:**
1. To highlight the importance of the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem and the significance of this event in prophecy.
2. To help class participants affirm that all prophecy focuses on Christ.

**Lesson Outline:**

**Focus on Christ (Dan. 9:24)**

A. The 70-week prophecy begins with the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem and ends on a Messianic note. This implies that the prophecy centers on Jesus.

B. Daniel’s 70-week prophecy helps us to arrive at the actual year of the Crucifixion, A.D. 34. This date serves as a powerful and convincing argument in favor of recognizing Jesus as the promised Messiah, thereby testifying to the accuracy of the day-year principle of prophetic interpretation.

**Summary:** All prophecies point to Jesus Christ, who is the end-time human Deliverer. As we stand now between the past and the future, may we pray that we remain on God’s side in the final resolution of the conflict between good and evil.

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**COMMENTARY**

Parallelism and historical linkage connect, and at times telescope, the prophecies of Daniel 2, 7, 8, and 9. In each case, there is a vision followed by an interpretation. Daniel 7 expands on chapter 2, and chapter 8 discusses the restoration of the sanctuary to parallel chapter 7’s judgment image in heaven. Daniel 9 telescopes back to chapter 8, when God sends the angel to explain the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14. Now we turn to Daniel 9:20-27 to study the answer to Daniel’s prayer, the interpretation of the vision, and the focus on Jesus.

**I. Prayer: God’s Swift Answer**

While Daniel was still praying, the answer came. God does not always answer instantly. Sometimes He delays. Sometimes He remains silent; but however He answers our prayers, the answer is for our good. Daniel’s prayer is not selfish: The future of God’s people and the destiny of His mission are at stake, so Daniel prays for divine enlightenment. Rare is such a prayer, but certain is God’s interest in the destiny of His plans.

“As soon as you began to pray,” says the angel, “an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly
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? See Matt. 1:1, 16; 16:16; Acts 3:13-15, 18; 5:30, 31.

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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.
esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision’” (Dan. 9:23, NIV).

Why was Daniel highly esteemed? He stood before God completely dependent, confessed his sin, mediated for His people, trusted Jeremiah’s prophecy, and sought the vindication of God’s name and promise.

II. The Interpretation of the Dream

The angel next explains the part of the dream not interpreted before: the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14. Note the following points from Daniel 9:24-27: (1) ‘‘Seventy “sevens” are decreed for your people’” (vs. 24, NIV). Although the Hebrew word chatak is translated “decreed” here and as “determined” in other translations, the root meaning of the Hebrew word is “cut off.” From what is 70 weeks to be “cut off” or ‘‘determined’” ‘‘for your people’”? Obviously from a larger portion of time, which is the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14. Seventy weeks amount to 490 days, or 490 years according to the prophetic year-day principle (Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:5, 6; see also The Living Bible, Daniel 9:24 and following). (2) These 490 years out of the 2,300 years are determined for the Jewish people. (3) This period will see an end to sin, atonement for wickedness, and an ushering in of the good news of righteousness. (4) This period also will see the climactic event of redemptive history: The Anointed One will appear and will be cut off (Dan. 9:26).

The period of 490 years is divided into three periods: seven weeks, 62 weeks, and one week. When does this important prophetic period begin? ‘‘From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem’” until the Anointed One comes will be 69 weeks (vs. 25, NIV). These 69 weeks cannot be literal 483 days, for Jesus, the Anointed One, did not come 483 days after the decree to restore the temple was given. So, the period must mean years. The decree to restore the temple was given by Artaxerxes in 457 B.C. (Ezra 7:7, 8), and after 483 years (69 weeks of prophetic days) we arrive at A.D. 27—the year Jesus was baptized and launched His messianic mission.

Now let us return to the 70 weeks. This period is divided into three sections. First, seven weeks (49 years) are allotted for the rebuilding of Jerusalem and its temple. From the decree of Artaxerxes in 457 B.C., the Jews began to rebuild Jerusalem. The temple was completed 49 years later, around 408 B.C. Second, 62 weeks (434 years) later, the Messiah appears, which takes us to A.D. 27 when Jesus was baptized. Third, the final week (seven years) is devoted to the confirming of the covenant by the Anointed One. In the midst of the week (approximately A.D. 31, Dan. 9:27), the Prince shall “put an end to sacrifice” (vs. 27, NIV) by offering Himself as the ultimate sacrifice on the cross.
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.

Command to rebuild Jerusalem
fifth–sixth century B.C.

Jesus the Messiah
first century

69 weeks

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.
III. The Focus of the 490 Years: Jesus

Based on the angel’s interpretation of the 70-week prophecy (vss. 24-27), we have three significant events in the history of God’s people: the restoration of Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity; the inauguration of the Messiah; and the Messiah’s death on the cross. Thus, we see that a central thread runs through the 490-year period—the thread of freedom. Freedom from Babylon, the freedom of God’s kingdom being established at the inauguration of the Messiah (Luke 4:16-19), and, finally, freedom from Satan.

Inductive Bible Study

Texts for Discovery: Ezra 4:7-16; 7:6, 7, 11-17; Daniel 9:24-27

1 To answer Daniel’s questions about the 2,300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14, Gabriel introduces another time period of 70 prophetic weeks, or 490 years. The stated purpose of this period was to “‘put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy’” (Dan. 9:24, NIV). Review this verse and reflect on how this prophecy was fulfilled in the centuries leading up to Christ’s birth. Read the chapter, “The Fullness of the Time,” in the book The Desire of Ages (pp. 31–38), for background.

2 The “‘Anointed One’” in Daniel 9:25, 26 (NIV) is an obvious reference to Jesus, the Messiah. Jesus’ life not only anchors this prophecy in history; it reveals one of the outcomes of His ministry: “‘The Anointed One will be cut off,’ ” and “‘he will put an end to sacrifice and offering’” (vss. 26, 27, NIV). Why did so many, in the ages up to Jesus’ birth, misunderstand this prophecy? What is the greatest misconception about Jesus and His ministry now?

3 Jesus’ earthly life and ministry has been well documented, establishing His place in history and giving credibility to the prophecies that predicted it. Why do so many people’s eyes glaze over when they delve into these and other prophecies? Is it possible that we put too much emphasis on time lines and not enough on Jesus? Explain your answer.

4 The Jews who returned with Ezra to rebuild Jerusalem fulfilled prophecy just as much as did King Artaxerxes, who issued the decree. What role are we now playing in fulfilling God’s promises to a lost world, both as individuals and as a church?
“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:

1. To whom is the letter being addressed?

2. What is the specific complaint against the Jews?

3. 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)?
(Rom. 6:21-23, 2 Cor. 5:16-18, Gal. 5:1). The focus of Daniel, as every other portion of God’s Word, is the Cross and what God did there for human redemption. “There is one great central truth to be kept ever before the mind in the searching of the Scriptures—Christ and Him crucified. Every other truth is invested with influence and power corresponding to its relation to this theme. . . .

“Hanging upon the cross Christ was the gospel. . . . This is our message, our argument, our doctrine, our warning to the impenitent, our encouragement for the sorrowing, the hope for every believer.”—Ellen G. White, The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7A, Appendix C, p. 458.

**Witnessing**

The “fortune cookie,” a baked cracker with a piece of paper bearing a prediction tucked inside, is a staple end-of-meal item in many Chinese restaurants. However, the concept was born not in China but in Los Angeles, California, in the early part of the twentieth century.

If there was someone who saw what you were going to do in life, not just a few days ahead but 500 years ahead of time, then that would be pretty remarkable. Or, it would be the work of God.

That’s the essence of this week’s study: God gave numerous detailed prophecies in the Tanach (the Hebrew name for the “Old” Testament) that point toward the Messiah, the Anointed One, or Christos in the Greek.

OK, you say, that’s nothing unique; there are tons of books with myriads of prophecies. Here’s the difference, however: The prophecies about the Messiah, or Christ, were definite and, just as in the case of the seventy-weeks prophecy, time specific.

Unlike other so-called “prophecies” in history, there’s a way to measure the ones surrounding Jesus. According to scientist Peter W. Stoner, there was only a 1 in 1017 chance of all the prophecies concerning Jesus coming together in that one man, at that one time. Stoner’s 1963 edition of the book, *Science Speaks* (Chicago: Moody Press) addressed the mathematical probabilities of Jesus’ messiahship, and proved—to many readers—that these prophecies were true.

In a world where street-side fortune-tellers, daily newspaper horoscopes, and other predictions capture the attention of millions, the seventy-weeks prophecy is part of a fabric that proves, beyond doubt, that there’s a God who cared about this world and its people so much that He left incontrovertible proof to back up Jesus’ claims.

That’ll beat a fortune cookie any day!
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” \((\text{Dan. 9:25})\), 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 \(\text{Ezra 7:6, 7, 11-17. What is going on here in this decree issued by Artaxerxes in regard to what the Jews are doing in Jerusalem?}\)

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” \((\text{Ezra 4:12})\), 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 \((\text{Ezra 7:7, 8})\) is indeed the “commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem” \((\text{Dan. 9:25})\).

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?
Life-Application Approach

**Icebreaker:** “Dr. George Sweeting once estimated that ‘more than a fourth of the Bible is predictive prophecy. . . . Both the Old and New Testaments are full of promises about the return of Jesus Christ. Over 1800 references appear in the O.T., and seventeen O.T. books give prominence to this theme. Of the 260 chapters in the N.T., there are more than 300 references to the Lord’s return—one out of every 30 verses. Twenty-three of the 27 N.T. books refer to this great event. . . . For every prophecy on the first coming of Christ, there are 8 on Christ’s second coming.’” —*Today in the Word*, Moody Bible Institute, December 1989, p. 40. [http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/p/prophecy.htm](http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/p/prophecy.htm) (accessed February 23, 2005).

