

BOOK OF DANIEL
DANIEL'S BIBLE STUDY AND PRAYER
DANIEL 9:1-23

Introduction

This chapter contains the vision of the "*Seventy Weeks*," which is undoubtedly the most important single structural prophecy in the Word of God.

It gives us a detailed blueprint of God's plan for His people, the Jews, and for this reason has been called "*The A.B.C. of Bible Prophecy*" and "*The Backbone of Bible Prophecy*."

In Daniel chapters 2, 7, and 8, we saw an overview of God's plans concerning the GENTILE nations. Here in Daniel 9, we receive a similar view of God's purposes for the nation of ISRAEL.

This Chapter is also one of the great Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament!

I. DANIEL'S STUDY OF THE WORD! (Vs 1-2)

A. The Time Of Daniel's Study! (vs 1)

The first year of Darius was 538 B.C.

B. The Object Of Daniel's Study! (vs 2)

Daniel was studying the Book of the prophet Jeremiah. The use of the word "*books*" here indicates that the Book of Jeremiah was received as part of the Old Testament canon.

This is noteworthy, since the lives of these two prophets overlapped!

Jeremiah was prophesying in Judah just prior to the Babylonian captivity;

Daniel was taken in the Babylonian captivity.

We know that initially, the writings of Jeremiah were rejected by the Jewish leaders (*Jeremiah 36:1-26*)!

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However we see that they were accepted as divinely inspired and preserved by God (*Jeremiah 36:32*)! It is quite possible that the original rolls were taken to Babylon with the captives.

1. The Prophecy Of Jeremiah!

The prophecy which interested Daniel is found in chapters 25, 27, and 29—particularly *Jeremiah 25:11* and *Jeremiah 29:10*.

2. The Perplexity Of Daniel!

Daniel Understanding From God's Word:

a. Daniel knew that the 70 years of desolations upon Jerusalem were coming to an end!

The Babylonian captivity began with the first deportation of Jews in 606 B.C. It was now 538 B.C. There were two years to go!

b. Daniel knew the time for the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple was at hand, since Cyrus was already king of Persia!

(*Isaiah 44:28; Cf. Daniel 6:28; 10:1*)

c. From both Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2 and his own visions in Daniel 7-8, Daniel knew there would be FOUR empires which must come and go before the complete restoration of Judah!

1) One had now fallen—Babylonian

2) The second was in place—Medo-Persian

3) Two others remained.

d. All these facts didn't seem to add up in his mind!

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3. The Purpose Of The Next Vision!

The purpose of the vision he was about to receive was to show that Israel's 70 year sojourn in Babylon was a FORESHADOWING of a dispersion that was to last 7 times longer.

II. DANIEL'S GREAT PRAYER! (Vs 3-19)

So we see here that Daniel began to seek the Lord in prayer as he searched the Scriptures diligently! Bible study and prayer are an indispensable combination for the believer—especially in times of change and revival!

Daniel's prayer here is one of the great prayers recorded in the Bible! It is a model for confession and supplication, in which Daniel—one of the most spotless major Bible characters outside of the Lord Jesus Christ—associates himself with his sinful people!

A. Daniel's Posture In Prayer! (vs 3-4)

We know from what we've seen thus far in this book that Daniel was a man of prayer. We saw him praying in Daniel 2:17-18 and also in Daniel 6!

And now here in Daniel 9 we see him praying again and we will also see him praying in Daniel 10.

1. The Activity Of Prayer! (vs 3)

"...I set my face unto the Lord God..."

For Daniel, praying was an intentional, unhurried activity. While it is true that we can pray at any time (1 Thessalonians 5:17), in any place (Jonah 2:1), and in the briefest of prayers (Nehemiah 2:4; Matthew 14:30), our general prayer life also needs to involve the setting aside of all other worldly concerns so that we might meet with God. See: Matthew 6:6.

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2. The Aim Of Prayer! (vs 3)

"... to seek..."

Prayer involves seeking God's face. See: Psalm 63:1-7

Prayer is much more than rattling off some words (vain repetition)—it is coming into the very presence of God, and this involves heart preparation—see: Ezra 7:10; 2 Chronicles 19:3b; also: Deuteronomy 4:29; Psalm 119:2; and Jeremiah 29:13.

3. The Attitude Of Prayer! (vs 3)

"...with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes..."

This was an outward display indicating the attitude and desires of the heart.

While we as Christians are not required to do all these things in order to seek the Lord, we must manifest the same heart attitude!

a. Fasting — refers to the setting aside of normal bodily (physical) needs and desires in order to accentuate spiritual things. Fasting is not some means of bargaining with God—it is an exercise whereby we suppress the flesh to heighten spiritual perception. It reveals an attitude of steadfastness. See: *Matthew 5:6*.

b. Sackcloth — refers to the wearing of rough cloth (burlap or hessian) in place of the fineries of life. It indicates an attitude of humility and neediness. See: *Matthew 5:3*.

c. Ashes — the smearing of the body with ashes, and indicated an attitude of mourning. See: *Matthew 5:4*.

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4. The Address Of Prayer! (vs 4)

Daniel's appeal is to the "*great and dreadful*" (Almighty) God and the covenant-keeping God.

Although Christians use different words when addressing God (because of our different relationship to Him through Christ—Matthew 6:9; John 15:15,16; 16:23; Romans 8:15; etc.), our prayers nonetheless are made to the same Almighty, covenant-keeping God in reference to His mighty work of salvation.

