

Daniel Chapter 9

Pastor Matt Postiff

Fellowship
BIBLE CHURCH

Timing

- First year of Darius, just after the events of ch. 5 and around the time of ch. 6, whether before or after.
- 538-537 B.C.

About Darius

- We studied about Darius in ch. 5 and 6.
- Darius was a son of Ahasuerus.
- This Ahasuerus must not be confused with a later king Ahasuerus (a royal title) who reigned 486-464 B.C. during the time of Esther. See Ezra 4:6 and the book of Esther.

About Darius

- Darius, a Mede by ethnicity, was appointed by the Persian King Cyrus to lead the Chaldean realm (area) of the Medo-Persian empire.
- Darius did not rule over the entire empire.
- He was second in command. He was “made king.” He did not make himself king.

Daniel Reads the Scriptures

- The books he was reading are the “scriptures” or “holy writings.”
- He specifies that he was reading Jeremiah, so we know exactly where he was reading: Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 29:10.
- Put yourself in his shoes and read those same verses.

Daniel, an Expert in the Book

- Before just now, would you have known where to go in the Bible to find out what Daniel found out?
- It has been there for about 2,600 years now. It is definitely not new.
- It would have been a massive scroll in his day. To comb through it would be a tough job.

Whence a Copy of Jeremiah?

- Where did Daniel get a copy of Jeremiah?
- Jeremiah lived and wrote in Judah. Daniel left there in 605 B.C. and lived in Babylon, 900 miles away, while Jeremiah still had 25 years left of life.
- King Jehoiakim took a copy of Jeremiah's prophecy and cut it up and burned it in his fireplace (Jer. 36:23).

Whence a Copy of Jeremiah?

- But Jeremiah and Baruch the scribe rewrote a revised and expanded version at the direction of God (Jer. 36:27-32).
- Copies were undoubtedly created.
- Jeremiah died in 580 B.C. By 538, Daniel had over 40 years to get a copy.

Back to Daniel

- He read about these 70 years.
- Based on 2 Chron. 36:20-21, it seems that the people had not allowed the land her legislated Sabbath rests every seven years. So 70×7 means that they must have neglected it for 490 years! That's way back to King David.

The Sabbath Year

- Leviticus 25:3-22 explains the every-seven year rest for the land, and the 50th year rest after seven sevens.
- The natural question arises in Lev. 25:20 about what the people will eat. God promises a blessing on the 6th year to make up the shortfall (25:21-22).

Punishment for Disobedience

- The people of Israel experienced exactly what God promised in terms of judgment.
- See Leviticus 26:14-15, 33-43 about how the land will “catch up” on its Sabbath rests.
- The distress on the land is for more than just an agricultural transgression.

Understanding the Scriptures

- Sometimes leads to joy – Nehemiah 8:12
- Should always lead to life change – 2 Tim. 3:16-17
- Is a very important aim of teaching in the church – 1 Cor. 14:1-19.
- Sometimes leads to prayer – Daniel 9:2-3

Preparation for Prayer

- Daniel decided to pray about this because he knew the end of the time was coming soon.
- He turned toward Jerusalem—and more importantly toward God—and prayed.
- Fasting, sackcloth, and ashes accompany prayer, but they are not the main thing.

About Fasting, etc.

- Often sackcloth and ashes are associated with repentance:
 - See Jonah 3:6-8 about the king of Nineveh.
 - Note Job 42:6 – “I repent in dust and ashes.”
 - See also Matt. 11:21 and Luke 10:13.
- Often they are associated with mourning:
 - See Mordecai in Esther 4:1-3.

Useless (Ritualistic) Fasting

- Consider Isaiah 58:3-10 and following.
 - The people complain their fasting isn't "working."
 - They live in strife.
 - Mere sackcloth and ashes don't cut it with God.
 - Fasting with righteous behavior is what He wants.
 - Then there will be blessing.