**Thought Questions:**

1. The book of Daniel is riddled with beasts, giant statues, and other vivid imagery. Yet, throughout the book Christ remains the underlying focus. How does the 70-week prophecy, in particular, illustrate this point? What specific steps can we take to keep Christ the underlying focus of our church; that is, how do we protect ourselves from majoring in minors?

2. This week’s lesson is deep—lots of math, number lines, and cryptic symbolism embedded in history. Yet, in spite of its intricacies, there is an all-important underlying message. Daniel 8 and 9 are a testament to God’s omniscience and supreme plan. It points to Jesus as the Messiah. It what ways does this prophecy make it easier to argue Jesus’ messiahship? Study the prophecies pointing to Jesus and see how they, together, make it so clear that He, and He alone, could have been the Messiah.

**Application Question:**

While Jesus lived on earth, He did things that let people know right away that He was special. What were some of those things? Which things can we emulate in our lives today? What are some things we can do so that people will know we are “special,” not in the sense of better but in the sense of different? And how can we do this in a positive manner so they will want to know more about us and what we believe?
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:

1. As a class, review everything that we’ve studied so far until everyone in the class understands the material.

2. 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?
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:

70 weeks are “cut off”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>457 B.C.</th>
<th>69 weeks</th>
<th>70th week</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>“Messiah the Prince”</td>
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*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?
**Key Text:** Matthew 27:51

**Teachers Aims:**

1. To help the class understand the significance of 1844 in a more simplified way.
2. To emphasize that the 1844 time prophecy revolves around heavenly things and spiritual realities.

**Lesson Outline:**

I. 1844 Simplified (Dan. 8:14)
   A. The 1844 time prophecy is part of a larger picture, depicted in Daniel 8 and 9: the 2,300 days.
   B. Simple math connects 1844 to the 70-week prophecy beginning in 457 B.C., tying into Christ’s ministry and crucifixion in A.D. 27 and A.D. 34, respectively.
   C. The baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist emphasizes how closely Christ relates to humanity. This divine ordinance gives us hope that Christ is ever ready to relieve us, ever close to offer us peace amid our daily struggles.

II. “Not for Himself” (Dan. 9:26)
   A. Christ’s death on the cross was an atoning sacrifice offered for a death-deserving world.
   B. Christ died to restore a fallen human race to God, whose relationship to Him was broken down by sin.
   C. Christ’s death in our place should reassure us that, no matter how far we have fallen away, the penalty for our past actions has been paid by His blood.

**Summary:** The year 1844 is significant, because it focuses on the launch year of the greatest Second Advent movement in ecclesiastical history. Equally important, 1844 began a heavenly process that will ultimately climax in the final purification of sin from the universe.

**COMMENTARY**

Last week we outlined the 70-weeks prophecy and its significance. We noted that it was cut off from the 2,300 years of Daniel 8:14. We also noted that the 70 weeks are divided into three portions, beginning with the 457 B.C. decree of Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem: 49 years for the completion of Jerusalem, 483 years until the coming of the Messiah, and seven years for the confirmation of Christ’s sacrifice and work on earth. This week we will show that the entire prophetic burden was focused on Jesus and His work.
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>70 weeks (490 years)</th>
<th>457 B.C.</th>
<th>A.D. 27</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Command to restore</td>
<td>69th week ends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and to rebuild Jerusalem</td>
<td>483 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Baptism of Jesus)</td>
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</table>

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?
of redemption. We will study the rebuilding of the temple, the mission of the Cross, and the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary.

I. The Rebuilding of the Temple

Daniel 9 provides the starting point for the 70-weeks prophecy. Review Daniel 9:25. The period of 69 weeks begins with the decree to rebuild Jerusalem issued in 457 B.C. It took seven weeks (49 years) to rebuild Jerusalem’s streets, walls, and temple. That event affirms that God keeps His promises. The promise made through Jeremiah that the captivity will last 70 years and that God’s people will return to Jerusalem was fulfilled as stated. The nearness of God to His people—that “‘I will dwell among them’” (Exod. 25:8, NIV) —had once more become a reality.

II. The Work of the Anointed One

God gave us in Genesis 3:15 the first gospel promise. This promise was fulfilled “when the fulness of the time” (Gal. 4:4). Daniel 9 shows God’s plan for the fulfillment of this promise, establishing once again the nearness of God to His people—this time in the form of Christ—God in human flesh, dwelling with us and dying for our sins. Gabriel says that this would take place 69 weeks from Artaxerxes’ decree, taking us to A.D. 27.

What happened in A.D. 27? The baptism of Jesus, which publicly affirmed His messiahship. See Matthew 3:16, 17. Out of the Jordan and on to the cross, the journey was one of battling with Satan, proclaiming God’s kingdom, choosing disciples to carry on His work, and performing God’s mighty works—all in all, announcing that heaven has come down to earth to atone for sin and to redeem the sinner. Christ’s mission reads amazingly like Daniel 9:24: “‘to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy’” (NIV).

Daniel 9:26, 27 informs us how part of Christ’s work will be done and that most of this work is accomplished during the last of the 70-weeks prophecy. In the midst of that final week (around A.D. 31), “‘the Anointed One will be cut off.’” By this act, He “‘will put an end to sacrifice and offering’” (vs. 27, NIV). This refers to the Cross, upon which Christ became our sacrifice for sin and death (Rom. 5:6-8, 6:10, 2 Cor. 5:15, Heb. 9:15, 1 Pet. 3:18). “Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. ‘With His stripes we are healed.’”—Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 25.

Daniel 9:27 adds one more detail: “‘He will confirm a covenant with many for one “seven” [week]’” (NIV). After being cut off in the
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 no 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>70 weeks (490 years)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>457 B.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Command to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Baptism of Jesus)</td>
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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?
middle of the final week for the sins of the world, the week ends with the confirmation of the covenant. The end of the final week brings us to A.D. 34—the year Stephen was stoned, Saul’s conversion came about, and his selection as the apostle to the Gentiles was confirmed by the Holy Spirit. Thus, God’s promise to Abraham that in him all nations shall be blessed (*Gen. 22:15-18*) became a reality.

### III. The Cleansing of the Heavenly Sanctuary

In Daniel 9, Gabriel rushed to Daniel to explain the 2,300 years

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**Inductive Bible Study**


1. While history (necessarily) zeroes in on pivotal events and prominent people, it would be a mistake to assume that ordinary people like us are insignificant in the great sweep of history. Read the chapter, “The Chosen People,” in Ellen G. White’s book, *The Desire of Ages* (pp. 27–30). What characteristics is God looking for among His people today? Is He finding them in you and in your congregation? Explain.

2. Jesus’ earthly ministry literally changed the course of history, just as prophecy foretold: “‘Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering’” (*Dan. 9:27, NKJV*). From the perspective of a believer, list at least three things that changed with Jesus’ crucifixion.

3. The final week of the 70-weeks prophecy is significant not only for what happened in the middle of the week but for what happened at its end. With the stoning of Stephen and the commissioning of Paul to take the gospel to the Gentiles, this prophecy took on a worldwide dimension. In what tangible ways are you, as an individual and as a congregation, involved in the task of taking the gospel to the entire world?

4. The 2,300-day prophecy has been manipulated and rearranged to “prove” a lot of bizarre prophecies. Yet, the fact remains: The 70-weeks prophecy, beginning in 457 B.C., coincides perfectly with Jesus’ earthly ministry. If that much of the prophecy is accurate, the larger prophecy must be trustworthy, as well. What primary lesson about God and His faithfulness have you learned as a result of this study?
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.


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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>70 weeks (490 years)</th>
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<tr>
<td>457 B.C.</td>
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<td>A.D. 27</td>
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<td>A.D. 31</td>
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<td>A.D. 34</td>
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<td>Command to restore</td>
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<td>69th week ends</td>
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<td>(Death)</td>
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<td>Gospel to</td>
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<td>and to rebuild</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
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<tr>
<td>483 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Baptism of Jesus)</td>
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<td>of Christ)</td>
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<td>Gentiles</td>
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<table>
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<th>2,300 days (2,300 years)</th>
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<tr>
<td>457 B.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(490 years)</td>
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<tr>
<td>A.D. 34</td>
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(Dan. 8:14). The angel explained in detail 490 of those years, beginning with the restoration of the Jerusalem temple to the coming of the Messiah, the Cross, and the confirmation of God’s covenant. We have a definite starting point for this 490-year period—457 B.C., the year of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem. But what is the beginning point for the 2,300-year prophecy? The answer must be found in the angelic announcement: “Seventy weeks are decreed” (Dan. 9:24, NIV)—that is, cut off. This implies that 70 weeks, or 490 years, must be cut off from the larger portion of 2,300 years. Hence, the 2,300-year prophecy must also begin with the same year. The math is simple and scriptural. The 2,300-year period ends in A.D. 1844—a year in which something was expected with the heavenly sanctuary. “‘Then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated’” (Dan. 8:14, NIV). We shall return to this theme in lesson 12.

**Witnessing**

The best place to hide something, Edgar Allan Poe wrote, is where everyone can see it. That formed the premise of his famous story, “The Purloined Letter,” and mystery writers have copied that idea for more than one hundred fifty years. But this notion truly may not be original to the great American writer and poet. I have the feeling that God was more than one step ahead of the author, especially when considering the prophecy of the cleansing of the sanctuary. As we saw in an earlier lesson, the mandate is clear: The sanctuary must be cleansed. But when is it to take place? How does it tie in to other prophecies? What’s the reason for all of this?

The answer is found here in this week’s study. The cleansing has to be reckoned with the 70 weeks running parallel to the start of the 2,300-day prophecy, or else that prophecy doesn’t work. When you lay the two time lines side by side, you end up with the 2,300-day-years concluding in . . . 1844.

