

Ministry on Daniel

Part 6

Speaker	Ernest Brown
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[00:00:00] The ninth year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans, in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes, and I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, [00:01:01] and to them that keep his commandments, we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments, neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which speak in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day, to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel that are near, and that are far off, to all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, [00:02:05] to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belongeth mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him. Neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice. Therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses, the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judge us, [00:03:04] by bringing upon us a great evil. For under the whole heaven hath not been done, as hath been done upon Jerusalem. As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us. Yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us. For the Lord our God is righteous in all his works, which he doeth, for we obeyed not his voice. And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day we have sinned, we have done wickedly. O Lord, [00:04:04] according to all thy righteousness I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain. Because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate for the Lord's sake. O my God, incline thine ear, and hear, open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name. For we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great [00:05:08]

mercies. O Lord, hear. O Lord, forgive. O Lord, hearken and do. Defer not for thine own sake, O my God, for thy city and thy people are called by thy name. And whilst I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God, for the holy mountain of my God, yea whilst I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation, and he informed me, and talked with me, [00:06:05] and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee, for thou art greatly beloved, therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. 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. Know therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment, to restore, and to build Jerusalem [00:07:05] unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore, and two weeks. The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times, and after threescore, and two weeks, shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself, and the people of the Prince that shall come, shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice, and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined, shall be poured upon the desolate.

[00:08:10] Fascinating, isn't it? Over the last two evenings, we've been looking mainly at chapter two and chapter seven of the book of Daniel, giving first of all in chapter two man's view, and then in chapter seven God's view of a period of time entitled by the Lord Jesus in Luke 21 verse 24 as the times of the Gentiles.

Israel, Judah, had been exceedingly disobedient to their God. They had to be disciplined, and one, another, another, and another. Four Gentile world empires were defined by Daniel as being [00:09:10] allowed to have the ascendancy over the kingdom of Judah, each being used as God's disciplinary tools. The first one who was dominating Judah at the time that we read the book of Daniel was even called by God, Nebuchadnezzar, my servant. What a travesty that though that Judah's enemy for the moment had to be called the servant of God in punishing the nation and kingdom of Judah.

Well, we've traced through from scripture, taking account of the words the Holy Ghost [00:10:01] uses of that succession of four world empires. Tonight and tomorrow night, if the Lord will, I propose to look at this 70 weeks prophecy.

Tonight should be relatively straightforward. Enjoy it, go home, read it through, have a good night's sleep, and then tomorrow night come fit and fresh, because if the Lord spares us, we'll have to work at a quicker pace tomorrow night. But we'll be laying a foundation tonight. But we'll be laying a foundation tonight. Now, notice the split of the chapter in chapter 9. The first two verses, introduction, and we learn there [00:11:01] that Daniel was studying the scriptures. And in verse 3, we read that he was praying. And in verse 4, we read, he was confessing his sins.

The only right combination for any godly person on earth.

In any dispensation. We are very good at telling the children, encouraging them to learn choruses like, read your Bible, pray every day. Are we as good at doing it for ourselves? Daniel did. He read

the scriptures, he prayed. We read in the book, we're getting nearly all [00:12:03] our information from the text of the book. He read the scriptures, and he prayed at least three times every day. That's the way to blessing. If I say, oh, there's a lot of the Bible I don't understand. It's very hard to me, I haven't the mind to understand that. Maybe that I'm not studying the scriptures. Maybe I'm not spending sufficient time in prayer. Maybe in particular, I'm not confessing sin when it comes into my life. Daniel, he studied the word of God. He prayed and he confessed his sin. Now, it was while those things were true of him, that the prophecy was revealed to him. Now, he was reading evidently, and we are told from Jeremiah [00:13:11] the prophet. Now, I think we would do well in this foundation study of this 70-week prophecy to look at the words that, in our language, that Daniel was reading at the time. Let's turn back to Jeremiah chapter 25 and verses 11 and 12. Jeremiah 25, 11 and 12.