Daniel's Prayer, v. 4-19

- Revolves around the two key ideas of Israel's sin and God's righteousness. He revisits these themes several times each (v. 4-15).
 - Both key ideas yielded God's stern judgment.
- Then Daniel makes his request in v. 16-19.
- Daniel connected himself to Israel's sin.

General Pattern of Prayer

- Daniel recognized God for Who He is.
- Then he confessed and repented.
- We see other examples of this “see God, then confess” pattern.
 - Isaiah 6
 - Job 42:5-6

Daniel's Prayer, v. 4-7

- Notice some key ideas in Daniel's prayer:
 - Daniel prayed and made confession.
 - **We** have sinned, committed iniquity, done wickedly, rebelled, departed from your precepts, did not heed the prophets.
 - To **us** belongs shame of face.
 - **They** were unfaithful.

Daniel's Prayer, v. 4-12

- More key ideas, these about God:
 - Great, awesome God.
 - Keeps covenant and mercy with those who love him and keep His commandments.
 - Righteousness belongs to God. No unfairness in God.
 - Mercy and forgiveness.
 - Confirmed his words, brought great disaster.
 - God is righteous in all His works.

Daniel's Prayer, 8-15

- More about their sin.
 - To all of us belong shame, kings, princes, fathers included.
 - We have sinned against God.
 - We have rebelled. We have done wickedly.
 - We have not obeyed His voice, nor walked in His laws.
 - All Israel transgressed God's law. They departed so as not to obey God's voice.
 - We did not turn from our sin or understand God's truth.

Consequences

- God sent His prophets—many of them. Israel didn't listen. They had said they would obey (Exodus 24:3-7), but they didn't.
- God poured out the curse on Israel.
- God confirmed His words by bringing great disaster.

Daniel's Request, v. 16-19

- Daniel is not asking for personal prosperity. He is asking for the place of God, the people of God, and the name of God to be exalted.
- He is asking for God to do what Solomon asked 400 years earlier in 1 Kings 8:46-51, and what God promised in Leviticus 26:44-45.

Daniel's Request, v. 16-19

- God's anger to turn away.
- Jerusalem and her people to no longer be a reproach to neighbors.
- Shine Your face on the sanctuary.
- Forgive, listen, act, do not delay.
- Daniel asks for Israel, not the church.

Daniel's Earnest Plea, v. 16-19

- Prayers offered according to God's will are heard by God.
- Still, Daniel emphatically asks God to hear:
 - Incline your ear and hear!
 - Open your eyes and see!
 - Listen! Do not delay!

Motivations for Answering

- To remove the reputational reproach on Israel before other peoples.
- For the sake of the name of God.
- God's great mercies to be demonstrated.

Why is Daniel Praying?

- At the beginning of this, he knew that God's promise said 70 years. He believed God would fulfill His promise—after all, He had kept the curse part of His word!
- So why pray? Because God commands us to do so, and because God has weaved our prayers into His eternal decree as means to His ends.

Applying the Passage Thus Far

- Knowing Scripture is essential for the believer.
 - But not mere head knowledge.
- This knowledge should affect our practice—
with holiness—and our inner being—with joy
and prayer.
- We should be experts at repentance.

Are These True in Your Life?

- Feel it is unrealistic to know Scripture like this?
 - What better thing do you have to do?
- Don't have the experience of being moved by what you read?
 - Cry to God for help; linger more in the text.
- Don't practice repentance?
 - You can't be godly without repentance.

Think of the Character of God

- Holiness is emphasized.
- Forgiveness is emphasized.
 - Forgiveness is on the basis of something that will be revealed to Daniel later in the chapter.
- Mercy is emphasized.
- Faithfulness is emphasized.

Prayer Answered

- Ephesians 3:20 teaches the Christian that God is able to do above and beyond what we ask.
- This is what Daniel experienced.
 - Not only did God acknowledge the prayer...
 - God answered by sending three waves of exiles back to Israel. But 9:24-27 passes over this.
 - And much more in 9:24-27.

