

The Book of Daniel

Text: "Earnest In Prayer"

Chapter 9 Part 1

Introduction

In Chapter 8, Daniel's vision reveals that God is not bound by time; he is eternal and beyond time. God sees the past, present, and future simultaneously and has ordained the length of time. We also see that the events of the future are all known to God, yet His "knowing" (Omniscience) does not negate our free will. Chapter 8 also reveals the conflict that would arise between Persia and Greece, Alexander the Great's victory and the establishment of the Grecian Empire. And finally, we see the rise of Antiochus IV as king of the Seleucid Empire, his devastating rule over Israel, and how he becomes a picture of the end-time ruler we often call the Antichrist.

In Chapter 9, we see Daniel, the Intercessor, in fervent prayer for the nation of Israel. Verse 1 gives us Daniel's reason for prayer. "In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans— in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years *specified* by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem." ([Daniel 9:1-2 NKJV](#))

Daniel 9 is arguably one of the most significant prophetic passages in the Bible. It begins with Daniel's understanding and application of prophecy. Daniel understands something significant after reading the words of Jeremiah's prophecy. Gleason Archer says, "These verses show Daniel as a diligent student of Scripture who built his prayer life on the Word of God." (Archer)

Daniel knew that effective prayer comes from knowing and praying God's word and how it relates to our present circumstances. Through his study, the 70 years described in Jeremiah 25 caused Daniel to realize Jeremiah's prophecies applied to his time. Jeremiah 29:10 says, "For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. (Jeremiah 29:10)

Daniel regarded these 70 years as literal, not "symbolic" years. Daniel was also familiar with Isaiah's prophecies concerning Cyrus in Chapters 44 and 45. He must have been thrilled to see a leader named Cyrus rise to power in Persia. This caused Daniel to pray a very passionate prayer.

2 Peter 3:12 indicates that our holy conduct and godly lives can hasten the Lord's coming. In Chapter 9, Daniel believes that prayer can hasten the Lord's coming, so he asks for a speedy fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy. In the Book of Revelation, John exhorts us to pray, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20) If you want Jesus to come soon, there is something you can *do* about it!

But a second important reason for Daniel's prayer of intercession is to petition God to act in His mercy. Why? Because Daniel wanted God to take the earliest of all possible starting points (Daniel's abduction) for determining the beginning of the 70 years.

There were three "waves" of captivity:

- 605 B.C. - Jerusalem is attacked, and Daniel and other captives are taken to Babylon.
- 597 B.C. - Jerusalem is attacked, and all the treasures are taken from the temple.
- 587 B.C. - Jerusalem falls, and the nation is exiled.

But if Daniel could prevail with God in prayer, and God takes the earliest starting point to determine the 70 years, then His mercy comes to Israel 18 years earlier. Since it was still three or four years short of the 70 years that began in 605 B.C., it wasn't too soon for Daniel to start praying.

God's plan for the ages is certain, yet Jeremiah made a prophecy, Daniel made a prayer, and Cyrus made a proclamation. One writer says, "Too often we conclude that God will carry out His sovereign purpose no matter what we do, and so we do not concern ourselves with those matters." (Strauss)

Actually, Daniel was not uniquely qualified for a ministry of intercession. He didn't belong to a priestly family like Ezekiel and wasn't a "career" prophet like Isaiah or Jeremiah, but like all of us, Daniel could pray. In verse 3, Daniel says, "Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes." ([Daniel 9:3 NKJV](#))

Daniel prayed with determination. He had an objective to achieve through prayer and approached God as a person who would not be denied. He was convinced that his prayer was in the will of God, based upon the scriptures, and not motivated by any selfish desire.

But Daniel was also humble in approaching God. He was determined but not demanding. In verse 4, Daniel prays an incredible prayer, confessing his people's sins and glorifying God's goodness and righteousness. (MP3)

"And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, "O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness *belongs* to You, but to us shame of face, as *it is* this day—to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You. "O Lord, to us

belongs shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. To the Lord our God *belong* mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him. And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem. "As *it is* written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth. Therefore the LORD has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for the LORD our God *is* righteous in all the works which He does, though we have not obeyed His voice. And now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made Yourself a name, as *it is* this day—we have sinned, we have done wickedly! "O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people *are* a reproach to all *those* around us. Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord's sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate. O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name." ([Daniel 9:4-19 NKJV](#))

Daniel begins his prayer where we all should - by recognizing the greatness and goodness of God. But Daniel knew the problem was not with God. God keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him.

Daniel's prayer is remarkable for both its understanding and earnestness. As Daniel confesses Israel's sin, he prays as if he is as sinful as the rest of Israel. It's a confession of *we*, not *they*. Daniel knew that Israel's sin was not God's fault; God was utterly righteous and blameless. Any shame belonged to Israel, not to God. Instead of complaining, Daniel confessed. During times of great revival, the Holy Spirit always brings a deep conviction and awareness of sin.