And most of the Christian world has yet to fully acknowledge this. Instead, many have bought into a “dispensational” view that jumbles times and prophecies together, creating a mixture of scenarios that sound interesting but are not truly satisfying.

By “doing the math,” as our study implores, you can be certain of the importance of 1844 and its role in fulfilling Bible prophecy. Knowing that, you can share this truth with those who need it: with nonbelievers who will find further confirmation of the Bible as truth and with Christians who could use a little push onto the rock-solid ground of understanding.
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).

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c}
70 \text{ weeks} & 457 \text{ B.C.} & 1,810 \text{ years} \\
& (490 \text{ years}) & \text{A.D. 34} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c}
2,300 \text{ days (2,300 years)} & 490 \text{ years} & \text{1,810 years} \\
457 \text{ B.C.} & \text{A.D. 34} & 1844 \\
\end{array}
\]

\textbf{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.

\textbf{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.

\textbf{Review} what we’ve studied this week. Be prepared to talk about it in class on Sabbath.
Life-Application Approach

Icebreaker: Here are some predictions from the past:
“King George II said in 1773 that the American colonies had little stomach for revolution.
“An official of the White Star Line, speaking of the firm’s newly built flagship, the Titanic, launched in 1912, declared that the ship was unsinkable.
“In 1939 The New York Times said the problem of TV was that people had to glue their eyes to a screen, and that the average American wouldn’t have time for it.

Thought Questions:

1 What we can clearly see from these various predictions is that it is not easy to tell the future, is it? One of my favorite past predictions was about the personal computer. When told about the idea of a personal computer, a company executive dismissed the idea, saying, “Like maybe one home in all the country will need one.” What does this teach us about just how hard it is to tell the future? Why is this principle important for us as we seek to tell the future through Bible prophecy? Prophecy will come true, of course, because it is from God. But what about our interpretation of the prophecy? Why must we always be careful in this area?

2 Read John 13:19. What important principle is Jesus giving us here on the role of prophecy?

Application Question:

As a church, we place a lot of emphasis on the prophecies of Daniel. In a sense, you could argue that we were founded on our understanding of the prophecies of Daniel. What role does your belief in Daniel’s prophecies play in your Adventist walk? What do some other denominations teach about the book of Daniel? In what areas do they see it the same as we do? What are the differences? Though there’s no question we would have plenty to show them, might we be able to learn something from them, as well?

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?
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”?
Key Text: Ezekiel 4:6

Teachers Aims:
1. To help class participants understand the application of the day-year principle in prophecy.
2. To confirm the relationship between the day-year principle and the time prophecies in Daniel.

Lesson Outline:
I. The Application of the Day-Year Principle (Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:5, 6)
   A. Once 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.
   B. Without the day-year principle application, the time prophecies in Daniel would yield neither accurate predictions nor a correct understanding of events.

II. Prophetic Time (Dan. 9:24-27)
   A. The 70-week time prophecy in Daniel 9:24—which takes us directly to the ministry of Christ—proves the validity of the day-year principle.
   B. The long-range time prophecies in Daniel should help us to understand the meaning of patience as we wait for the promised things of God.

Summary: The day-year principle is rock solid. Because this principle has its roots in the Bible, it is the God-given means for helping us interpret prophecy.

COMMENTARY

In last week’s study we applied to both the 70 weeks and the 2,300 days the principle that in apocalyptic prophecy a day represents a year. Using this principle, and recognizing that Gabriel told Daniel that the 70 weeks shall begin with the decree to rebuild Jerusalem (457 B.C.), we arrived at the conclusion that the 70 weeks (490 years) covered the restoration of Jerusalem, the arrival of the Messiah, the crucifixion of the Messiah, and the universal proclamation of the gospel. The same year-day principle, we argued, must be applied to the interpretation of 2,300 days, because the 70 weeks (490 years) were cut off from the larger period of 2,300 years. Hence, the 2,300-year period also should have the same starting point as the 490 years, namely, 457 B.C.), which would bring us to A.D. 1844 when the sanctuary shall be cleansed. This interpretation hinges on two factors: (1) in apocalyptic prophecy, one day is equal to one year, and (2) the 70 weeks were part of the 2,300-day prophecy. Hence, both must have the same starting point.

However, is that all there is to our argument? While we can say
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?
Yes on the basis of a contextual study of Daniel 8 and 9, we need to note a few other factors: the nature of symbolic prophecy, the contextual flow in which the 70 weeks and 2,300 days are located, and the end-time nature of the 2,300-day prophecy.

I. The Nature of Symbolism in Apocalyptic Prophecy

Daniel and Revelation are known as apocalyptic prophecies because they deal with the conclusion of history in a cataclysmic manner and the establishment of God's kingdom afterward. In contrast, traditional prophecy, such as the ones found in other books of the Bible, speak either of impending events or of God's stern warnings. One important characteristic of apocalyptic prophecy is symbolism. For example, Daniel 2 speaks of an image and a rock. As the interpretation itself shows, each of these symbolizes various kingdoms. Likewise, in Daniel 7 and 8, the beasts symbolize kingdoms, while the sea and the winds in Daniel 7:2 represent the conditions of the Mediterranean world out of which the kingdoms arose. The horns, the wings, and the little horn are symbolic of an earthly power. Thus, it is logical to conclude that the time periods mentioned in Daniel also are symbolic. How else can we explain the supremacy of the little horn of Daniel 7 (papal Rome) that lasted “time, times, and half a time” (Dan. 7:25, 12:7, NIV; compare Rev. 12:14, NIV) or “forty-two months” (Rev. 11:2, 13:5) or 1,260 days (Rev. 11:3, 12:6)? If they are literal, then papal Rome ruled for only three years and six months. Yet, this is not historically true. The little horn’s power is projected to the end time, something that is possible only if we accept the year-day principle. Such a principle is used in Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6 as a teaching principle.

II. The Contextual Flow of Daniel's Prophecies

Further, the year-day principle has the following supportive factors. (1) The empires of Daniel 2, 7, 8, and 12 last for long historic periods. So, the power of the little horn of Daniel 7 is said to be longer than any, reaching almost to the end time. (2) Daniel 8:26 (NIV) demands that the vision of the “evenings and mornings” (i.e., 2,300 days) is true but needs to be sealed up, “for it concerns the distant future.” This indicates that the time period is not literal days but prophetic years, projecting events to the distant future. (3) Why would Daniel be exhausted and become sick if the sanctuary were to be reconsecrated after a short period of 2,300 literal days (Dan. 9:27)? Daniel understood these were years and that the captivity was not nearing its end as Jeremiah declared it would after 70 years. (4) Gabriel, in explaining the prophecy of 2,300 days, says 70 weeks (490 days) were cut off for the Jewish people. Cut off from what? Obviously from the 2,300 days; and both were to begin from the
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?
Inductive Bible Study

Texts for Discovery: Exodus 34:22; Leviticus 12:5; Ezekiel 4:5, 6; Daniel 8:17, 19, 26; 10:2, 3

1. Read Daniel 2:44, 45; 7:13, 14; and 8:25, 26. Identify the words or phrases that indicate that the events of these prophecies will come at the very end of earth’s history. What suggests that these events are more than just the natural rise and fall of nations?

2. The day-for-a-year principle of prophetic interpretation has a long history among students of the Bible. Given the benefit of hindsight, it is easy to see how the pieces of the puzzle fit so perfectly into place. Why, then, do so many try to discredit this method of prophetic interpretation? What are they afraid of?

3. At the heart of the 2,300-day prophecy is the earthly and heavenly ministries of Jesus. Yet, often evangelistic and Bible study treatments of this prophecy focus almost exclusively on the activities of pagan and papal Rome. Why is it necessary for believers to stay focused on Jesus? Read 2 Corinthians 3:18.

4. After seeing these visions, Daniel wrote: “‘I, Daniel, was deeply troubled by my thoughts’” and “‘I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding’” (Dan. 7:28, 8:27, NIV). Clearly, Daniel did not understand all the symbols and timetables related to these prophecies. What did he understand about his relationship with God (see Dan. 12:13)? What should we emphasize as we await history’s climax?

5. Think of the challenges and persecutions faced by Christ’s followers through the centuries. What encouragement do the prophecies of Daniel offer you that was unavailable to believers of previous generations?
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?
some other power than historicist interpreters have attributed.

III. The End-Time Nature of 2,300 Days

Daniel 7–9 predicts the course of history to the end of time when God will crush all earthly kingdoms, along with false religious systems. Before those final days dawn upon the earth, God’s last time prophecy predicts the restoration of the sanctuary. That is the purpose of the 2,300 days. As an end-time event, these days must also be years and must begin at the same time as the 70 weeks. Both time periods begin and run concurrently. Any attempt to break them apart, or break the 70 weeks to let the last week be fulfilled in connection with the Second Coming, as secret-rapture theorists advocate, is a violation of Scripture. After the end of the 70 weeks with the conclusion of Christ’s

Witnessing

During the later part of the 1800s and the early decades of the twentieth century, some Western women believed they should have a true “hourglass” figure. For them, this meant squeezing into a tight, laced-up garment called a corset. Sometimes there would be pain—and even internal injuries—but the women were usually pleased with their appearance.

Oddly enough, today there are many people, women and men, who are all too willing to bind themselves into a prophetic corset that limits their range of movement through the texts of the Bible. Rejecting commonsense views of Scripture, they try to squeeze the Bible into their preconceptions, perhaps with internal spiritual injury as a result.

That’s one good reason why this week’s study gives us something important to share with our friends and neighbors. It’s as important as sharing the truth about the prophecies surrounding Jesus or the understanding of the significance of 1844 as a prophetic milestone.

Properly understanding the day-year principle behind Bible prophecy will give you a vital tool in explaining the mysteries of Scripture to others, especially nonbelievers. Those who understand simple mathematics and how time works will suddenly understand that these predictions aren’t mere fables but reliable guides to what has happened in history—and to what shall happen in the future.