Prayer Answered

- Read the early chapters of Ezra and you will see that the Lord moved the heart of King Cyrus to send any Jew who wished to go back to Jerusalem in order to rebuild the temple.
- 40,000 returned under Shesbazzar about 537 B.C.

Prayer Answered

- Then Ezra 7 records the return of Ezra and 1700 others, which was in 458 B.C.
- Neither of these was associated with a decree to rebuild the city's fortifications.
- That came later under Nehemiah, who led a third wave of Jews to return in 444 B.C.

Prayer Answered

- So Daniel asked, God heard, and answered. And God was going to do much more for Israel than even Daniel anticipated in his requests.
- So God does and will do for you, dear believer. Let us have full confidence in God that when we ask according to His will, He hears us.

On Corporate Confessions

- In recent months (of 2018), much has been written about corporate apologies for the sins of racism/slavery/etc.
- The social justice movement in the church calls for groups representing the sins of years past to confess and repent of those sins.

On Corporate Confessions

- The good part of this is that it recognizes that sins are more than just individual. They can become systemic and deeply engrained in a culture.
- The bad part is that it calls an entire people group to confess sins of their forefathers, which sins they despise and did not do, and which even their particular forefathers may not have done!

On Corporate Confessions

- So the question arises: how do you repent of a sin you are not responsible for?
 - Certainly, if you propagate the sinful thing, you are responsible and confession is proper.
 - If you are an official representative of that group or nation (like Daniel was for Israel), then a corporate statement of confession can be in order.

In the Midst of Prayer, v. 20

- Notice how Daniel summarizes:
 - Speaking, praying.
 - Confessing my sin.
 - Confessing the sin of my people.
 - Presenting my supplication before the Lord regarding the temple, etc.

The Answer, Part 1, v. 21

- Right in the midst of prayer, Gabriel arrived.
- This was the same Gabriel that helped Daniel to understand the vision of chapter 8.
 - This happened about 12-13 years earlier, but Daniel recognized the angelic visitor.
- Gabriel was “caused to fly swiftly.” He came in the late afternoon, the evening sacrifice time.

Side Note on Angels

- Angels are *finite* creatures. They are localized with “spirit bodies” and are not omnipresent.
- It appears that Gabriel had to cover a great distance to reach Daniel, and he did so quickly.
 - From heaven to earth? How far is that?
 - I don’t take the mention of his travel as language of accommodation. It is real.

The Answer, Part 1, v. 22

- Gabriel was sent by God to give Daniel skill to understand what was going to happen to Israel.
- The believer today has an even better teacher: the Holy Spirit who indwells us.
 - See 1 Cor. 2:12, 13, 15; 1 John 2:20, 27.

The Answer, Part 1, v. 23

- Gabriel was sent as soon as Daniel *started* to pray, not after he finished. God already knew what Daniel would ask, and He had an answer!
- Why? God greatly loved Daniel.
 - Reflecting on God's love for me, I give thanks.
 - A follower of Christ who labors in God's word has the esteem of God. See also 1 Timothy 5:17.

God Shares His Plan

- It may seem strange that God would tell future events to His servants.
- There are a couple of examples in the Old Testament:
 - Genesis 18:17
 - Amos 3:7

Prophecy is Important

- We see in this particular case that the focus is on prophecy. Do not despise it, friends!
- 1/3 of the Bible was or is prophetic. We can't throw it out. God will help us understand.
- Daniel is told to consider and understand. He has angelic help, but he still has to work at it.

The Answer, Part 2, v. 24-27

- Remember there was a prior period of 490 years of Israelite history where the nation did not obey God's will.
- Now God reveals that *another* 490 years will happen to the nation.
- Seventy "sevens" or "heptads" = 70×7 years.

How Do We Know 70x7 Years?