Daniel's Posture In Prayer!

B. Daniel's Penitence In Prayer! (vs. 5-15)

1. Personal Participation!

Note the personal pronouns "we" and "us".

Daniel was too young to have personally taken part in the wickedness of Judah prior to the Babylonian invasion. He has no sin ascribed to him in Scripture (though he was a sinner—Romans 3:10,23). Yet Daniel identifies with his people!

Note the lack of just finger pointing at others!

Note the lack of self-justification and/or excuses!

Note he doesn't bring up his own faithfulness!

Note he doesn't claim privileged position with God!

Note he doesn't protest that he is just a victim in all this!

One of the essentials for answered prayer is true humility! (*2 Chronicles 7:14*)

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Daniel's willingness to be identified with his people reveals a heart of love—so much so, that he was willing to be counted with them and share the consequences and culpability of their sin!

This was the attitude of men such as: Moses—Hebrews 11:24-25 and Exodus 32:31-32 The Apostle Paul—Romans 9:3. It reminds us of our Saviour—Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 2:14-16.

2. Particular Points!

a. The Guilty Parties! (vs 5-6)

All inclusive list from "*kings*" to "*all!*"

b. The Guilty Acts! (vs 6, 10-12)

Sin is named! It is not generalized! The greatest sin of the Jews was their disregarding of the Word of God (which is the beginning of all moral disorders)!

1) They rejected Moses—vs 11,13
See: Deuteronomy 28:63-65.

2) They rejected the Prophets—vs 6,10.
See: 2 Chronicles 36:15,16.

c. The Guilty Verdict!

Daniel acknowledges the rightness of God and the wrongness of Judah:

1) **God's righteousness vs Israel's confusion! (vs 7-8)**

2) **God's love vs Israel's rebellion! (vs 9)**

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3) God's longsuffering vs Israel's disobedience!
(vs 10-15)

Note: In these verses we have an excellent definition of CONFESSION. Confession is simply agreeing with God as to the cause and character of our sin!

In I John 1:9 we have the Christian's '*bar of soap*.'— In this great Scripture, we are not instructed to ask for forgiveness—it is "*If we CONFESS our sins...*"

The reason so many Christians struggle with sin, and continue to fall over and over into the same sin is because they have never agreed with God about it! Furthermore, when we do confess our sins to God it is often with the rider clause of circumstances!

C. Daniel's Petition In Prayer! (vs 16-19)

1. His Approach! (vs 16,19)

Daniel invokes God's reputation. It is "*thy*" city, "*thy*" holy mountain, and "*thy*" people which Daniel expresses concern over.

He in effect reminds God of the reproach that would come upon His Name should Jerusalem remain desolate and the Jews stay in captivity.

2. His Appeal!

Daniel asks God to cease from his anger and restore the nation according to His promises.

3. His Argument! (vs 18b)

This statement is the Old Testament way of saying, "For Jesus' sake."

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Daniel's only argument before God is God's righteousness and mercy. See also: verses 17,19— "*...for the Lord's sake...;*" "*for thine own sake...*"

III. DANIEL'S HOLY VISITOR! (vs. 20-23)

This is an "*interrupted prayer*"! It is exactly what God promised in *Isaiah 65:24*— "*And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.*"

We know that even as believers today God knows our needs before we even ask. (Matthew 6:8; Romans 8:26)

A. The Angelic Caller! (verse 21)

There are only three spirit beings whose actual names are given in the Word of God:

- The archangel MICHAEL — Daniel 10:13,21; 12:1; Jude 9; Revelation 12:7
- The cherub LUCIFER — Isaiah 14:12; Ezekiel 28:14
- The angel GABRIEL — Daniel 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26

There are several things we know about Gabriel:

1. His name means "*man of God*," or more literally "*the servant, the strong one of the Strong God.*"
2. His appearance to Daniel was as a man. (Cf. Dan 8:15) All angels (which are spirit beings) appear as men when they materialize in human form. (Gen 18:2;19:1)

There is NO EVIDENCE in the Bible for portraying angels as female creatures with long, golden hair and wings. (Only the seraphim and probably the cherubim are said to have wings, Isaiah 6:2; Exodus 25:20.)

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3. His duties, it appears are associated with bringing important messages from the throne room of God to people on the earth.
4. His abilities include being able to fly very swiftly.
(vs 21)

The distance between Heaven and earth is not so great as far as the unseen spirit world is concerned. Gabriel left Heaven as Daniel began to pray (verse 23) and arrived on earth before he finished his prayer.

B. The Angelic Arrival! (vs 21)

Gabriel came to Daniel at the time of "*the evening oblation.*" This has reference to the Jewish sacrifices made around 3 p.m.—cf. Exodus 12:6.

The amazing thing about this is that there had not been any evening oblation since the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

No doubt as a young boy Daniel would have seen the smoke of the sacrifice every day—a continual reminder that God accepts sinners only on the basis of a substitutionary blood sacrifice.

Apparently, even through the long years of captivity, Daniel faithfully continued to pray at this time.

C. The Angelic Message! (verses 22-23)

Gabriel has come to answer Daniel's questions and show him more of God's plans for His people.

Note: Daniel is referred to as "*greatly beloved.*" This is how God views a faithful, praying saint. (Cf. Daniel 10:11,19)