

Adventist Identity



Week Ten

inTro



Read This Week's Passage:
Daniel 9:20–27

BELONGING AND BELIEVING

We live in an age when it's more important to belong than to believe. People are looking for community and for connection. Even in the Christian community, truth and beliefs and doctrines are minimized. But God is calling us to worship in spirit and truth (John 4:24). In other words, it is not belonging or believing; it is belonging and believing. God wants us to have community that is grounded in truth.

Belonging and believing in an Adventist community necessitates that questions of Adventist identity must be answered. We must know for ourselves whether the central tenets of our belief system are indeed on solid biblical footing. Ellen White states that the 2,300-day prophecy is “the central pillar” of the Adventist faith. By implication, if we are wrong on the “central pillar,” the whole structure crumbles. How solid is the evidence for our interpretation of Daniel 8:14? This is an identity question that we cannot afford to entrust to others; we must examine the evidence for ourselves.



inScribe

Write out Daniel 9:20–27 from the translation of your choice. If you're pressed for time, write out Daniel 9:24–27. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, outline, or mind map the chapter.



Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

Circle repeated words/phrases/ideas

Underline words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you

Draw **Arrows** to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse in Daniel 9:20–27. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

What are the reasons that you are a Seventh-day Adventist?

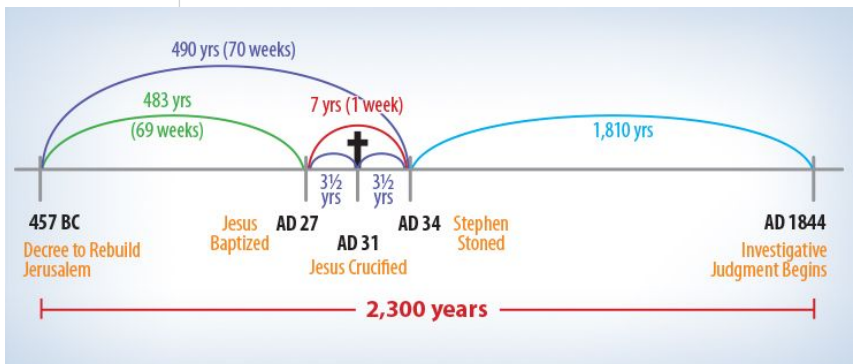
Have you studied for yourself the reasons for your faith?

GROUNDING IN MESSIAH

In Daniel chapter 8, Daniel is given the vision of the ram, he-goat, horn, and the 2300-day prophecy. The angel Gabriel proceeds to explain the vision and does not explain fully the 2300-day prophecy in reference to the sanctuary. Daniel is awaiting the end of the seventy-year captivity of the Jews and is worried that the 2300-day prophecy means seventy-year captivity will be extended to 2300 years. Daniel chapter 8 ends with Daniel fainted and sick because he did not understand the vision.

Chapter 9 begins with Daniel's reference to the seventy-year captivity and Daniel's prayer for the restoration of his people to Jerusalem as God had promised through Jeremiah. Daniel is worried that the restoration of his people, Jerusalem, and the temple's rebuilding will be extended. Gabriel comes and says that he has come to help Daniel to "understand the vision" (Daniel 9:23). The vision of the 2300 days is not understood and the angel Gabriel proceeds to give the seventy-week prophecy. In other words, the key to understanding the 2300-day prophecy is to link it with seventy-week prophecy.

1844 and the Adventist belief in the investigative judgment is grounded in seventy-week prophecy. The seventy-week prophecy proves the authenticity of Jesus as the Messiah. He was baptized exactly on time. He died exactly on the year that the Bible predicted. It's hard to deny the veracity of seventy weeks and its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. When the seventy weeks are linked with the 2300 days, the implications are clear. If 1844 is wrong, then the seventy weeks are also wrong and Jesus is not the Messiah. In other words, if you are a Christian, then prophetically-speaking you must believe in the Investigative Judgment that began in 1844. If you believe in Jesus as the Messiah, then being a Seventh-day Adventist makes perfect sense.