- In our notes on Daniel 9:24-27, we addressed this issue by correlating with Revelation 11 and 12.
- In Daniel 7:25 and 12:7, we see “time,” “times” and “half a time,” just like in Revelation 12:14.
- Daniel 12:11-12 mention periods of 1,290 and 1,335 days. Therefore, 3.5 times has to be years.

Chronology

- We don't want to get bogged down in numbers. But it is interesting to think about...
 - 490 years prior to captivity
 - 70 years of captivity 605-536 B.C.
 - About 90 years until the decree to build the wall.
 - Then 490 more years to complete the Jewish program, paused by the church age.

Chronology

- This is a total of about 1,133 years without the church age and without the last 7 for Israel.
- The church age is $(2018-33=)$ 1,985 more than that, for a total of 3,118 years.
- Our God must be VERY patient in working out His plan.

Years Determined

- Importantly, these 490 years have been determined *by God*. His decree has set them in place.
 - God’s decree encompasses *all things*.
- There was obviously no doctrine of imminence in the Old Testament.

Years Determined for Whom?

- Your people = Israel = Jews = Hebrews.
- Your holy city = Jerusalem.
- Notice that this is not the church. The church has no holy city and has *Jews and Gentiles*.
- The church is not revealed in the Old Testament. It is a mystery until the NT.

Side Note on the Church

- First revealed in Matthew 16:18.
- Started in Acts 2.
- Explicitly said to have been unrevealed in the OT prophets in Ephesians 3:5.
- A shadowy implication is found in passages like Isaiah 42:6, 49:6, but this is not explicit.

Side Note on the Church

- A tendency among Bible readers is to plug in the church wherever there are believers. This is anachronistic. E.g.: Matt. 24-25; Rev. 6-19.
- There have been thousands of years of believers before the church started, and there will be believers after the church age is over.

Years Determined Why?

- Finish transgression.
- Make an end of sins = atone for iniquity.
- Make reconciliation for iniquity.
- Bring in everlasting righteousness.
- Seal up vision and prophecy.
- Anoint the most holy place.

Three Negatives: Sin

- The first three deal with sin. They are preliminarily fulfilled in the coming of Messiah and His being cut off for the transgressions of Israel. But sin is obviously not gone yet...
- This will come to full implementation as God opens a fountain of cleansing for Israel (Zech. 13:1). God will remove sin from the land.

Three Negatives: Sin

- Israel's pattern of apostasy, rebellion, idolatry, and the like will come to a screeching halt.
- Not only will the sin cease, but an actual atonement and reconciliation will be made for all sins that is permanent, not merely temporary → Messiah.

Three Positives: Righteousness

- Everlasting righteousness refers to the millennial kingdom and, more perfectly so, to the eternal state on the new earth.
 - In the Kingdom, sin will be greatly reduced, and quickly and justly punished.
 - Ultimately in eternity, there will be no sin at all.

Vision and Prophecy

- Vision and prophecy will be “sealed.”
- There shall be no need of them when Christ comes back. Prophecy will be unnecessary.
- We have a similar situation today: the canon is closed. The Bible is sufficient. New revelation is unnecessary.

The Last of the Positives

- To anoint the Most Holy refers to the temple.
 - It will be desecrated by the Antichrist in the latter half of the Tribulation (9:27).
 - It will be cleansed and dedicated for proper use as the new temple is built for the millennial reign of Christ.
 - See Joel 3:18, Isaiah 60:7, Jer. 33:20ff, Ezekiel 37:26ff, Ezekiel 40-48.

Two Comings Fulfill the 70 Sevens

- Speaking broadly...
- The first three (negatives) are handled at the first coming of Christ.
- The second three (positives) are handled at the second coming of Christ.

The 490 Year Plan, v. 25

- From that decree to Nehemiah, there will be 62+7 (483 years) of the 70 weeks (490 years).
- During this time, the street (city square) and moat/trench will be built. **Fulfilled.**
- The times will be troubled. **Fulfilled:** Read of external and internal problems (Ezra 4-6, 9-10; Neh. 4, 5, 10, etc.).