After saying how disobedient, how willful and sinful the nation was, Jeremiah says to the people, and he was contemporary with Daniel at this time, he said, this whole land [00:14:03] shall be a desolation and an astonishment and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon 70 years and it shall come to pass when 70 years are accomplished that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, saith the Lord, for that iniquity and the land of the Chaldeans and will make it perpetual desolations. Daniel was very clever. He was very experienced. He'd done very well. He was virtual prime minister of the land. He'd done very nicely, thank you very much. He didn't need have any cause for concern for himself. He read of this prophecy of Jeremiah, [00:15:10] given about 70 years before Daniel was reading it, a year or so before the kingdom was taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, he read the words where Jeremiah was saying, now then, you're going to be vanquished by the kingdom of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar is going to take you all into captivity and it happened about a year after Jeremiah predicted it. About 68 or 69 years after it happened, that is about 70 years after the prediction, Daniel, who had no cause for concern for himself, he'd done very well in life, [00:16:01] he was reading Jeremiah 25 and probably 29, another similar verse, and he says, hello, and he says, hello, the 70 years is almost expired.

He could have thought, well, that's very interesting. Maybe he did. He could have thought, well, if God says so, it will happen. Doesn't need anything from me. If God says it will happen, it will, and it does. But Daniel was in the will of his Lord and he knew instinctively that if God's purpose, mysterious to men, if God's purpose for the nation was to be carried out, [00:17:03] carried out, and if this kingdom of Babylon was to be in turn disciplined on God's behalf by the kingdom of the Medes and ultimately the Persians, the second world empire, Daniel knew because he was close to the Lord that this would be because God would choose to answer the prayers of the godly people of the day. Let me pause there.

You believe that Jesus died for you and rose again.

You're clear of judgment. You've got nothing to worry about for yourself. Why not sit back and take it easy? God's work will go on and it will.

[00:18:09] God wants each of us to be involved in his work now.

If I don't get involved, the work will still go on, but it means that God will use some of my but it means that God will use somebody else instead of me. Let us take the lesson. We can't rest on our laurels. Knowing that we're saved and ready for heaven, as long as he leaves us here on earth, there's something on earth he wants us to do. Let us enjoy Christian fellowship. Let us undertake Christian service for the Lord as long as he leaves us here. Now Daniel there thought, I must get down on my

knees. [00:19:01] I must confess the sins of the nation and my own part in it. Daniel could have said, well I do alright. If everybody else in the nation was as good as me, the nation would be favoured by God. He didn't even say, well I'll pray for the others because they need prayer on their behalf. I'm doing alright, but I'd better pray for them. Then he said, no I'm part of the general condition and he prayed to God and confessed his part in the sins of the nation. And notice, and that's why I read it all the way, thank you for your patience, from verse 3 to verse 19, the majority of the chapter is about Daniel in the presence of God, [00:20:09] praying, confessing his sin and interceding on behalf of the people. Notice the proportion. Yes, he studied the scripture. He prayed intelligently because he'd read the scriptures. He felt the general sinful condition, didn't sit back. He said, Lord forgive me for my part in it and bring then all of us to a spirit of repentance before God. And his prayer was answered.

He had this angelic visitation. That's how God spoke to the nation of Israel in those days, by angelic ministry. And it happened here. And he was given the message. And notice that the [00:21:07] prophecy, the actual prophecy, many books have been written on it since the days it was first put onto papyrus parchment or whatever it was in those days. And many volumes have been written upon this prophecy, which is detailed in four verses, 24 to 27. Now we are here tonight to introduce ourselves to the main outline of this 70-week prophecy. But unless we've learned this initial lesson, that revelation comes to those who confess their sin, study the scriptures, and continue in prayer before God. Let us not just say, my sins are forgiven. I'm saved. I know it. [00:22:10] Why should I bother anymore? There's much that needs to be done. There's much that we need to grow in. There's much that we need to learn. The work of the Lord has to go on. These are the principles of showing those of the Lord's servants that he will use. And now we come to the prophecy itself, verses 24 to 27. Now, as an introduction, notice, first of all, there's the statements, 70 weeks are determined. That's the period. We'll come to the detail. Now, verse 24 there, and we'll come back to the detail, it gives an overall summary of what will [00:23:23] be achieved by the fulfillment of the prophecy. Verse 25 tells us about the first 69 weeks of the 70. Verse 27 tells us about the last week of the prophecy. Notice how much time.