A DEEPER LOOK AT DANIEL 9:20–27

How Solid Is The Link Between 2300 Days In Daniel 8 And The Seventy Weeks In Daniel 9?

When Daniel 8 and 9 are read through from chapter to chapter continuous, it becomes clear that they are linked. (Remember there were no chapter divisions in the original manuscript, they were added later for our convenience.) Here are evidences that the 2300-day prophecy of Daniel 8 and the seventy-week prophecy of Daniel 9 are linked:

1. Daniel 9:23 states that Gabriel is the angel “whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning.” There is no vision in Daniel 9, but there is a vision in Daniel 8 that is interpreted by Gabriel. In other words, the association of Gabriel with the vision of Daniel 8 indicates that the 2300-day prophecy and the seventy-week prophecy are linked.
2. Daniel faints and says that he could not understand the vision (Daniel 8:27). The only part of the vision that Daniel of chapter 8 that Daniel could not understand was the 2300-day prophecy. When Gabriel comes in Daniel 9, he says to “consider the matter and understand the vision” (Daniel 9:23). In Daniel 9, the angel Gabriel comes to give understanding specifically in regards to the 2300-day prophecy.
3. Daniel 8:15 uses the word “hazon” to refer to the whole vision and then uses the word “mareh” in Daniel 8:27 to refer to the 2300-day portion of the vision that Daniel did not understand. When the angel Gabriel comes and says to “understand the vision” (Daniel 9:23), he uses the word “mareh.” The angel Gabriel links the 2300-day prophecy to the seventy-week prophecy linguistically.
4. When Gabriel opens with the seventy-week prophecy, he says that seventy-weeks “are determined” (Daniel 9:24). The word “determined” is the word “chatak” which literally means to cut off or separate. Gabriel is indicating that seventy weeks are “cut off” from the time prophecy of the 2300-day prophecy. In other words, the key to understanding the 2300-day prophecy is look at it in the context of the seventy-week prophecy that is within the 2300-days.

What About The Gap Theory?

Some Christians have espoused the belief that the last week in the seventy week prophecy is to be detached and thrown off into the future. According to some, the last week of the prophecy is to be seven years of tribulation. They believe that the secret rapture is the event that begins the seven years of tribulation where the people who did not make the first time get a second chance. In the middle of the seven years, the anti-Christ comes.

There are a number of issues with this position. First, there is no indication from the seventy-week prophecy in Daniel 9 of any discontinuation of the last week from the other 69 weeks. Furthermore, there is no mention of the anti-Christ in the seventy week prophecy; to the contrary, the seventieth week is a reference to “Messiah” (vs. 26) who “shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering” (vs 27) which Jesus did when He died on the cross and the temple veil was rent from top to bottom (Matt 27:51). This indicated that earthly sacrifices were no longer necessary because the real Lamb of God had been slain.



inTerpret

After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks overall seem to point to?



What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

Why are wrong ideas of prophecy so spiritually dangerous?



What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Mark 1:15

Luke 3:1

Daniel 12:1

Acts 7:54–60

Acts 8:1–4

Ezra 6:14

Matthew 27:51

What other verses/promises come to mind in connection with Daniel 9:20–27?

Review your memorized verse from Daniel 9:20–27.

JESUS AND ADVENTISM

Adventist identity is anchored in Jesus as Messiah. The whole notion of 1844 seems bizarre to other Christian communities. Where in the world did we come up with that date? Yet, when we see clearly that 1844 comes from being faithful to the text and anchoring it in the Messianic prophecy of Jesus Christ, we come to the realization that 1844 is not weird, but that it is Christ-centered! According to the book of Daniel, the Adventist belief in 1844 is anchored in the belief that Jesus is the Messiah; and the veracity of the seventy-week prophecy gives veracity to the date of 1844.

