

DEEPER

Daily Bible Study

Podcast, Study Notes, and Teacher Helps

From Confession to Consolation

Sabbath (February 29): God of Answered Prayers

Of the many powerful lessons that stand out in the book of Daniel, one of the greatest is that God answers prayer. In Daniel 1, God answers the prayers of Daniel and his friends and leads their Babylonian guard to allow them to eat the food of God's choosing. In Daniel 2, God answers their prayers again, and reveals the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's dream to Daniel. In chapter 3, God answers the prayers of Daniel's friends and protects them from a fiery death in the furnace. In Daniel 6, God again answers Daniel's faithfulness in prayer by preserving him through a night in the lion's den. And this week, as we study Daniel 9, we will see God's dramatic answer to one of the Bible's most beautiful prayers.

Sometimes it may be tempting to think, as we look at our own lives, that God doesn't answer prayer in the same ways that we read about in these Bible stories. And yet, the Bible contains numerous promises that God will answer "Yes" to our prayers when we pray them according to the Word of God and the will of Jesus Christ. In today's lesson we will look at several prayers that God promises to always answer "Yes."

Discussion Questions:

- Read the passages below and discuss in what way, and for what reason(s), God will always answer "Yes" to these prayers:
 - 1 John 1:9. (The prayer for forgiveness and cleansing from sin.)
 - Mark 9:14-24. (The prayer for more faith.)
 - Matthew 26:36-39. (The prayer of submission to God's will.)
 - Luke 11:9-13. (The prayer for the Holy Spirit.)
- What prayers has God answered in your life recently? In what way has this answered prayer strengthened your faith in God, in His character, and in the trustworthiness of His Word? (Answers will vary.)

Sunday (March 1): The Centrality of God's Word

The prayer recorded in Daniel 9 came as a response to careful Bible study. Although God had revealed many wonderful things to Daniel through dreams and visions, the prophet still found it necessary to study God's Word for himself. Daniel's experience here illustrates well the principle found in 1 Corinthians 14:32, "And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." Privileged as he was with direct communications from heaven, Daniel based his religious experience on the revealed and written Word of God passed down through the ages. Today, we have access to that same Word—and the same prophecies—that encouraged and guided Daniel so many years ago.

Discussion Questions:

- Read Daniel 9:1,2. What powerful key to Daniel's prayer life is revealed in these verses? (Daniel prayed in response to the promises and prophecies contained in God's Word.)

- Read Jeremiah 25:11,12; 29:10; and Leviticus 26:14-45. What do these passages reveal? (Moses warned that captivity would be the result if Israel rebelled against God, while Jeremiah revealed the length of the captivity.) In what ways did these two prophetic passages help Daniel understand the times in which he lived? (Daniel was living at the end of the 70 years of captivity, and he realized that God had allowed this terrible experience because of the sins of His people.)
- Read 2 Peter 1:19. What action on our part is necessary in order for the Bible's prophecies to benefit us? (We must "take heed" to them and act on them.) What experiences have you had where you acted on a Bible promise or prophecy? What happened as a result? (Answers will vary.)
- Read 2 Peter 1:16-18. In verse 19, Peter refers to the "more sure word of prophecy." In verses 16-18, what is prophecy "more sure" than? (According to Peter, Bible prophecy is more sure than personal experiences we might have—even "more sure" than the experiences of those who were eyewitnesses of Christ's miracles.) Read the passage below and discuss why it is so important for us today to develop unbreakable trust in God's Word:

Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive. By the Bible testimony these will detect the deceiver in his disguise. To all the testing time will come. By the sifting of temptation the genuine Christian will be revealed. Are the people of God now so firmly established upon His word that they would not yield to the evidence of their senses? Would they, in such a crisis, cling to the Bible and the Bible only? Satan will, if possible, prevent them from obtaining a preparation to stand in that day. He will so arrange affairs as to hedge up their way, entangle them with earthly treasures, cause them to carry a heavy, wearisome burden, that their hearts may be overcharged with the cares of this life and the day of trial may come upon them as a thief. {GC 625.3}

Monday (March 2): An Appeal to Grace

Daniel's prayer begins with a powerful appeal to God's character. His character is revealed in His justice and mercy, and also in His prophetic Word given to humanity.