There's as much detail given about one week, the last week, as is given about the first 69. [00:24:01] Much more detail. God's microscope is put on the detail of one week in a concentrated way more than the first 69. This is why, as well as introducing ourselves to it, we are going to think about the 69 weeks tonight, and then, if the Lord will, we look at the last week, the 70th week tomorrow night. Verse 26 is an interval. It's in brackets. For my help and benefit, I've, in reading, I've put brackets around verse 26 to remind myself that it's parenthetical. It tells us about the condition of things, and things that will happen after the first 69 weeks have finished, and before [00:25:08] the 70th week begins. Now, that's straightforward, but forgive the simplicity. Verse 26, we must think about, tells us about what will happen after the end of the first 69 weeks, and before the beginning of week 70. Now, that gives the general scope. Now, would you turn to your diagram, please? Top right-hand corner, you will see it should have sheet one. If it has sheet two, you have the wrong sheet. I'll give you a copy of sheet one. Sheet two is on the 70th week tomorrow night, if the Lord will. So, we are going to work through the sheet. If we do no more tonight than understand the framework of this 70-week prophecy, and take this home, and look up the [00:26:08] scriptures that are quoted, we will have done well enough for one session. But, second last line, you'll see the 70-weeks prophecy, Daniel chapter 9, verses 24 to 27. Please take this away with you, and study it as the Lord enables you. Every time you look at it, remember that this prophecy came after the study of the scriptures by Daniel, after the time spent in prayer, after the time spent in confession of sin, and intercession for his own nation. And then, you're ready to think about this. Now, the events are indicated in the dots, the large dots on

the horizontal line, just above [00:27:05] the phrase, the study of prophecy. All right? The dots. The little wiggles in the line just indicate that the sketch is not to scale. Nothing more dispensational significance with the little squiggles. If you look at the top horizontal line, in between the vertical lines, where there are arrows which show the limits that govern the statements that I make. Again, I will assume we haven't thought about the 70-weeks prophecy before. We are looking at it for the first time, and I will try not to miss anything out as to general scope. Now, on the bottom horizontal line, [00:28:01] you will see a dot with a vertical line from it, which says, decree of our taxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem. And I've given two scriptures for that, Nehemiah 2 and Daniel chapter 9, verse 25, which we've read tonight. And from that vertical line to the next vertical line, I've put seven weeks, and I've put the word weeks in brackets. Really, it might take us on the wrong path. Literally, the word is seven sevens. Doesn't say what the sevens are. At this stage, as we've thought with the four world empires, let us just take our teaching from scripture, without interpretation, without borrowing from the world's historians. Let us see what scripture [00:29:05] teaches. We always do well to think of the units. I remember when my daughters were at school, and when they were young enough in their school life to do things that weren't too hard for father, the thing I usually used to check was that they'd put their units. And very often, I used to look at their book and say, cabbages, and they knew what I meant. They'd put a number without the units. Now, at this stage, we cannot put the units. It's seven sevens. The actual word is unimportant. It's seven sevens. Let us reserve our judgment for the moment. We are thinking of a period of time which is called, in the text, seven sevens. Now, the second dot with the second [00:30:01] vertical line is called Jerusalem rebuilt. Now, I've taken that from the beginning of this prophecy.

Pick up your Bible again, please, and look at chapter nine. It says, 70 weeks are determined. That's the whole of the prophecy. Well, let's pause there. Look at the arrows at the top of the page, and look along the top, and you'll see seven weeks, or seven sevens, 62 sevens, and then you'll see a longer line with a question mark, and then the last pair of vertical lines has a note, one week, week 70. Now, the bit with the question mark corresponds with verse 26, which I suggested should be in brackets. Now, if you look back [00:31:09] to the chart, and look first of all at the first pair of vertical lines, I've said seven weeks, and if we look in verse 24, it says, well, verse 25, know therefore, and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and three score, and two weeks, and the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. Now, if you check the grammatical construction of that, [00:32:01] you'll be able to check that the two periods, seven sevens, and 62 sevens, refer to those two works, or two periods that are detailed. One, the time it would take to rebuild the city of Jerusalem, it says the street and the walls, that that would take a period called here seven sevens. Then it says from the end of that period, the end of the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem, to what is called Messiah the Prince, would be another 62 sevens.

If you are patient, if you have stamina, if you make yourself the time available, and you check through the historical books, late second kings, second chronicles, [00:33:06] Ezra, Nehemiah, the major and minor prophets, it would be possible for you from scripture to follow all these events through to see countries quoted, kings quoted, the year in their reign quoted, and events quoted, which would make it possible for you to track down in numbers of years when these events occurred. Now, secular historians differ.

