

# GROWTH + GROUPS

## NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide  
SB 04.21.2024

THE 70 WEEKS OF DANIEL - DANIEL 9:20-27

### PART 1: Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

Today, we have the privilege of looking at one of the most amazing prophecies in the entire Bible. I know of lots of churches and pastors who actively avoid the parts of the Bible that deal with prophecy because they find it to be too complicated. While I would concede that prophecy can be confusing, I don't think that gives us a right to ignore it. If your approach to God's word is to avoid prophecy, I'm afraid you'll have to avoid large portions of Scripture because 27% of this book is prophetic in nature. I'm not willing to ignore that much of my Bible. That's one of the reasons why study prophecy around here but let me give you another. The prophecy we're going to look at today has been dubbed, 'the backbone of biblical prophecy' because it provides an outline for the course of human history. If you're able to grasp this prophecy, it will go a long way towards helping you understand all the other prophecies about the last days. Let's get into our lesson...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What struck you most from Pastor Daniel's sermon?
2. Can you think of a time when you were utterly compelled to pray? What prompted you to do so?
3. Can you also think of a time when God clearly answered or responded to your prayer?

Daniel 9:1-19 records a prayer from the prophet Daniel interceding on behalf of the people. From Daniel's perspective, the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. was a significant spiritual event with lasting implications for God's people. One important aspect of Jeremiah's prophecy for Daniel (see Jer. 25:11-12 and Daniel 9:2), was the need for God's people to repent of their sins which led to Jerusalem's destruction and to the Babylonian exile. Thus, all that God revealed to Daniel about the end of days was in the context of the need for repentance from sin on the part of God's people. This motivated Daniel's prayer.

### PART 2: Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ DANIEL 9:20-23

1. Daniel prayed for further understanding; God answered by sending Gabriel to him for the second time (see also Dan. 8:16). What are your biggest questions concerning end time events as you read the Scriptures? Where do you desire understanding of these things from God?

Gabriel acknowledged that Daniel was treasured by God. The word used to describe Daniel as beloved refers to that which is valuable. Daniel was called treasured on several occasions (see Dan. 9:23; 10:11,19), each at a time of personal weakness or inadequacy. Gabriel encouraged and strengthened Daniel for what was ahead. The communication cycle had come full circle. In a time of uneasiness, Daniel felt extremely weary and petitioned God. In turn, God heard his petitions, answered his prayers, and sent Gabriel to encourage him. Daniel was treasured by God because he maintained his faith throughout the long decades of persecution.

2. Why is it important to approach studies of the end times and personal times of suffering with humility? What role does prayer play in keeping us humble?

3. How is Daniel described? Is this true of us? (cc. Eph. 2:4-5)
4. Who else in scripture was also described as being beloved of God?

Though Daniel didn't understand everything about Jeremiah's prophecy, the one thing he did understand was repentance—he confessed his sin and the sins of the people. We don't have to understand everything about suffering to know that it can draw us closer to the Lord. Whenever we struggle with the prospect of suffering because of our faith or with understanding the tribulation in the end times, we can find satisfaction in knowing the Lord will never leave us or forsake us during times of persecution. Instead, He uses the trials of this life to build our faith (cf. Jas. 1:2-4).

#### HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ DANIEL 9:24-27

These are some of the most difficult verses to interpret in the Book of Daniel, and people have a variety of interpretations of them. What is most important for us to note is that while we wait for Jesus to return, we must prepare for difficult times that lie ahead for us and our faith.

1. What are the 70 sevens? Who are they directed to? (Perhaps you have a study bible to reference)
2. How does Jesus help us find hope in the midst of suffering?
3. Read Daniel 9:26-27 and identify the acts the Messiah would perform when He returned. Why are these significant for us to reflect on today? How might doing so sustain our faith in the midst of difficulty?

Verse 25 recognizes the presence of the Messiah, the Prince, who will provide comfort for believers. These words from Gabriel set a precise timetable predicting when the Messiah "anointed one" would be presented before all the people. We know this day as Palm Sunday (Lamb Selection Day), April 6<sup>th</sup> 32 AD according to Sir Robert Anderson. The mark for beginning this mathematical prophecy began with a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. We know that in history the decree came from Artaxerxes Longimanus March 14<sup>th</sup> 445 B.C. This prophecy is based on 360-day years. If we calculated the number of days from the going forth of this command to restore Jerusalem until Messiah, we count 173,880 days (483 prophetic years), and Jesus was acknowledged as Messiah and people were saying "Hosana, Hosana, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Jesus received worship for the 1<sup>st</sup> time in His ministry.

It is the Messiah's promised return that is the true focus. Daniel envisioned a time when wrongdoing would be eventually cut off, when the people's sins would be atoned for by the Messiah, and when the holy city Jerusalem would be completely restored.

4. How does this hope give strength for today? How does it make you feel that God will one day put an end to suffering and tribulation? What fears do you still have for the future, even though you know Jesus will be victorious?
5. Does the knowledge that God will destroy evil absolve us from opposing it now? Explain.
6. When was vs 26 fulfilled in history? (The Jewish Temple destroyed)
7. Who is vs 27 referring to and when will this happen? (Note there is one final 7-year period that has not been fulfilled yet)

You should note that a time gap exists between verses 26 and 27. This gap is not overtly stated but rather inferred by the division that is placed between the first 69 weeks, which are dealt with in conjunction with one another and the 70th week, which is dealt with on its own. We live in the gap

between those two verses. We're still waiting for the 70th week of Daniel to unfold. We are waiting for the Rapture.

**PART 3: Applying God's Word**

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

Pastor Daniel said "That's a lot to digest. What are we supposed to do with all of this? Remember how I told you that prophecy is meant to 'strengthen, encourage and comfort' us. How does knowing this stuff accomplish that? By reminding us that everything that happens is part of God's plan. The same God who orchestrated the events of Jesus' first coming and took care of all the details down to the very day that He would arrive, has also taken care of every detail regarding His return. You can take comfort in that. It also strengthens our faith by reminding us that God is specific and detail oriented. He's got it all figured out."

1. What are some ways we can keep our minds focused on Jesus' victory when we are facing discouraging situations that challenge our faith?
2. How do you see tribulation/trouble, both now and at the end times, as an aspect of God's ultimate plan of redemption? How are you prepared to handle trials that you might face for the sake of Christ?
3. Do you live out the implications of Jesus' second coming? Do you urgently share Christ with your friends and family and shine for Him in all you do? How might you pursue this further?

**PRAYER:** Close your time in prayer, thanking God that He is not slow to fulfill His promises but instead is working all things in His timing. Pray that we would have peace and patience as we live out today in the knowledge that Jesus will return.

*"So, when you see standing in the holy place the abomination that causes desolation, spoken of through the prophet Daniel... then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains." (Matt. 24:2)*