Daniel doesn't make excuses for Israel's sin. He acknowledged the fault belongs to Israel and Israel alone. Even when Israel faced great trials and calamity, the people still did not cry out to God in prayer. When we sense a trial or difficulty, it should immediately cause us to pray. If it doesn't, it should be a wake-up call to the coldness of our heart.

Daniel also asks God to forgive and restore Jerusalem. He prays as a true patriot. However, he is a patriot more of the Kingdom of God than the Kingdom of Israel. Christian patriotism means we love and are committed to the mission of the Church.

The heart of Daniel's plea is "Cause your face to shine." His concern is for people to see God's glory, his work accomplished, and His cause glorified. It isn't wrong to pray for our own needs, but at the same time, we need to remember that everything is for the glory and benefit of God.

Our motives must be pure when we come to God in prayer. Daniel prays on firm biblical grounds. His confidence isn't in his goodness but in God's goodness. We pray in the name of Jesus as a reminder that our prayer is for the glory of God, not our own glory. Those aren't words we tack on to the end of a prayer; they express that we are praying in the merits and righteousness of Jesus, not our own.

Daniel was not great because he prayed. He was great because his prayer was an expression of his great trust and dependence on God. O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act!

In verse 20, Daniel's prayer is interrupted by an angelic visit. While Daniel is still praying, Gabriel arrives with the answer to Daniel's prayer. "Now while I *was* speaking, 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, yes, while I *was* speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering." (Daniel 9:20-21 NKJV)

Sometimes God answers prayer before we even pray! Isaiah 65 says, "It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer, and while they are still speaking, I will hear." (Isaiah 65:24) As a young boy in Jerusalem, Daniel often saw the smoke rising from the temple at the time of the evening sacrifice.

In verse 22, Gabriel announces that he has come to bring Daniel an answer to his prayer. "And he informed *me*, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell *you*, for you *are* greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:" (Daniel 9:22-23 NKJV)

Daniel studied the passage in Jeremiah but still didn't understand it completely. Daniel had just considered a set of "sevens" that marked Israel's 70 years of captivity prophesied by Jeremiah. In verse 24, Gabriel says, "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy." (Daniel 9:24 NKJV)

There is almost universal agreement among Bible scholars and commentators that this refers to seventy sets of seven years, or "weeks of years." In ancient Hebrew, weeks refers to a unit of seven, but it can also be used to describe a unit of seven years. The seventy weeks focus on the Jewish people and the holy city, Jerusalem. Talbot calls the seventy weeks "God's calendar for Israel" because it does not focus on the Gentiles or the church.

To finish the transgression means to establish an entirely new order on earth that ends humanity's rebellion against God. To make an end of sins means not only the guilt of sin but an end of sin itself. To bring in everlasting righteousness means a new Godly order to society. Gabriel tells Daniel that each of these amazing things will happen within the period of seventy weeks.

Verse 25 says, "Know therefore and understand, *That* from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, *There shall be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times." ([Daniel 9:25 NKJV](#))

In answer to his prayer, Gabriel gives Daniel the starting point for the seventy-week prophecy. In 445 B.C. Artaxerxes made a decree giving Nehemiah permission, safe passage, and supplies to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the city and the walls. (Nehemiah 2:1-8)

Gabriel's message to Daniel is simple and striking. 483 years, or 69 units of seven years, would pass from the time of the command recorded in Nehemiah 2:1-8 until the appearance of Messiah the Prince. Many scholars say the 483 years were completed at the triumphal entry of Jesus (if dated at 32 A.D.).

Sir Robert Anderson's significant work, "The Coming Prince," follows this argument in great detail. Anderson uses the 360-day year used in Daniel's day to calculate 173,880 days from the decree to the triumphal entry, which fulfills the prophecy to the very day. Walvoord says, "It is customary for the Jews to have twelve months of 360 days each and then to insert a thirteenth month occasionally when necessary to correct the calendar." (Walvoord)

This remarkable fulfillment of prophecy takes place when a Gentile king makes a decree, and 483 years later, to the day, Jesus presents Himself as the Messiah, the Prince of Israel.

The rebuilding of the streets and wall of Jerusalem happened in the first seven weeks. Then, another 62 weeks of years followed until the coming of Messiah the Prince. The seventy weeks, then, can be divided into three parts:

- Seven weeks or 49 years, until the city and its walls are rebuilt.
- Sixty-nine weeks; 7 plus 62, or 483 years from the decree, until the Messiah the Prince appears in Jerusalem.
- A final 70th week, yet needed to complete the prophecy.