One might say something happened in 445 BC, somebody else may say 456 BC, or something else. But with tenacity and spiritual judgment and spiritual interest, you could track it down from the text of scripture. If you did that, you would find that the length of time [00:34:08] it took, though that remnant

who went back to Jerusalem when Artaxerxes gave the decree and said, yes, if you want to, you can go back and rebuild your city. If you tracked it down, you'll not be surprised, you'd find it was 49 years. Now, this seven sevens, this 49, is the period that corresponds to that historical period of 49 years. Now, this gives us the scale of the prophecy. This seven weeks tells us that the scale is seven years for one week, or one seven. Now, that makes life very much easier. And again, with the same tenacity, you won't be [00:35:06] surprised to find that if seven times seven gives you the period from the decree of Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem to the completion of the work, you won't be surprised to find at all that the 62 weeks, which we now know as 62 times seven, 434 years, takes you to the time, to the year when the Lord Jesus walked, well, when he rode into Jerusalem and presented himself as Messiah to the nation of Israel. From the decree of Artaxerxes, check the text, Nehemiah 2 gives his name. From the decree of Artaxerxes to say, yes, all right, go back and build the city, [00:36:05] right through the completion and right through to what people, I suppose, would call Palm Sunday nowadays, the beginning of the week in which Jesus our Lord was crucified, always sticks in my memory. I remember in boyhood, there were three significant Sundays about Easter time. The older ones might remember, Carlin, Palm, Pesach Day. Now, it's in history, it's recognized, but in the history of the Bible, something of far greater significance than the customs of man. When Messiah, the prince, presented himself for the acclaim and for coronation, he was refused, but he presented [00:37:08] himself and he presented himself 483 years after the decree of Artaxerxes. Now, this tells us, this takes us then to Messiah presenting himself at Jerusalem, and please check the text when you get home, Zechariah 9 verse 9, behold thy king cometh. Matthew 21, well, if Zechariah 9 is the prophecy, Matthew 21 is the historical record that that's exactly what happened in fulfillment of the prophecy. Colossians 2 11 tells us the significance of it. It says that those of us who trust Christ [00:38:02] as savior, we have been cut off in the cutting off of the Christ. Now, look now, please, at verse 24, and we must have a word about this. We've now got something which pins down seven sevens, 49 years, 62 sevens, 434 years, 69 sevens in total, 483 years. Now, what is the prophecy given to achieve? Verse 24, 70 weeks are determined upon thy people. Well, let's pause there. We know now 70 weeks from scripture, we know 77s, 490 years. Why 490?

[00:39:05] We learned the other night that the people were taken into captivity into Babylon for 70 years because as a kingdom, when it was first set up with King Saul as its first king, from then on, they'd been disobedient to God. They hadn't kept one Sabbath year. They'd been disobedient for a full cycle of 77s, 490 years. Listen carefully to what I'm going to say. Please don't misquote me. It will take 490 years, 77s of years, to work out God's answer and reply and necessary response to the disobedience of the people. The disobedience [00:40:10] was for 490 years. Working out in the ways of God, God's reply will take 490 years.

Yes, they had to pay back to God sevenfold. They'd missed out 70 Sabbaths, so they owed God they had to repay 490 years. I'm not saying it will take God 490 years to work it out. What I am saying is that in order that there might be a full demonstration of the folly of the disobedience of God's people, it will be necessary to demonstrate that over something that takes 490 years to unfold. And that's why in verse 24 we read, 70 weeks are determined [00:41:10] upon thy people and upon thy holy city. I think John will tell us shortly whose alarm has just gone off. 70 weeks connected with the people and land and city of Judah. Now if we look at these other phrases, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, bring in everlasting righteousness, seal up the vision, they merit your personal study too. Like Daniel, let you and I read the scriptures, compare scripture with scripture, [00:42:03] pray over it, confess any outstanding sin, and then God will let us into the secret of what it all means. Certainly, without looking at the detail, we can see that all the sin that had accrued because of the disobedience of the people had to be answered. Every claim of God upon the

people because of their sins must be given due answer. Every claim of God must be met. The enemies of God, given their answer, God's Messiah brought in as God's anointed, appointed king, bringing in blessing with him, bringing his sheaves with him. All this is encompassed [00:43:08] in verse 24. But now look just for a moment at verse 26.

After the three score and two weeks, check up a literal translation, you'll find that there should be a definite article there, after the three score and two weeks, that is at the end of the 69th week. Messiah shall be cut off, and again literally, and shall have nothing.