The human heart and mind yearn to know what’s going to happen; we’ve read about this before. But most people are as logical as they are curious, and using this knowledge can satisfy their need for understanding, as the good news behind the prophecies satisfies the longing of their hearts.

Isn’t there someone you know who needs to grasp this good news? Could that someone even be . . . you?
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?
work on earth, the next point in the 2,300-day prophecy is 1844—the cleansing of the sanctuary. This will be discussed in lesson 12.

Life-Application Approach

Icebreaker: One of the most amazing scientific discoveries of the past century was the theory of special relativity. Albert Einstein showed that time was not absolute; that a person in one frame of reference would experience time differently from someone in another frame of reference. It was all relative. The faster you moved, the slower time went. If two people were the same age, and one of them spent time in a rocket moving near the speed of light, then when that rocket returned to earth, the person on the ground would have aged more rapidly than the one in the rocket! Why? Because for the person in the rocket time slowed down, and what was a year for him in the rocket was (depending upon how fast he or she was going) three years for the person on the ground. Time is clearly something more complicated than we imagine.

Thought Question:
The Adventist Church obviously understands and accepts the time prophecies in Daniel. Yet, at times it doesn’t seem as though we take them too seriously. According to the prophecies, we are in the last phases of earth’s history. Time is running out. And still we are lukewarm and laid back. We are content to sit back, relax, and wait for the Second Coming. Knowing our place in time, through Daniel’s prophecy, shouldn’t we utilize every moment we have? Why aren’t we on fire, making use of our short time here?

Application Questions:
1. We have limited time on this earth to do our part in the great controversy. Every second is precious. Every moment we waste could be a moment used to further God’s work. How can you make better use of your time and live every moment for God?

2. Today there are companies such as HeadConcierge.com that offer to do what you don’t have time for—anything from taking your child to the doctor to researching for your next report. This trend of passing on our responsibilities to someone else because of our lack of time can bleed over into our spiritual lives. We may rely on Christian music or Christian schools to provide our children spiritual food. As a class, find biblical passages about stewardship and spiritual accountability. Then come up with ways your class can support one another during the week to provide quality time within each family.
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?
SABBATH AFTERNOON


**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.


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?
**Key Text:** *Luke 2:1*

**Teachers Aims:**
1. To examine what the New Testament teaches us about Rome as a political empire.
2. To consider 1844 in the light of the wonderful saving grace of Jesus Christ, His dying for us on the cross, and His intercession now for us in heaven.

**Lesson Outline:**

I. **The Revelation of Rome** (*Luke 2:1*)
   A. The power of the worldly empire described in Luke 2:1 is the same one depicted in Daniel 7:23, implying that Daniel actually referred to Rome.

II. **The Little Horn** (*Daniel 7 and 8*)
   A. The Lord wants us to know exactly what the little horn represents.
   B. The little horn obviously symbolizes an important power in the prophetic history of the world.
   C. Daniel’s prophecy does not mention Rome by name. God does not reveal all truth to all people at once. God gives us light in a progressive manner; as our understanding increases, God unfolds more and more truth, according to His perfect timetable.

**Summary:** In understanding prophecy, the Bible is its own interpreter. Thus, we find all four empires named in the Bible.

**COMMENTARY**

The prophecies in Daniel 2, 7, and 8 sketch history from Daniel’s time to the end time when God will establish His eternal kingdom. The kingdoms shown in each of these prophecies are Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and God’s kingdom. But one is not named: Rome, both pagan and papal, the empire that follows Greece and precedes God’s kingdom. Pagan Rome succeeds Greece and rules from western Europe to Asia Minor to most of North Africa. Papal Rome involves those prophecies pertaining to the persecution of the saints and the change of the Sabbath.

This particular interpretation is not unique to Seventh-day Adventists. Scholars from the beginning of the Christian church through the Protestant Reformation have advocated this position. But some have provided alternative interpretations to oppose applying the prophecies to papal Rome. One such view still is prominent among Protestant scholars. It suggests that the little-horn power
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 (Dan. 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?
refers to Antiochus Epiphanes, a Syrian king who ruled from 175–164 B.C. Why do Adventists reject Antiochus Epiphanes as the little horn? Do the little horns of Daniel 7 and 8 represent the same power?

I. The Little Horns of Daniel 7 and 8

Daniel says more about these little horns than he says about any other power, indicating the significance this prophecy attaches to the power they symbolize in both secular history and the history of the great controversy. In Daniel 7, the little horn comes out of the ten horns of the fourth. The third beast is Greece, so the fourth beast must be a kingdom that came after Greece. History indicates that the fourth great empire following Greece is Rome. The ten horns symbolize the ten divisions into which Rome fell in A.D. 476. Out of these ten horns, one little horn arose whose power and work lasted until God’s everlasting kingdom was set up. From the description of its work (Dan. 7:21-27), it is clear that it represents a religious power with political authority—the continuation of Rome from its pagan to its papal phase. The little horn of Daniel 8 succeeds the goat, which is described as Greece. This horn also is pictured as a great religious power (8:19-26). A comparison of Daniel 7 and 8 reveals that both powers are described as a little horn (7:8, 20; 8:9); both are persecuting powers (7:21, 25; 8:10, 24); both are religious and blasphemous powers (7:20, 25; 8:10, 11); both attack God’s people (7:25, 8:24); both extend their work until the end time (7:25, 26; 8:17, 19); and both will be destroyed by God (7:11, 26; 8:25). Thus, we see that the two horns represent the same power, Rome. Daniel 7 deals primarily with papal Rome, while Daniel 8 points to the work of both pagan and papal Rome.

II. Why Antiochus Epiphanes Cannot Be the Little Horn

The Adventist position that Antiochus Epiphanes cannot be the little horn is solid. (1) Antiochus did come out of the Seleucid division of Alexander’s empire. He ruled over Syria from 175–163 B.C. But such a short reign cannot come anywhere near the description of the little horn whose power and influence extend to the end of time (8:17, 19). (2) In 168 B.C., Antiochus invaded Palestine, massacred thousands of Jews, and attempted to change their culture and religion by desecrating the Jerusalem temple with sacrifices of unclean animals. This resulted in the Maccabean revolt and the rededication of the temple in 164 B.C. The temple itself never was fully destroyed, and the sanctuary system was not abolished for 2,300 years (8:14). So, Antiochus cannot be the little horn. (3) The little horn became a great power, standing up against the Prince of princes (8:25) and cutting off the Anointed One (9:26). Antiochus never became a great power and was not around when the Messiah
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?

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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?
came. (4) In 167 B.C., Antiochus invaded Egypt, but when he reached Alexandria, the Roman legate ordered him out. Such a humiliated king cannot represent the mighty, growing, religiopolitical power of the little horn.

III. Why This Hesitation on Rome?
While most scholars agree in the interpretation of the various

Inductive Bible Study


1 While there are many questions about the Bible that we do not have answers for, there are many places where the Bible intersects with secular history. Scan through the book of Daniel and see how many times the events of the book are anchored to a historical event. How does knowing that there really was a Nebuchadnezzar and a Belshazzar make it easier to believe in Daniel and his prophecies?

2 Some of our critics say that the Adventist interpretation of the 2,300-day prophecy is an attempt to cover up William Miller’s mistaken belief that Jesus would return in 1844. How would you explain that the mistake was in the what, not in the when, of that prophecy? How would your understanding of the 2,300-day prophecy—particularly the 70-week prophecy—figure into your explanation?

3 Devout believers always have experienced persecution on some level by the enemies of truth. How does that fact explain the use of symbols and mysterious numbers in many significant Bible prophecies?

4 As we have seen in previous lessons, the great themes of Daniel recur in different ways throughout the book. Read Daniel 7:8, 11; 8:9-12. What common themes help identify the historic power represented by the little horn? In what ways does this power differ from other violent and ruthless world leaders?

5 Some interpreters, in order to bend Daniel’s prophecies to suit their interpretations, make some of the time prophecies of Daniel 8 and 9 symbolic and some of them literal. Why is this not a good idea? What principle of prophetic interpretation is violated as a result?
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?
prophecies of Daniel pertaining to Babylon, Media-Persia, and Greece, there has not been agreement on the fourth kingdom as Rome and the little horn as Rome in its pagan and papal phases. Why? The first three kingdoms, although not particularly friendly to the biblical theme of history, occasionally showed their interest in God’s people. Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged God (Dan. 4:34-37), and Cyrus, the Medo-Persian emperor, reversed the Babylonian captivity. Alexander the Great of Greece was responsible for the translation of the Old Testament in Greek. But Rome had great political and religious aims. Under its political authority, it did everything it could to destroy the Christian church. As a religious power, it established its world dominance, undermined the authority of Scripture, changed the Sabbath, and usurped the priesthood, which is the sole prerogative of the risen Lord. Having done all this, would it not be convenient if people believed this fourth kingdom to be anything else but Rome? And would it not be useful if Daniel’s

Witnessing

Grigori Aleksandrovich Potemkin was romantically linked to Catherine the Great, an empress of Imperial Russia, and helped her seize power. When she toured the Ukraine and the Crimea, he constructed elaborate and impressive façades that made Catherine think her subjects were well off when, in fact, they lived in desperate straits. Today, a Potemkin village is English shorthand for something that looks impressive but actually hides a dismal reality.

Many Bible commentaries and study notes contain their own “Potemkin village” when it comes to Daniel 8. They claim that the “little horn” referred to here is Antiochus Epiphanes, a successor to part of Alexander the Great’s empire who defiled the Jewish temple during his reign.

It’s a nice-looking picture, but it doesn’t hold up to scrutiny. If you are to take a “dispensational” view of prophecy, however, you must hold on to Antiochus like a drowning person grasps a life preserver.