Verse 26 says, "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it *shall be* with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined." (Daniel 9:26 NKJV)

Gabriel says that after sixty-two weeks, the Messiah shall be cut off. The Biblical term cut off sometimes describes the loss of life or execution (see Genesis 9:11 and Exodus 31:14). The Messiah would give His life for the sake of others, not for Himself. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ occurred immediately after the 483 prophetic years expired. After the Messiah "is cut off," an overwhelming army would again destroy Jerusalem and the temple. Most scholars agree the Romans fulfilled this part of the prophecy with their destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

In verse 27, Gabriel tells us about the events of the seventieth week. He says, "Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate." (Daniel 9:27 NKJV)

The "he" Gabriel mentions the "prince who is to come" mentioned verse 26. Since we know that the prince's people destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D., we know this coming prince has his ancestral roots in the soil of the ancient Roman Empire. It's logical that the "prince who is to come" will in some way be an heir to the Romans, even as the final world government is an heir to the Roman Empire (Daniel 7).

The coming prince will make a covenant with Israel for the final unit of seven years, completing the seventy weeks prophesied for the Jewish people and Jerusalem. With this covenant, Israel will embrace the Antichrist as a political messiah and possibly as the literal Messiah. Jesus predicted this in John 5:43 when He told the leaders of Israel, "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive." (John 5:43 NKJV)

The events promised in the first 69 weeks are already fulfilled, leaving a lengthy "pause" in the 70 Weeks between the 69th and 70th weeks. The 70th week will begin when the Antichrist, the coming prince, makes a seven-year covenant with Israel. The "pause" between the 69th and 70th week is what we call the "times of the Gentiles" or "the Church age."

"The 70th week will begin once the Jewish people take possession of their homeland and the city of Jerusalem. Israel will experience a spiritual revival, and a faithful remnant will emerge that acknowledges their sin and seek to return to the ways of Jehovah. The Antichrist will, however, break the covenant with Israel in the middle of the seven years.

The Book of Revelation picks up from here and takes us through this seven-year period. The Antichrist breaks the covenant and ends sacrifice and offerings by desecrating the temple's holy place. In Matthew 24, Jesus calls this the "abomination of desolation" spoken of by Daniel the prophet. (Matthew 24:15)

That action is a pivotal sign of the Great Tribulation. Paul referred to this idolatry by the Antichrist in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4.

Daniel 9 gives us an incredible amount of prophecy. We are living in the last days, maybe the final days that end the church age and the times of the Gentiles. So, what does this mean for us?

I. Our Prayer Should Always Glorify God

The purpose of prayer is to see God's work accomplished and His name glorified. God's Word instructs us to glorify God in everything that we do. 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31 NKJV)

In every activity, whether big or small, we are to pursue God's glory. And one way we can do this is through our prayers. Just as God was glorified when Jesus spent time in prayer, God is glorified when we pray. Our very act of praying brings glory to God because it reveals that we are creatures who need our Creator.

If we are honest, our sinful human nature sees prayer as a means to fulfil our own selfish desires and wants. However, we see a very different approach towards prayer in Jesus' words to his disciples in John 14:13, "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (John 14:13-14 NKJV)

That is the ultimate purpose of our prayers; to glorify God! Listen to your prayers. Do they glorify God or make demands of Him?

II. Prayer Shows Our Need For God

God is glorified through prayer because it shows our need for God. We pray to God because we don't fully trust human wisdom, strength, and resources. Psalm 79 says, "Help us, O God of our salvation, For the glory of Your name; And deliver us, and provide atonement for our sins, For Your name's sake!" (Psalms 79:9 NKJV)

God is glorified as we confess our dependence upon Him and admit that we need Him. Prayer is not about increasing our strength or gaining confidence in ourselves. It is about accepting our helplessness, weakness and seeing God as the source of all wisdom and strength.

The joy in answered prayer is that it is proof of God's glorious love and grace by providing for us as His special creation. When we acknowledge our need for God, we approach Him not with a sense of entitlement but with a desire for His will to be accomplished and His glory to be revealed.

III. God Is Glorified When We Yield To His Will.

God Is Glorified As We Surrender To His Will In Prayer. Instead of worrying or being anxious, we can bring our requests to God in prayer. We can ask anything we want in prayer, but God only gives us what glorifies Him and honors His will. I John 5:14 says, "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him."

(1 John 5:14-15 NKJV)

Thoughtless prayers, selfish prayers, and prayers done merely to fulfill a sense of duty do not bring glory to God. We ask according to His will so that God gets the glory as His will is done. That is the prayer Jesus prayed in anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Not my will but yours be done" (Lk. 22:42). That is the example of prayer that we need to follow.

Prayer is not limited to times of private, personal prayer. You can pray as a family, as Christian friends, corporately in our local church, or small groups. But in all our praying, our desire should be to glorify God.

Conclusion

The purpose of prayer is to see God's work accomplished and His name glorified. Prayer does not make a person great. Trust and dependence upon God are what cause great praying. Effective prayer concentrates on bringing glory to God, not just for our own benefit.

A diligent student of Scripture builds his prayer life on the Word of God. Effective prayer comes out of knowing and praying both God's word and our present circumstances. Prayer should always begin with recognizing the greatness and goodness of God. Prayer that glorifies God causes God's face to shine upon us.

Thankfully, one day soon, sin and transgression itself will be finished. God will establish His entirely new order on earth, which will put an end to all of our rebellion against God.