The judgment message is anchored in Jesus as Messiah and the gospel. The whole notion of the judgment seems antithetical to the gospel and the good news of salvation bought at Calvary. However, Daniel 8 and 9 do not disassociate the two, but rather it links them together. The message of judgment and the message of the cross are joined together prophetically; it should not be disassociated from each other theologically.

The linking of the seventy-week prophecy and the 2300-day prophecy links Jesus as the Lamb and Jesus as High Priest. These two time prophecies reveal Jesus in the courtyard of the sanctuary and by implication Jesus as our High Priest in the Holy Place during the span from 31 AD to 1844 AD; and Jesus as our High Priest in the Most Holy Place from 1844 AD to the present day. The linking of the seventy-week and 2300-day prophecies further authenticates the sanctuary as the hermeneutical key to understanding the plan of salvation.



inVite

Where is Jesus in the midst of the prophecies of Daniel 9:20–27?



What is He saying to you through these texts?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?



Review the memory verse.
How does it apply to your
life this week?

After this week's study
of the chapter, what are
personal applications you are
convicted of in your life?

What are practical applications
you must make in your life from
these prophetic studies?

GOD'S WORD CANNOT FAIL

The scripture which above all others had been both the foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith was the declaration: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Daniel 8:14. These had been familiar words to all believers in the Lord's soon coming. By the lips of thousands was this prophecy repeated as the watchword of their faith. All felt that upon the events therein foretold depended their brightest expectations and most cherished hopes. These prophetic days had been shown to terminate in the autumn of 1844. In common with the rest of the Christian world, Adventists then held that the earth, or some portion of it, was the sanctuary. They understood that the cleansing of the sanctuary was the purification of the earth by the fires of the last great day, and that this would take place at the second advent. Hence the conclusion that Christ would return to the earth in 1844.

But the appointed time had passed, and the Lord had not appeared. The believers knew that God's word could not fail; their interpretation of the prophecy must be at fault; but where was the mistake? Many rashly cut the knot of difficulty by denying that the 2300 days ended in 1844. No reason could be given for this except that Christ had not come at the time they expected Him. They argued that if the prophetic days had ended in 1844, Christ would then have returned to cleanse the sanctuary by the purification of the earth by fire; and that since He had not come, the days could not have ended.

To accept this conclusion was to renounce the former reckoning of the prophetic periods. The 2300 days had been found to begin when the commandment of Artaxerxes for the restoration and building of Jerusalem went into effect, in the autumn of 457 B.C. Taking this as the starting point, there was perfect harmony in the application of all the events foretold in the explanation of that period in Daniel 9:25-27. Sixty-nine weeks, the first 483 of the 2300 years, were to reach to the Messiah, the Anointed One; and Christ's baptism and anointing by the Holy Spirit, A.D. 27, exactly fulfilled the specification. In the midst of the seventieth week, Messiah was to be cut off. Three and a half years after His baptism, Christ was crucified, in the spring of A.D. 31. The seventy weeks, or 490 years, were to pertain especially to the Jews. At the expiration of this period the nation sealed its rejection of Christ by the persecution of His disciples, and the apostles turned to the Gentiles, A.D. 34. The first 490 years of the 2300 having then ended, 1810 years would remain. From A.D. 34, 1810 years extend to 1844. "Then," said the angel, "shall the sanctuary be cleansed." All the preceding specifications of the prophecy had been unquestionably fulfilled at the time appointed. (*The Great Controversy* by Ellen G. White, p. 409-410.)



Share insights from this week's memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.



What are reasons that individuals are part of a denomination?

How important is the role of doctrines in choosing a denomination?

Is it more important to belong or to believe?

What evidence can you give for Jesus being the Messiah?

How does the 2,300-day prophecy build your faith in the Adventist movement?

Why is it important to have a solid biblical position for our core doctrines?

Why do you think the sanctuary is "the central pillar" (The Great Controversy, 409) of the Adventist faith?

What are the implications of living in a time of judgment since 1844?