Discussion Questions:

- Read Daniel 9:4. What commandment is Daniel referring to here? (The second commandment.) For what reasons might Daniel have begun his prayer this way? (Daniel begins his prayer by referring to God's character as the basis upon which his praise and petition will be based.)
- Read Exodus 20:4-6. What does the second commandment reveal about God's character? (God is both just and merciful.) How important are these two qualities in a time of judgment? What do they reveal about God as a Judge? (Answers will vary. Any judge who is not just is not fit for that office, and a good judge will, at times, show mercy and grace to those who do not deserve it.)
- Read Matthew 6:9,10. In verse 9 of Christ's model prayer, how are we encouraged to begin our prayers to God? (We are to call upon God's name, which also points to His character, as the basis of our prayers to Him.) In verse 10, what else about the structure of our prayers is implied by praying, "Thy kingdom come"? (One of the most repeated prophecies in the

Bible is the establishment of God's kingdom at Christ's second coming. By praying for God's kingdom to come, we are praying as Daniel did by basing our prayers on Bible prophecy.) What aspects of God's character are revealed by the fact that He has provided so many prophecies for us? (Answers will vary. God values communication and transparency, and wants to build our trust in Him.)

- Read the passage below and discuss how basing our prayers on God's character and Bible prophecy can help us achieve this experience:

There is no spiritual strength for us in constantly brooding over our weakness and backslidings, and bemoaning the power of Satan. This great truth must be established as a living principle in our minds and hearts—the efficacy of the offering made for us; that God can and does save to the uttermost all who come unto Him complying with the conditions specified in His word. Our work is to place our will on the side of God's will. Then, through the blood of the atonement, we become partakers of the divine nature; through Christ we are children of God, and we have the assurance that God loves us even as He loved His Son. We are one with Jesus. We walk where Christ leads the way; He has power to dispel the dark shadows which Satan casts across our path; and, in place of darkness and discouragement, the sunlight of His glory shines into our hearts. {5T 741.1}

Tuesday (March 3): The Value of Intercession

In his prayer, Daniel exemplifies the importance and the power of intercession. In doing so he joins a list of other great intercessors found in the Bible, including Abraham, Moses, Elijah, and, of course, Jesus Christ. In Daniel's life of service to God, this prayer of intercession stands as one of the most beautiful examples of his Christ-like character.

Discussion Questions:

- Read Daniel 9:5-16. In every verse, Daniel uses either the word *we* or *us* to identify himself with the rebellious Hebrew nation. What is revealed about Daniel's character through the repeated use of these words? (As a member of the wayward nation, Daniel is identifying himself as one that needs God's mercy and grace. In his role as their intercessor, he is presenting their needs of forgiveness and redemption.)
- Read Hebrews 2:14-18 and 7:25. For what reasons did the Son of God need to be made "like unto his brethren" in order to be an effective Intercessor for humanity? (As our Intercessor, Jesus was made like us—though without sin—for two primary reasons: so that He could die as our Sacrifice [Hebrews 2:14], and so He could be a sympathetic and effective High Priest that can help us in our need [Hebrews 2:17,18].)
- Read Daniel 9:16-19. Did God need Daniel's prayer in order to fulfill His promises given through Jeremiah to bring His people back to Jerusalem after the 70 years of captivity? (Presumably not.) What was the value or importance, then, of Daniel's intercessory prayer if God was going to keep His promises anyway? What value is there for us in praying for things that are already promised in the Bible? (Answers will vary. Perhaps the most important reason for us to pray these kinds of prayers of intercession is because Jesus Christ prayed this way. While we might not understand all the "rules" of prayer and how our prayers interact with God's will in the great controversy, we can understand the importance of becoming more like Jesus Christ.)