The truth, however, may be a little less pretty, but it’s more, well, true: Rome, a political and, ultimately, a religious power, is the little horn that moves against believers. The pieces fit with greater symmetry than the Antiochus argument.

The logic and “connect-the-dots” nature of prophecy, when properly understood, is a powerful witnessing tool. Unlike various doctrines, it can’t be subjectively argued: Either prophecy works or it doesn’t. That makes it a great way to penetrate even the hardest heart or the greatest skeptic.
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?
authority could altogether be minimized by undermining the book’s authorship and the date as critical scholars have attempted to do?

Life-Application Approach

**Icebreaker:** The Bible addresses a broad range of topics. From history and prophecy to parables and lifestyle, God shares with us divine wisdom and truth. Some prophecies are easier to accept and apply than others. The prophecy of the little horn is one of the more difficult ones to accept, for social reasons—despite the overwhelming preponderance of evidence giving it a positive identification. It is not as easy to accept the little horn portrayed in Daniel as a specific church organization, because it is deemed socially unacceptable to stigmatize any group, even if we are dealing only with an organization and the individuals in it. Truth, though, has never been popular; for those who love God and who love truth, we must follow it no matter where it leads us.

**Thought Questions:**

1. Philosophers have sometimes said that human beings, at their core, want to be God. It’s the idea that humans want to be their own bosses, their own rulers, and make their own rules. One of the activities of the little horn is that it thinks to change times and laws. We know, historically, what this was all about. How did this action reflect the idea of making our own rules and being our own God?

2. Tuesday’s lesson says: “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.” How does knowing and understanding God’s truth help in times of confusion and discouragement?

**Application Question:**

As Bible-believing Christians, we need to be faithful to what we understand as Bible truth. We must remember, too, that Bible truth includes loving all people, even our “enemies.” With this thought in mind, how are we to teach people the important truths regarding the activity of the little-horn power yet do it in a kind and loving manner?
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.
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?

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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?

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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?
Key Text: *Hebrews* 8:1, 2

**Teachers Aims:**

1. To look more closely at the details of the little horn, specifically at its attack against Christ.
2. To review the services of the heavenly sanctuary in relation to the little horn.
3. To help class participants gain insight into the cleansing role of the sanctuary in the context of the gospel and the plan of salvation.

**Lesson Outline:**

I. **The “Prince” Under Attack** (*Dan. 8:9-12*)
   A. The little horn’s power is two-dimensional:
      1. Horizontal: depicts military or political expansion
      2. Vertical: depicts religious attack
   B. The vision in Daniel 8:9-14 focuses on the religious attack by the little horn.

II. **Sanctuary Under Attack** (*Daniel 7 and 8*)
   A. The little horn takes away the heavenly ministry of Christ.
   B. The little horn casts down the foundation of the sanctuary.

**Summary:** The little horn, in its attack against the heavenly sanctuary, usurps power and prerogatives that belong exclusively to God.

**Commentary**

Our lesson this week zeroes in on the little-horn power and its attack against the sanctuary. This attack is described in Daniel 8:10-13. The little horn “‘set itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host; it took away the daily sacrifice from him,’ ” and brought low “‘the sanctuary’” (*vs. 11, NIV*). Note also the imagery of Daniel 8. Unlike Daniel 7, here we have beasts that are clean and related to the sanctuary service. From this we may infer that the sanctuary is an important topic of discussion in Daniel 8, and the little horn has set itself to hide the true meaning and significance of the sanctuary.

In other words, the little horn’s primary attack is on the plan of salvation as revealed in the Scripture and as made available through Christ and Him alone. In the little-horn power (pagan and papal Rome) we encounter a religious system that is contrary to the one in Scripture. This lesson focuses on the meaning of “the daily” and on how it was taken over by the little horn.

I. **The “Daily”**

The phrase “daily sacrifice” translates the Hebrew *tamid*, a word
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 vss. 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.
TEACHERS COMMENTS

occurring more than one hundred times in the Old Testament. It usually is translated “continual” or “perpetual.” Only in Numbers 4:16 (NKJV) and five times in Daniel (8:11, 12, 13; 11:31; 12:11) is the word translated “daily.”

The idea of daily does not derive from tamid itself but from its association with the sanctuary. The sanctuary had many services and objects that were “daily”—continual or perpetual. In addition to the daily burnt offerings (Exod. 29:38, 42), there was the daily shewbread (25:30), the lamp that was always lighted (27:20), continually burning incense (30:8), and the perpetual fire on the altar (Lev. 6:13). All these daily ministrations of the priesthood were “a copy and shadow of what is in heaven” (Heb. 8:5)—the priestly ministry of the risen Jesus, who is our heavenly Mediator (vs. 6).

“In all instances tamid denotes aspects of the tabernacle or Temple service that were in operation ‘continually,’ ‘regularly,’ or ‘daily.’ . . . The ‘daily’ or ‘continual’ service represented God’s continuing beneficent provision for man, and pointed forward symbolically to Christ’s ministry—Christ, who ‘ever liveth to make intercession for’ us (Heb. 7:25).”—The SDA Bible Dictionary, pp. 257, 258.

II. The Little Horn and the Daily

In previous lessons we identified the little horn as Rome in its pagan and papal stages. The work of the little horn (Dan. 8:10-12, 24-26) describes functions carried out by both pagan and papal Rome. For example, verse 25 speaks about standing “‘against the Prince of princes.’ ” The reference in verses 11 and 25 to being exalted as high as the Prince of the host is reflected in the papal claim to the office of Christ as Mediator between God and humanity. The persecution of saints spoken of in Daniel 8 was accomplished in both the pagan and papal stages of the little-horn power.

But how did the little horn (papal Rome) take away the daily and cast down the sanctuary? How did it eclipse the daily priestly ministry of the new covenant established by Christ, our heavenly priest? Daniel gives us word pictures, but history tells us how it occurred. Here are a few pointers: (1) The establishment of the intercessory ministry of human priests, the confessional, and the mass through which Jesus is sacrificed afresh minimized the role and function of Christ as Savior and Priest. Eventually, people turned more to the human priests for confessing their sins, instead of approaching Christ directly (Heb. 4:16). (2) The mass literally made the priest alter Christus, another Christ. Indeed, the priest, in administering the mass, supposedly changes the bread into the body of Christ. (3) The confessional shifts the forgiveness of sin from Christ to the human priest. (4) The little horn cast the truth to the ground (Dan. 8:12). Nonbiblical doctrines such as the Sunday Sabbath, immortality of the soul, Mariolatry, human intercession, purgatory, equal or superior status of tradition with reference to Scripture, and oth-
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?
ers have indeed trampled biblical truth. (5) Such teachings led to the glorification of the human priesthood and the exaltation of the institutional church, attributing to it powers that the New Testament does not give. Instead of the church being the proclaimer of salvation by grace through Christ alone, it became the reservoir of salvation so that one cannot be saved without being a member of it.

Such is the work of the little horn. But the Scriptures do not leave us in the dark regarding such apostasy. Restoration and redemption are the Bible’s central themes. Those who will be led not by tradition but by the unfailing Word of God will find the Lord in whom alone there is truth, grace, and forgiveness.

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**Inductive Bible Study**

**Texts for Discovery:** *Exodus 25:8, 9; Romans 8:28-39; Hebrews 7:24–8:6; 9:1-14, 24*

1. The earthly tabernacle, and later the temple in Jerusalem, was a powerful symbol of God’s abiding presence with His people. It represented not only His presence but the process by which His erring people could be reconciled and restored into a right relationship with Him. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, how well do you understand the symbols connected with the sanctuary service? How do the sanctuary and its services affect your assurance of salvation?

2. Read Daniel 8:9-12. These few verses predict the little horn’s attempt to usurp prerogatives that belong only to God. Since the Garden of Eden, Satan has tried to replace the true worship of God with some kind of counterfeit. List at least three incidents in which people were deceived into accepting the counterfeit. What makes people so gullible? What fortifies us against deception?

3. Ellen G. White wrote: “The principle that man can save himself by his own works lay at the foundation of every heathen religion; . . . Satan had implanted this principle. Wherever it is held, men [and women] have no barrier against sin.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 35, 36. What inherent dangers threaten those who ignore salvation that is only by grace, through faith in Christ? List at least three.
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?
Witnessing

If you’ve ever driven a car—or perhaps sat up front with the driver—you know that there are many indicators on the dashboard you want to see: You want to know you’re going within the speed limit or that your oil level is fine. The one indicator you don’t want to see, especially at night, particularly way out in the country, is the one that tells you the car is out of, or low on, gas.

But if you’re driving along and that low-fuel warning light comes on, what should you do? Well, you want to fill the tank as soon as possible; you might reduce speed and turn off the air conditioning (and open windows) to maximize what gasoline you have. And when you find a gas station, you put the right kind of gas in your car. You don’t use tap water or a bottle of root beer.

This week’s lesson offers a clear, distinct warning about Christians missing a source of power and safety: the ministry of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary. I mentioned earlier that Jesus isn’t just our Judge but our Defense Counsel, as well.

Yet, too many Christians around the world place their faith in “the church” and its rituals to save them. Some are actually taught such principles from the pulpit! Those ideas are just as foolish as putting root beer in your gas tank: You won’t get anywhere, and you might seriously damage the vehicle.

Contrast that foolish approach with the wise, loving counsel of this week’s study. Review it carefully. It’s a message worth sharing with others.

