

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

In America, we often say, 'I hope' something happens. What are the differences of hope and wishful thinking? What gives you confidence (true hope) that something in the future is going to happen?

The word translated as "hope" [*elpis*] in the New Testament has with it the concept of "confidence." The purpose of this opening discussion is to understand that ALL people have wishful thinking. This is not hope. Hope is when you know what is promised by God and live dependent and confident in that.

LEARN FROM GOD'S WORD

This week, we are going to continue walking through Daniel chapter nine. The first 19 verses are Daniel's prayers of confession. The next eight verses are God's answers, insights, and promises for the future. As you study, keep the main thing central, i.e., what promises He is going to do.

What do you notice about the encouragement to Daniel in verses 20-23?

God is fully listening, attentive to our prayers

God answers our prayers

God loves and treasures Daniel and us

God knows all things including what we need most and when things will roll out

Lots of confidence should come from these.

What six things are promised to happen in verse 24? How do these coincide with Daniel's prayers in the first part of the chapter? (Note: This is the heart of the prophecy)

What the Jewish people and US need most are these six things.

Each of them is only possible through God's kind and generous work.

Only Jesus could fulfill these.

finish transgression (e.g., against the prophets)

end sin

atone for wickedness (acts of sin)

everlasting righteousness

seal vision and prophecy (fulfill promises made by God)

anoint a holy one

The promise of 70 sevens (490 years) coincides with the previous 490 years of disobedience by the Jewish people. What will happen during those years?

This wasn't a rosy picture. While Jerusalem would be rebuilt and a temple reconstructed, it would take 49 years (longer than most people would live) and the temple would no longer have the Spirit of God, the arc of the covenant, and the lineage of priesthood.

In addition, those years would have war and end up in a flood of military conquest.

THE GOOD NEWS: An "anointed one" (Messiah) would die for us and accomplish what we read in verse 24.

How was this prophecy helpful to the Jewish people?

God revealed enough to know that (1) not an easy going future – they can prepare, (2) ultimately, if they trust in God, they can have righteousness and live forever with God.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

What do we learn about God and prayer from verses 20-23?

God is fully listening, attentive to our prayers

God answers our prayers

God loves and treasures Daniel and us

God knows all things including what we need most and when things will roll out

Lots of confidence should come from these.

What were Daniel's greatest concerns and requests in his prayers? Why would Daniel be so concerned, since he knew that the 70 years of exile were nearly finished, and he wasn't planning to return to Jerusalem?

Daniel knew that even if people get to return to Jerusalem, they still have the unsolvable problem of a giant debt of sin, ongoing wickedness, unrighteousness, and no way out.

Praise God that He solved the problem for those who would turn to and trust in Him.

How are God's prophecies and promises the source of true hope for us now?

The promises of this world are rarely kept and only temporary in relief.

Only God's promises are yes and yes, amen and amen. If God promises, it WILL happen, no maybes.

Those who trust in Jesus have REAL HOPE, and can be fully confident of their eternal future.

NOW, our job is to share that hope.

SEE 1 Peter 3:15

PLEASE PRAY

- For the Ohana team in Greece and Poland
- For joy and teamwork at our upcoming Workdays (April 5,6)
- For our ministry to kids and families at Micah House and our new board members