The 490 Year Plan, v. 25

- At the end of the 483 years, Messiah the Prince will come on the scene. **Fulfilled.**
- N.B. that Messiah is central to the prophecy.
- This long-awaited Messiah was promised in Genesis 3, 12, 49; Psalm 2, 110; Isaiah 4, 7, 9, 11, 40, 53 and many other places.

After 483 Years, v. 26

- Messiah will be cut off. **Fulfilled.** This is clear like Isaiah 53 about the murder of Jesus Christ.
 - NT revelation makes clear why Jesus was killed.
 - Note “after the 62 weeks.” There must be some kind of a gap.
 - The murder of Jesus “paused time” for the Jews.

Cut Off with Nothing

- Messiah is cut off “but will have nothing.”
 - He is king, but He will not have a kingdom.
 - He is priest, but He will not have a temple or a people.
 - He is prophet but His prophetic ministry is inactive in the present age (except the unchanging Word).
 - But He is calling out a people for Himself.

After 483 Years, v. 26

- After that point, the people who are associated with antichrist will destroy the city and temple → Rome, 70 A.D. **Fulfilled.**
- After that, “until the end,” desolations are decreed for the people of Israel. This is also during the “gap.”

The Gap

- This is not the “gap theory” of evolutionary creationists!
- This gap between weeks 69 and 70 is clear, based on:
 - The language “after.”
 - The fact that the city was not destroyed until 70 AD, much longer than 7 years after Messiah.

The Last 7 Years, v. 27

- “Then” marks the transition to heptad #70 and God’s program is “unpaused.”
- Antichrist – the prince who is to come—is the main character.
- He will make some kind of peace covenant with many (Israel+?) for 7 years.
- But he will renege in the middle.

The Last 7 Years, v. 27

- Evidently, terms of the covenant will include the resumption of temple sacrifice.
- Two witnesses will prophesy; national revival will occur; 144,000 evangelists will minister.
- But that all will be stopped in the middle of the heptad – 3½ years into the covenant.

The Last 7 Years, v. 27

- The abomination of desolation is an event in which the temple is desecrated by the antichrist.
 - Mentioned by Jesus in Mark 13:14.
 - 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4
 - See Revelation 13, etc.

Echoes of the Past

- The Abomination echoes a historical event that happened under Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 B.C. when he put up a statue of Zeus in the temple and sacrificed a pig to the false deity.
- That historical event was a mere foreshadowing of the coming Antichrist.
- A similar event happened when Roman General Titus destroyed the temple in 70 A.D. and then Hadrian built a temple to Jupiter on the same site ca 120s A.D.

End of the 7 Years, v. 27

- A consummation/completion is poured out by God and Christ and finishes the desolator.
 - Notice again “determined” like in 24, 26. This whole thing is decreed by God.
 - 2 Thess. 2:8-10.
 - Revelation 6:2 and many other places in the book speak of this antichrist and his agents.

The Kingdom

- After the 70th seven, then the Messiah will have “something”:
 - A kingdom.
 - A priestly ministry.
 - A prophetic ministry.
 - A people—actually several peoples, including the living nation of Israel, living Gentiles, resurrected Israel, OT saints, and the resurrected church.

Determined

- Every thing or event that occurs is determined by God. See Ephesians 1:11.
- This is what makes prophecy work.
- This is what makes your life work too.
- It ought to comfort us that *everything* is prepared and planned by God.

Where Does the Church Fit?

- In other words, where does the believer fit?
 - Between weeks 69 and 70.
 - After week 70, in the millennial kingdom.
 - After the kingdom, in Heaven.
- All part of God's master plan.
- He's moving his chess pieces as He wills...

But He Involves YOU!

- God answered Daniel's prayer by laying out a plan for world history.
- God answered Nehemiah's prayer by sending him back to rebuild the wall.
- How has God answered your prayer? Example: Have you prayed for the Lord to come quickly?