Life-Application Approach

**Icebreaker:** “In ancient Rome, crowds by the tens of thousands would gather in the Colosseum to watch as Christians were torn apart by wild animals. Paul Rader, commenting on his visit to this famous landmark, said, ‘I stood uncovered to the heavens above, where He sits for whom they gladly died, and asked myself, “Would I, could I, die for Him tonight to get this gospel to the ends of the earth?”’ Rader continued, ‘I prayed most fervently in that Roman arena for the spirit of a martyr, and for the working of the Holy Spirit in my heart, as He worked in Paul’s heart when He brought him on his handcuffed way to Rome.’ Those early Christians ‘lived on the threshold of heaven, within a heartbeat of home, no possessions to hold them back.’”—*Our Daily Bread*. Retrieved February 23, 2005, from http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/p/persecution.htm.
“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?**
Thought Question:
Sunday’s study says “The little horn is said specifically to persecute ‘the mighty and holy people.’” Though this was a historical event, prophecy does teach that, eventually, persecution will arise again and that God’s faithful people will face a terrible time of trouble. How seriously do we as a church take these prophecies? What will it take for the remnant church to realize that persecution could occur in our lifetime? At the same time, what danger is there of obsessively focusing on the predicted persecution?

Application Questions:
1 The following are quotes in Friday’s lesson taken from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1995): “There is no offense, however serious, that the Church cannot forgive” (par. 982); “Were there no forgiveness of sins in the Church, there would be no hope of life to come or eternal liberation. Let us thank God who has given his Church such a gift” (par. 983). It is obvious that the Catholic Church wholeheartedly believes that it is the surrogate God on earth. As with anyone with strong convictions, it is not hard to imagine the measures the Catholic Church could take to preserve their divine power. What convictions do you have that are a match for the little horn in the last days? Take an inventory of your history with God and see what you have that is battle-ready. Do you really believe in the church, in the Bible, and in God enough to die for it all? How do you feel about the way you have answered these questions? What do you think needs to happen to be prepared to face the little horn?

2 This week’s lesson focuses on the heavenly sanctuary. Jesus is our High Priest, interceding for us right now. How does this make you feel—knowing He is constantly working on your behalf? Why, then, should the sanctuary message be considered part of the good news of the gospel?
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 life to come or eternal liberation. 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?
SABBATH AFTERNOON


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.
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 that 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?

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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?
**Key Text:** Revelation 22:12

**Teachers Aims:**
1. To review the crucial truths in Daniel 7 and 8.
2. To emphasize the significance of the pre-Advent judgment as outlined in these two chapters.
3. To underscore that God’s final kingdom will be vindicated through His righteous elect.

**Lesson Outline:**

I. **Sanctuary Revisited** *(Daniel 7 and 8)*
   - A. The cleansing of the sanctuary, both worldly and heavenly, was of major importance in Daniel’s prophecy.
   - B. The final victory of God and His saints is shown after all the worldly empires are phased out. This victory takes place upon the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary.

II. **Judgment Revisited** *(Ps. 51:1-4, Matt. 24:13)*
   - A. The little horn shall be judged, condemned, and punished while the saints shall be vindicated and exonerated.
   - B. Justice is part and parcel of the pre-Advent judgment that leads to the second coming of Christ.
   - C. God judges His people in an open way before the onlooking universe.

**Summary:** A close connection exists between the cleansing of the sanctuary and the pre-Advent judgment. May we, by faith in Christ’s righteousness, have the assurance in the day of judgment that we will be sealed in the book of life forever.

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**COMMENTARY**

Daniel 7:23-25, 8:9-12, and 9:24-27 describe the anti-God activities of the little-horn power. These activities include a rebellion in heaven, which ended with the crucifixion of the Prince of heaven, the trampling down of truth, the substituting of the “daily” with a false system of salvation, and the persecution of the saints. In answer to the question “How long will it take for these things to be fulfilled?” *(Dan. 8:13; paraphrased)*, a holy one replies, “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” *(vs. 14).*

Greatly disturbed and needing more clarification, Daniel faints and remains ill for several days until, in answer to his earnest prayer, God sends Gabriel *(vs. 27, Dan. 9:20-27).* Gabriel’s answer provides a starting point for the 2,300 years. That starting point, the 457 B.C. decree to rebuild Jerusalem, is the same as the one for the 490 years *(vs. 24)*, since both periods run concurrently. Add 2,300 years to 457 B.C., and one gets A.D. 1844, the time when “the sanctuary [shall] be cleansed.” This week’s lesson looks at the meaning
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?
of the cleansing, the results of the cleansing, and implications of the cleansing for the end-time history portrayed in Daniel.

I. The Meaning of the Cleansing of the Sanctuary

Daniel 8:14 must refer to the heavenly sanctuary, for in A.D. 1844, there was no earthly sanctuary in which a priestly ministry operated. To help us understand what the cleansing of this heavenly sanctuary involves, we must study the earthly sanctuary of the Old Testament, for it was a copy of the heavenly one (Heb. 8:5).

Leviticus 16 speaks of the annual great Day of Atonement when a cleansing took place. On this day, and this day only, the high priest entered the Most Holy Place to make an atonement for the sanctuary, symbolically cleansing the sanctuary from the confessed sins of Israel. The entire nation came under divine scrutiny, typifying the last-day judgment. All the activities of the day were part of the cleansing process, which symbolized judgment against Satan, the final atonement of sin by Christ, and the purification of God’s people. In addition, the process symbolized the vindication of God’s character and His power to save all who confess their sins and seek His grace.

II. 1844 and the Cleansing of the Heavenly Sanctuary

The 2,300-year prophecy ending in 1844 initiated a process whereby the heavenly sanctuary was to be cleansed. Paul states: “It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these” (Heb. 9:23, NIV).

The cleansing of the earthly sanctuary cannot be transferred literally to the heavenly, but Paul makes a transition of immense significance. The earthly sanctuary was cleansed annually by a human high priest. But the heavenly sanctuary is cleansed once for all by Christ, the high priest who mediates the sanctification of the believers through His blood. The cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary must be understood not in the sense of a physical cleansing but of a moral and spiritual one. For here in the courts of heaven began Satan’s rebellion and his charge against God’s character of love and justice. Now, at the end of the 2,300 years, even as Satan’s wickedness climaxes through the work of the little horn and the end time draws near, Christ begins in heaven the antitypical Day of Atonement service. The unfallen intelligences of the universe, the angels, and Satan himself will see the just and righteous basis on which the character of God is vindicated. That vindication (eventually to climax in the final destruction of Satan and sinners and the gathering of God’s people into His kingdom) is itself the restoration of the heavenly sanctuary.
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?
III. The Pre-Advent Judgment

The interpretation of 2,300 years led Adventists to teach not only the vindication of the heavenly sanctuary but also a pre-Advent judgment of all those who profess the name of Christ. Why is there a need for such a judgment? There are two reasons.

1. When Christ returns, He rewards His people (Matt. 16:27) and gathers them into His kingdom. Is it not, then, appropriate to have a judgment process before the Second Coming so that Satan and his forces can no longer charge God as unfair and His law as impossible to obey? The pre-Advent judgment seals the character of the saints against these false accusations.

Inductive Bible Study


1 Many people are threatened by the idea of a judgment, especially at the hands of an all-knowing God. But the judgment process described in Daniel 7:8-14, 19-27 primarily reveals the condemnation and destruction of the little horn and the vindication of the “‘saints of the most high’” (Dan. 7:22, NIV). What issues are involved in this judgment? Who are the main characters? How is this related to the “cleansing of the sanctuary”?

2 Throughout the great struggle between truth and error, Satan has been able to use lies, coercion, violence, hatred, and other weapons that are inconsistent with God’s character of love, justice, mercy, and grace. Although glimpses of this cosmic conflict have revealed Satan’s methods through the centuries, the pre-Advent judgment will reveal the issues at stake for the entire universe to see. What evidence would indict Satan and, by extension, the little horn and other oppressive powers?

3 Read Leviticus 16. How does the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary at the Day of Atonement relate to the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary? According to the symbolism, who is being justified? Who is being condemned?

4 If our standing in the judgment were based only on our performance, we would be in trouble. For as Paul reminded the believers in Rome: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23, NIV). Fortunately, we face the judgment on the basis of Christ’s merits, not our own. How does that truth change the way we look at the judgment? How does it change the way we talk about it to others?
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?

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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.

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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.
2. The entire universe will witness the vindication of God’s character, realize the unreasonableness of Satan’s charges, and marvel at Christ’s redemptive and mediatorial satisfaction of God’s justice and love. As the process comes to a close, there will be a universal acclaim: “‘Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed’” (Rev. 15:3, 4, NIV).

Witnessing

On his deathbed, Harold Marshall Sylvester Richards, Jr., a longtime radio evangelist who succeeded his father, H. M. S. Richards, Sr., as speaker of The Voice of Prophecy, was thinking about preaching. He told his daughter, Mary Richards King, and he told Lonnie Melashenko, his VOP successor, the same thing: He wanted to preach about Jesus’ return. The key point: “He’s on His Way!”

The hope that Jesus is coming has sustained the faith of Christians for centuries, from that first-century Roman Empire backwater where He was crucified to the twenty-first century metropolises in which many of us live and work.

But what is Jesus bringing with Him? “My reward,” He says in Revelation 22:12, “to give every man according as his work shall be.” Oh, and that’s also Jesus’ gift for every woman and every child.

Determining who gets what reward is a process that’s going on right now. It’s part of the pre-Advent judgment, and it’s another source of comfort for the Christian.

God isn’t just sitting around doing nothing. Jesus isn’t reclining on a heavenly chaise lounge. The Holy Spirit isn’t on vacation.

Instead, the lives and work of all who’ve ever lived are under review. During America’s great Civil War, Julia Ward Howe wrote in the anthem “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” that God “is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment seat.”

That’s good news. God actively is involved in our lives. Better news: Jesus pleads our case, if we’ve trusted Him for salvation. Best news: He’s on His way, and a reward is with Him!
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?
Icebreaker: The Web site http://unusualchurches.blogspot.com lists unusual churches and religions that have a unique belief system. Some of them are:

“The Temple of the Vampire is . . . devoted to the Vampire religion, legally registered with the U.S. federal government since 1989.”