Tells us that after the end of the 69th week, doesn't exactly say precisely on the same day, [00:44:05] but after the end of the 69th week, and of course that's what happened, no disservice to scripture, no inaccuracy in the text. Yes, he presented himself at the beginning of the week, and towards the end of the week, he was tried, led away, and ultimately crucified. Or read the epistle to the Galatians, find out what an ugly activity crucifixion is. How horrible in the sight of God. For your sins and mine, it was necessary for Jesus, our Lord, to be cut off, to be crucified with such a cruel death. Well, it's foretold here, that after having been presented as the Messiah of the nation, [00:45:07] as Isaiah 53, we have to compare scripture with scripture, because he was rejected by the nation, he was cut off in his prime, in the midst of his days, halfway through approximately the allotted span for man. And at that time, none of the acclaim and the glory and the honour due to him was proffered and given. It will. God has appointed a day in which he will rule the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained, whereof he has given assurance unto all in that he's raised him from the dead. Act 17, 31, strictly speaking, tells us about that occasion [00:46:01] and that period when the Lord Jesus will be in universal sway. And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. If we go back to the times of the Gentiles, the four world kingdoms, chapters 7 and 8, and earlier chapters, told us the names of the first three kingdoms. Babylon, Medes and Persians, and the Greeks. No interpretation needed. We had to leave in abeyance the identity of the fourth kingdom. But here in verse 26, we learn that at the end of the 69th week, [00:47:07] Messiah would be cut off, his life on earth brought to a precipitate end, and that again, before the beginning of the 70th week, a people called here the people of the prince that shall come, they would destroy the city of Jerusalem. Even for this, we don't need the secular historian. Happily for them, the secular historian agrees with what scripture teaches.

Read the gospels, read the acts, read the epistles, it becomes very plain. That the sovereign nation at the time of the gospels and early days of Christianity [00:48:05] was the empire of Rome. We can tell that from scripture. And here we learn that the people of the prince that shall come, this notable person, that this people, the Roman people, we know from the gospels and acts, that they would destroy the city of Jerusalem. Now we do know from secular history that this did take place in AD 70.

We know that. We know from the epistle to the Hebrews, written about AD 64, that that destruction of Jerusalem was just round the corner. Ye have not yet resisted to blood, but the implication was you're about to, and they did. And these are things which verse 26 says would happen after [00:49:08] the end of week 69 and before the beginning of week 70. Now there's much. Now as to the last week, we'll be looking tomorrow night at the last week, and it will be necessary for us to move from thinking about the people of the prince that shall come to the prince of the people of the prince that shall come. In other words, we are going to think about someone who's a descendant of the fourth world empire, someone who comes to prominence in a particular way. Put that at the back of your mind for when we get to the 70th week, but for a moment look back to the chart just before we close. [00:50:06] What happens after the end of week 69 before the beginning of week 70?

My suggestion to you is that it's valid to say that the church period is the period covered by the brackets that I've suggested putting around verse 26. After Jesus our Lord was crucified, before the prophetic period that we are going to look at tomorrow night, and for reasons which will emerge then, we now live after the end of week 69 before the beginning of week 70, and we live in the period marked by two epochs. The first epoch concerning us [00:51:05] was the inauguration of the Christian church on the day of Pentecost. Again, that was after the end of week 69. The time from the crucifixion of the Lord, covering his resurrection, and the period up to the day of Pentecost, even that period is covered by the prophecies concerning the feasts in Leviticus 23. But nothing in the prophetic statements of the old testaments tells us any detail about what happens after the end of week 69, after the inauguration of the Christian church, and the end of the church period. The Christian church is not a matter of prophecy so much. It's a matter of revelation. Now, revelations of prophecies are given to us [00:52:09] in the Christian church to learn about and to learn from, particularly about the 70th week. Things that will happen after the church is gone to be with the Lord. I would suggest this indeterminate period with the question mark began on the day of Pentecost when the church was brought into being, and it will come to an end when the church is translated, when the rapture occurs, 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 17. Now, we'll have to leave that there, and we will be looking in particular tomorrow night at that period of seven years which cannot begin until after the rapture and will come to an end when the Lord Jesus Christ appears in power and great glory. Read these [00:53:08] scriptures, please. Get them settled in your mind. Let you and I do what Daniel did, study the scriptures, pray, meditate, confess any sin, and seek grace from the Lord to find the time to share with us tomorrow evening.