- Read the passage below and discuss why “a spirit of intercession” is such an important aspect of true revival and reformation:

In visions of the night, representations passed before me of a great reformatory movement among God’s people. Many were praising God. The sick were healed, and other miracles were wrought. A spirit of intercession was seen, even as was manifested before the great Day of Pentecost. Hundreds and thousands were seen visiting families and opening before them the word of God. Hearts were convicted by the power of the Holy Spirit, and a spirit of genuine conversion was manifest. On every side doors were thrown open to the proclamation of the truth. The world seemed to be lightened with the heavenly influence. Great blessings were received by the true and humble people of God. I heard voices of thanksgiving and praise, and there seemed to be a reformation such as we witnessed in 1844. {9T 126.1}

Wednesday (March 4): The Work of the Messiah

As Daniel is praying for God to forgive his people and restore Jerusalem, an angel comes “swiftly” (Daniel 9:21) from heaven and announces that he will give Daniel “skill and understanding” (Daniel 9:22). The prophecy that the angel gives performs several important roles: it predicts the timing of the Messiah’s appearing and the year of His death; it reveals the character of the Messiah’s work; and it provides the answer to the lingering question of the 2,300-day prophecy in Daniel 8:14. In today’s lesson we will focus on the character of the Messiah’s work.

Discussion Questions:

- Read Daniel 9:24-27 and discuss how the following aspects of the Messiah’s work are reflected in the prophecy:
 - Judgment. (The prophecy begins with a 70-week, or 490-year, period of probationary time for the Hebrew nation to prepare for and announce the Messiah’s mission. In verse 26, it is the Messiah Himself who experiences the ultimate judgment on sin by being “cut off,” or killed as the atoning sacrifice.)
 - Cleansing. (The Hebrew word translated as “transgression” indicates willful disobedience [compare Ezekiel 2:3]. The Messiah’s work to “finish the transgression” points to the sin problem being cured, not just forgiven.)
 - Forgiveness. (The Hebrew verb translated in the phrase “to make an end of sins” means “to seal” and indicates forgiveness of sins.)
 - Reconciliation. (Through forgiveness of, and cleansing from, sin, true reconciliation with God is possible.)
 - Intercession. (Through Christ’s power we can live righteous lives, and this will naturally be the result for someone that has been forgiven and cleansed of sin and reconciled to God.)
- What other aspects of the Messiah’s work do you see in this passage? (Answers will vary.)

Thursday (March 5): The Prophetic Calendar

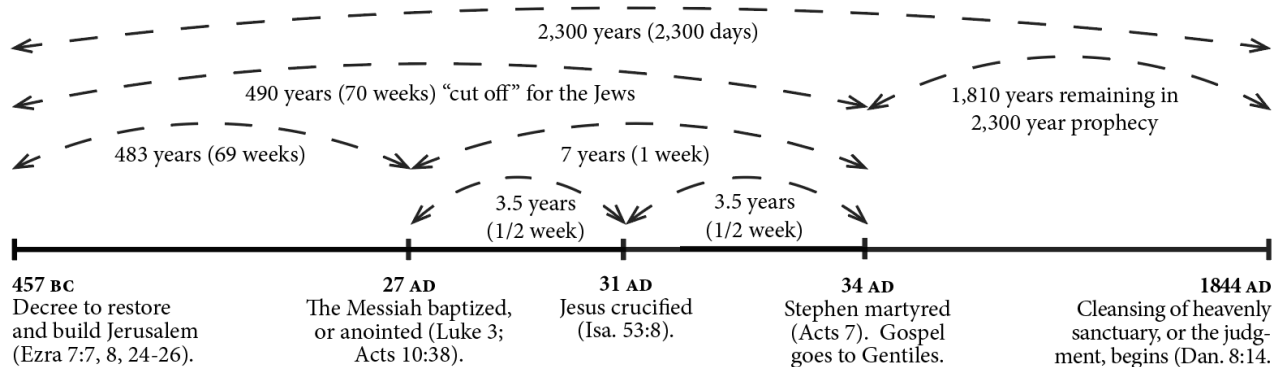
Daniel 8 and 9 present two of the Bible’s most important prophecies—the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14 and the 70 weeks of Daniel 9:24-27. Both of these time prophecies are connected and really form two parts, or two aspects, of a single prophecy that predicts the timing of the Messiah’s first advent and the beginning of the pre-advent judgment immediately before the second coming. The angel explains that 70 weeks, or 490 years using the Bible’s day-for-a-year principle of prophetic time,

are “cut off” from a larger segment of time. This larger segment of prophetic time must be the 2,300 days, or years, in Daniel 8:14, because the angel told Daniel that he was come to give the prophet “understanding” (Daniel 9:22), something that he lacked at the end of the vision in Daniel 8 (see Daniel 8:27).