The Church of the Friendly Ghost provides “a venue and environment for high-quality art, music and theatre that is overlooked, under-appreciated, or otherwise marginalized by mainstream complacency.”

The Temple of Godzilla offers “everything you ever wanted to know about Godzilla.”

Hair Religion, where hair is revered.

Thought Questions:
1. Those “churches” listed above are unique. Yet, unique isn’t necessarily bad, is it? After all, as Adventists we are, in some ways, unique. How so? What things about us, not just in doctrine but in anything, helps make us different from other churches?

2. The pre-Advent judgment belief is what helps to make the Seventh-day Adventist Church unique. When we have 27 other fundamental beliefs that are shared by one Protestant church or another, why is it important to emphasize the belief that makes us stand out? Or should we seek to downplay the role of the pre-Advent judgment in our theology?

Application Question:
When the Millerites first read and interpreted the prophecies of Daniel 8 and 9, they were convinced that Christ was coming. They were so convinced, and many of them neglected their crops that year. Why waste time working in the fields? Jesus was coming! But when He didn’t come, many were left disillusioned and confused. Though we can admire their sincerity and dedication, we don’t want to make the same mistake. How can we as a church strike the right balance between believing that Jesus is coming and yet getting on with the daily tasks and chores of life?
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.”—“The Day of Atonement,” quoted in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*.

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?
**Lesson 13**

*September 16-22*

**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?
Key Text: 1 John 2:1

Teachers Aims:
1. To establish the link between the Day of Atonement and the judgment.
2. To derive the fact that judgment is, of course, good news.
3. To understand the significance of the Cross in the context of the judgment and the gospel.

Lesson Outline:
I. Standing in the Judgment (Rom. 8:1, 34; 1 Pet. 1:2, 18, 19)
   A. Jesus stands in our place in the judgment.
   B. Without the perfect garment of righteousness, which is attainable only through Christ, we would all be condemned.
   C. Having Jesus as our Advocate and Judge gives us the highest hope to stand victorious in the judgment.

II. The Meaning of His Blood (Heb. 9:12-14)
   A. The earthly sanctuary is a model of the whole plan of salvation.
   B. Christ now stands in the heavenly sanctuary and ministers in our behalf the merits of His atoning death.
   C. Christ’s blood alone can atone for sin.

Summary: Understanding the pre-Advent judgment in the context of the gospel gives us a deeper understanding of the plan of salvation. By accepting Christ as our Savior, we have a substitute who stands in the presence of God “for us” (Heb. 9:24) now, and especially in the judgment.

COMMENTARY
Jesus’ incarnation is the ultimate form of God’s self-disclosure. It is also God’s way of dealing with sin and the great controversy. History finds its commentary, continuation, and culmination in Jesus. He acts as the Judge of human life. He not only is One among us; He is our Redeemer.

Jesus is the Man of the Cross and the Lord of the resurrection. As such, He defies death by exposing the true nature of evil and defines life by leaving the tomb empty.

Through crucifixion and resurrection, God reconciled the world unto Himself (2 Cor. 5:19), redeemed us from sin (Gal. 4:4-6), and vanquished the devil. That is the good news and the power of the gospel. Shall we choose to be transformed by that good news and power? Such a choice can at times be difficult, for it is Satan’s goal to prevent people from doing so. Furthermore, he tries to lure people who already have chosen Christ to believe in a cheap grace that makes no demand on the mind or the life of the individual. Hence,
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.

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?
Jesus warned His followers to be aware that, while discipleship is the initial step, judgment will be the last. Read Matthew 12:36 and Hebrews 9:27. Our lesson this week deals with the gospel and judgment. We will study the basis of the gospel, the certainty of judgment, and the relationship between the two.

I. Blood: The Basis of the Gospel

Read John 3:16, Romans 1:16, and Ephesians 2:8. These and other biblical passages make it clear that our salvation is founded on God's grace through Jesus Christ, the one who shed His blood on the Cross as an atonement for sin. Read Ephesians 1:7. Blood is crucial to salvation. “In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Heb. 9:22). God hoped to teach Israel the seriousness of sin and the enormous cost of forgiveness through the sanctuary services. Blood played a most important part in both the daily services, where individuals brought their sin offerings, and in the annual service of the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16), where the High Priest used blood to offer an atonement for the entire congregation and the sanctuary itself.

II. The Gospel of Judgment

The gospel is good news not only unto salvation but also unto judgment. The God who saves is also the God who judges. Without judgment, the work of redemption stands incomplete. Observe the Day of Atonement again. The Most Holy Place contained the mercy seat and the ark of God, which contained God's law. The High Priest's cleansing of the Most Holy Place signifies not only the fulfillment of the work of mercy but the justification of the unalterable nature of the Law.

The Day of Atonement symbolizes the high-priestly ministry of Jesus. Adventists believe Jesus began this second phase of His priestly ministry in 1844. This phase is known as the pre-Advent or investigative judgment—a process so specific that through it God's love and justice stand vindicated before the universe. The blood of Jesus shed on the cross proved that God is both just and loving in His efforts to destroy sin and redeem the sinner. Thus, the work of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary since 1844 is the fulfillment of the earthly sanctuary’s Day of Atonement.

We are, indeed, living in the time of the heavenly Day of Atonement. Those who claimed to have accepted Jesus will have their fitness for heaven examined on the basis of their loyalty and discipleship to Christ. This examination also will demonstrate to the universe that Christ’s atoning death vindicates God’s position in the great controversy and His judgment on sin and Satan. The pre-Advent judgment is not a figment of theological imagination. Rather, it is God's appointed way for the universe to see that the
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?
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What does the garment symbolize? See Isa. 61:10, Zech. 3:1-5.
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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.
cross and the love that drove the Savior there form the basis for the salvation of the faithful, the damnation of sinners, and the justification of God’s judgment against sin and Satan.

III. Grace and Judgment: Their Relationship

Grace is the power of God unto salvation. The blood of Jesus makes grace possible. Judgment is the power of God unto total cleansing and restoration. God’s justice ensures judgment. Thus,

Inductive Bible Study

**Texts for Discovery:** Leviticus 16; Romans 5:6-11; 8:1, 34-39; Hebrews 6:19, 20; 7:24, 25; 9:24-28; 1 Peter 1:17-21

1. The plan of salvation is not an add-on, an afterthought. It always has been part of God’s plan to rescue His rebellious creatures. The prophecies of Daniel merely reveal, in broad brush strokes, the time line that stretches from Daniel’s time to ours. What do these prophecies tell us about God’s sovereignty? What do they say about our role in prophecy’s fulfillment?

2. While past generations of Adventists may have viewed the pre-Advent judgment as a time to systematically reform their behaviors by sheer force of will, the gospel says that there is only one way to transform our characters from the inside out. What is it? Read Romans 12:1, 2. What form does that transformation take?

3. The parable of the wedding garment (Matt. 22:1-13) revolves around not just who came to the wedding but what they were wearing. What did the garment symbolize? Why is that a good representation of the garment God provides for our salvation? Why would anyone want to appear in God’s judgment without a wedding garment?

4. “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,” wrote the apostle Paul (Rom. 8:1, NIV). Why does it sometimes seem that even though Christians are delivered from being condemned by God, they cannot expect that same treatment from one another? Read Matthew 7:1-5. What would your congregation look like if it were a “no condemnation zone”? Is that even remotely realistic? Should it be?

5. What is the relationship between faith and works? Read Luke 18:9-14. To whom is this parable addressed (vs. 9)? In whose works can we put our confidence?
No Condemnation

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

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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?

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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.
both grace and justice are part of God’s character in the destruction of sin, the cleansing of sin, the victory of God in the great controversy, the redemption of the faithful, and the ushering in of the new heaven and earth.

Paul is right, therefore, in pointing to the Cross as the basis by which God has declared “his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. 3:26). The pre-Advent judgment, then, is only a preface to the certainty of when all the universe will acknowledge what has been established during the heavenly Day of Atonement: “ ‘Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for true and just are his judgments’ ” (Rev. 19:1, 2, NIV).

Witnessing

Judgment. It has a rather final sound to it, and it should. A judgment is passed in criminal and civil cases; judgments are rendered at the end of the process. Sometimes an appeal can be made, but often those appeals are unsuccessful.

Judgments are often final.

But to leave things there would be to finish with only half of the story. This week’s lesson details judgment—every idle word, every thought, every act will be judged—but for believers the judgment happens in a different set of circumstances.

The gospel enters in!

Think about this for a minute. This isn’t some special incantation or formula we say to avoid judgment. It’s not something you can buy; the true price of salvation is far too high for any human to afford. Rather, the gospel is what it’s name means: “good news.” And the good news is that in this universal Day of Atonement, a sacrifice has been made that can, and does, pay for our sins. The sacrifice belongs to Jesus; when we believe, salvation is ours.

Unlike any other trial or any other proceeding in the history of the universe, this judgment can turn totally in your favor, however bad your record has been. Jesus has written on His hands the names of those He’s forgiven. If you are in those hands, you have nothing to fear.

Courtroom proceedings are a fixation for many people: Novels, motion pictures, and television programs the world over concentrate on judgment and the final verdict. But in the courtroom of the universe, in the trial of all time, God’s standard of justice is vindicated; yet, many of those whose sins prove that standard are spared punishment.

If that isn’t something to tell a friend about, I can’t imagine what is.
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?
**Icebreaker:** “In 1981, a Minnesota radio station reported a story about a stolen car in California. Police were staging an intense search for the vehicle and the driver, even to the point of placing announcements on local radio stations to contact the thief. On the front seat of the stolen car sat a box of crackers that, unknown to the thief, were laced with poison. The car owner had intended to use the crackers as rat bait. Now the police and the owner of the VW Bug [Volkswagen Beetle] were more interested in apprehending the thief to save his life than to recover the car. So often when we run from God, we feel it is to escape his punishment. But what we are actually doing is eluding his rescue.”—Unknown, “Salvation,” eSermons, http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/s/salvation.htm (accessed February 23, 2005).

**Thought Questions:**

1. Wednesday’s section of lesson 13 says, “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.” Being true, this makes salvation very simple. There is nothing difficult about being saved. In spite of this truth, we, as Christians, find it hard to accept the simplicity of salvation. Why do you think that is? What factors cause our skepticism?

2. The Sabbath section of this lesson says, “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.” How do we incorporate the judgment into our spreading of the good news? The judgment evokes images of a trial and the possibility of damnation. This can be a scary thought. How do we balance the good news of salvation with the seriousness of the judgment?

**Application Questions:**

1. What if God randomly picked the life you lived the past week to judge you? Consider the things you knowingly did that were wrong. Would you have lived differently if you knew that last week was “the” week? If so, how so? Why so?

2. Like the thief in the story, we sometimes run from God, even when He has our best interests in mind. Whatever our reasons for running from God—fear, guilt, shame, or otherwise—and though we know we should trust Him, we can’t help ourselves. What are some things in your life that compel you to run from God instead of letting Him help you overcome them?

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 for 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 that for so many people in the church the pre-Advent judgment has 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?
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?

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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 judgment 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?

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Key Text: Revelation 14:7

Teachers Aim:
1. To discern the significance of the pre-Advent judgment for us today.
2. To reveal the implications of the pre-Advent judgment for the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
3. To help class participants understand what the judgment reveals about God and the salvation He offers.

Lesson Outline:

I. Judgment and Justice (Ps. 73:1-17)
   A. The hour of God’s judgment has come.
   B. Judgment will reveal God’s character in dealing with sin.

II. The Last Event in Salvation History (John 14:12, Acts 1:11, Rev. 22:12)
   A. Judgment culminates in the second coming of Christ.
   B. Judgment reassures us that the Second Coming is near.

III. The Assurance of Salvation
   A. Judgment reveals that our salvation rests in Christ.
   B. Full salvation shall be attained upon the vindication of Christ’s righteousness in us.
   C. Our works can never save us, but they do play a role in demonstrating the reality of Christ’s salvation in our lives.

Summary: The pre-Advent judgment, with the date 1844 and its teachings, is important for us because it affirms the biblical basis upon which we as a church, with our distinctive message, exist.

COMMENTARY

Many years have passed since 1844. Why does it take God so long to wrap up the cosmic conflict? This question reflects our failure to understand God’s purposes. After sin came to this planet, Adam and Eve certainly would have expected the Redeemer to come soon and solve their dilemma. Indeed, Eve named her first son Cain, which means “I have received a man from God.” For more than four thousand years, the human race waited for the Redeemer to arrive—in “the fulness of the time” as Inspiration states (Gal. 4:4). Then came the promise of the Second Coming, and even as early as Peter’s time, scoffers wondered why Christ had not yet returned. He had to reply: “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you,
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?
not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9, NIV). God has His own time, His own clock.

During what we view as delay, yet another question regarding judgment seeks an answer: What is the purpose of the pre-Advent judgment today? Three answers may be given: the vindication of God’s character, the assurance of salvation, and the cosmic victory of God after which we shall go home at last.

I. The Vindication of God’s Sovereignty

We have noted that Daniel 7:13, 14, 26, 27 and 8:14, 23-25 are parallel passages describing the same event. Daniel 7 speaks of a judgment prior to the establishment of God’s kingdom (vs. 27). Daniel 8 speaks of the cleansing of the sanctuary, leading to the destruction of the little horn (vs. 25). The scene in Daniel 7 describes the seating of the Ancient One in the heavenly court, the coming of the Son of Man, and the restoration of the Son’s “authority, glory and sovereign power” (vs. 14, NIV). These are the powers Christ had in heaven and the powers Lucifer coveted. Satan would never acknowledge that Christ is coeternal, coequal, and copowerful with God the Father—a point he contested powerfully and lost in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11).

Daniel 8, on the other hand, speaks of the cleansing of the sanctuary, providing the time of 1844 for when the judgment events of Daniel 7 will take place in order for the entire universe to see the true nature of God and Christ. Daniel 7 also speaks of Satan’s attack against God’s law (vs. 25). This, however, is brought to the universe’s full attention by the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8. How was the unchanging nature of God’s law’s proven to the universe? By the Messiah’s death on the cross. If God’s law could have been changed, Jesus need not have died. By approaching the Ancient of Days with His sacrificial blood, Christ proved that He had kept the law. Thus, in the pre-Advent judgment, the character of God—His love and justice—is fully vindicated.

II. The Assurance of Salvation

Salvation is a gift of God’s grace, accomplished through the Cross. It is a gift we should freely accept. Just as choosing to side with Satan results in sin, choosing to live by what Christ has accomplished results in salvation. This latter choice gives us the following assurance: “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:1, 2, NIV).

As a result of the pre-Advent judgment, the entire universe will witness that “those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 3:13, NIV).
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.*

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

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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?
III. Home at Last

The ultimate focus of biblical history is the Second Coming. The One who brought the good news of grace will stand at the last day as the Judge of a rebellious order. The climactic moment in the history between good and evil will witness the unleashing of divine wrath to cleanse the universe of every hostility toward righteousness. This cleansing is described in terms of fire that will melt the elements and purify the earth (2 Pet. 3:10-13). But before this

Inductive Bible Study


1. Spend a few moments listing some specific injustices in the world. They include militant terrorism and ethnic cleansing, child abuse and terminal illnesses. What does the Adventist doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary say to people who suffer under those horrible conditions? Is that message being heard? How could it be broadcast more effectively?

2. Compare Daniel’s dream of the four beasts (Dan. 7:2-14) with the three angels’ messages (Rev. 14:6-13). What are some obvious similarities? Are these passages fundamentally threatening or encouraging? What is the primary message we should take away from them?

3. “Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets,” wrote Amos (3:7, NIV). While some people are frustrated by what they do not know about God’s activities in the course of human events, He is remarkably open in terms of His plan of salvation. Give at least five concrete examples of how God has chosen to reveal Himself. List five questions you would ask God if you could interview Him. What is the most important thing you know about God that makes Him trustworthy?

4. The 2,300-day prophecy is the last great Bible prophecy to be fulfilled before Jesus returns. How should that information alter the way we live our lives? Or should it? Can we justify living at the same level of commitment that we are living now?

5. Read Galatians 5:22, 23. Say that you wanted to exhibit these characteristics in your life. How would you begin? How would they show that you are involved in a saving relationship with Christ?
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.
occurs, the pre-Advent judgment provides the universe and unfallen beings with an opportunity to understand why Christ is the judge and purifier. Before He returns to earth, the pre-Advent judgment confirms who will be saved and who will not.

Out of the cleansing will come the fulfillment of God’s promise: “‘Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth’” (Isa. 65:17). This new cosmos will forever be in harmony with God’s eternal purposes and the home of the redeemed. The only evidence it will contain that sin ever existed will be the scars in the Redeemer’s hands and feet. In that new earth, we will celebrate throughout eternity the love of God and the faithfulness of His promises these scars symbolize.

**Witnessing**

What is the most heart-stopping question in the world? In the universe? In your life?

Since I don’t know you, friend reader, I can’t say for sure, but I suspect it includes the word why. Like the cards in an old trivia game, all those questions are buried in our memories and written on our hearts. If any of us could have a few minutes with God, speaking frankly as Abraham and Moses once did, we could sum up all our questions, perhaps, in that word: *why*.

By now, as we conclude this look at the motive, method, and means of God’s judgment, perhaps something is beginning to form in your mind. Can you see it? I’ll give you a hint: It’s the answer to all those whys.

Another component of a competent judgment is justice. The answer to why there is sin in the world. Why did we have decades of Attila the Hun, Genghis Khan, Pol Pot, Saddam Hussein? Why are there husbands who beat their wives, mothers who kill their children, neighbors who attack neighbors? Why do diseases ravage young lives, or full lives that should be spent in quiet retirement?

The entire reason for the judgment is to find out the answers to these why questions. That’s good news; it’s something you can depend upon in the darkest hours of life.

But are you the only person in the world with those why questions? Of course you’re not. Everyone has those questions. Now, though, through this study, you and I both have the means to share that with people who are weighed down under those questions. What can we share? The answer—and the Answer!
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?

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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?

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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?
Life-Application Approach

**Icebreaker:** The best gifts in a relationship are those received without asking, those given without any motivation other than love. The best gifts are those given as a spontaneous gesture of an overwhelming need to make “feelings” tangible. In this respect, being saved by faith is similar to being in love. When you are saved by faith, you are not able to smugly and idly wait to enter heaven’s pearly gates. You are overwhelmed with a desire to do good things, to make a difference. And you are not doing this for any reason other than love. And the world, and the universe, see this. When you are saved, when you have the joy of salvation, then everyone sees the reality of that salvation in your actions. Your works are a testimony of God’s saving grace in your life.

**Thought Questions:**

1. With the Icebreaker in mind, compare and contrast the following texts: Romans 4:5; Ephesians 2:8, 9; 2 Corinthians 5:10; and Revelation 22:12. How would you explain the relationship between “saved by faith” and “judged by works?” How does this affect a person who is saved on his or her deathbed and has no time for good works?

2. Why is it often so hard for us to accept that salvation is by faith alone? Why is it so easy to get caught up in the idea that our works can get us to heaven or that they have saving merit before God?

**Application Question:**

What do you think constitutes “quality” works? Think of situations that tempt you to gain God’s acceptance by works, hoping He won’t notice that His grace is not your motivating factor. Think of other circumstances in which people’s opinions force you to do good works. What should ultimately be our motivation in all that we do?

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 farther 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.