As the chart below shows, both of these prophetic time periods begin at the same time, in 457 BC when King Artaxerxes commanded that Jerusalem be rebuilt and restored (see Daniel 9:25 and Ezra 7). Near the end of this first 490 years of the prophecy, the Messiah would appear, or be baptized, then be killed. The 490 years ended with the death of Stephen, the first Christian martyr (See Acts 7). Moments before his death, Stephen declared that the Jews were rejecting the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51-53), something that Jesus said could not be forgiven (Mark 3:28,29). Although individual Jews could still be saved after this time, just like anybody else, the unique mission of the Hebrew nation was, at Stephen’s death, brought to an end at the conclusion of its period of probation (compare Matthew 18:21,22).

At the conclusion of the 490 years in 34 AD, 1810 years remained of the 2,300-year prophecy in Daniel 8:14. In 1844, this time prophecy ended, marking the beginning of the heavenly judgment and the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary in the antitypical Day of Atonement. This work of cleansing is to be reflected in the lives of Christians here on earth (compare Ephesians 5:25-27) in preparation for Christ’s second coming, when His people will stand “holy and without blame before him in love” (Ephesians 1:4).

Daniel 8:14 — The 2,300-Day (2,300-Year) Prophecy



Friday (March 6): More Connections Between Daniel 8 and 9

Some people have questioned whether the 70-week prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27 is really connected with the 2,300-day prophecy in Daniel 8:14. In today’s lesson we will look at an important linguistic link between Daniel 8 and 9 that clearly shows how the 70-week prophecy “completes” the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14.

In Daniel 8:1-12, the Hebrew word *chazown*, translated as “vision,” is used to refer to what Daniel sees. This includes the ram, the goat, and the little horn. Daniel uses the same word in verse 15 when he says that he “had seen the vision.” However, in verse 16, when God commands Gabriel to “make this man to understand the vision,” another Hebrew word, *mareh*, is used. Although both Hebrew words are translated into English as “vision,” in Daniel 8 they refer to different parts of the

vision. As already stated, *chazown* refers to what Daniel sees in verses 2-12. It is also used in verse 13 as the voices in heaven refer to what Daniel had seen in prophetic vision. The word *mareh*, however, consistently refers to what Daniel hears about in verse 14, and that is the 2,300-day or year prophecy.

In verse 26 Gabriel uses the word *mareh* when he says, “And the vision [*mareh*] of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision [*mareh*]; for it shall be for many days.” The part of the vision that is “shut up” is the *mareh* of the 2,300 days, not the *chazown* that includes the ram, goat, and little horn. After all, the angel in verses 20 and 21 explicitly explained two of these symbols! It is the *mareh* of Daniel 8:14 that the prophet does not understand, for in verse 27 he writes, “I was astonished at the vision [*mareh*], but none understood it.”

In Daniel 9:21, the prophet refers to “Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision [*chazown*] at the beginning.” Notice, again, that Daniel uses the word *chazown* in reference to things he had seen in the vision of Daniel 8. However, when Gabriel speaks to Daniel, the angel uses the word *mareh* to point to the reason why he has come: “I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding, ...[T]herefore understand the matter, and consider the vision [*mareh*].” Clearly, God has sent Gabriel to explain the part of the vision that Daniel had heard, but not seen, the *mareh* of Daniel 8:14. The rest of the chapter, Daniel 9:24-27, contains a time prophecy that explains the starting date of the time prophecy in Daniel 8:14. By providing a prophecy (Daniel 9:27) focused on Christ’s visible, earthly ministry, a prophecy (Daniel 8:14) that reveals Christ’s unseen, heavenly ministry is also explained!