

Lecture #11

Daniel 9:1-23

Daniel 9:1-14

It has been observed that the study of biblical prophecy is not escapism from the present, it is not a distraction from the present; it is a motivation for the present. This is certainly true when one comes to Daniel 9. This is a chapter that ought to promote godliness, faith and prayer.

Daniel chapter 9 is one of the most important chapters in all of Daniel; in fact, it is one of the most important chapters in the whole Bible. In this chapter we learn incredible, precise information about God's future. Philip R. Newell called Daniel 9 "the greatest chapter in the book" and "one of the greatest chapters of the entire Bible" (Newell, p. 129). As one person said, Daniel 9 is the "high point of the book of Daniel." This is the chapter that contains detailed information that becomes the basis for understanding the book of Revelation. It was Dr. John Walvoord who called his commentary on Daniel—*Daniel: The Key To Prophetic Revelation*. What this prophecy proves is that Israel will survive and God still has a plan for her as a nation and one day she will be honored by God.

Now the thing that leads to this great prophetic text is a remarkable prayer of Daniel.

**A CRITICAL KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE DEEP MYSTERIES OF GOD IS HUMBLE PRAYER THAT ACKNOWLEDGES TRUTH BEFORE GOD ABOUT SELF AND ABOUT HIM.**

This prayer is very important to see because this prayer is what moved God to reveal one of the most famous prophetic passages in all of the Bible. God is immutable in that He does not change, but He is not immobile in that He will move. Prayer moves God.

**Daniel 9:1** – The time of the revealed prophecy.

**Fact #1** - This prophecy was given in the first year of the reign of Darius. **9:1a**

This specific year this happened is stated twice for emphasis in **verses 1 and 2**. This happened in the first year of Darius' reign. The year was 539 B.C. which means it has been thirteen years since Daniel's last vision (8:1). It has now been sixty-six years since Daniel had been exiled and taken captive in 605 B.C. He would have been eighty-two or eighty-three years old by this time. He had done much for God and had been greatly used by God, but as an old man he was not done.

**Fact #2** - Darius was the son of Ahasuerus of Median descent. **9:1b**

This is a different Ahasuerus than the Xerxes of Esther who lived approximately 100 years after this event (485-465 B.C.).

**Fact #3** - Darius had been "made" king over the Chaldeans. **9:1c**

The term "Chaldean" was used two ways: 1) Division of wise men; 2) Ethnic group of mountain people dominant in Babylonian world. The Hophal stem of the verb "was made" is passive, meaning Darius the Mede had nothing to do with the action of being king, but was the recipient of an appointment action of Cyrus the Persian who was actually in charge.

The thing we need to see is that we do not need to be in a God-honoring environment in order for God to allow us to understand deep things about Him.

**Daniel 9:2** – The study of Daniel which leads to the revealed prophecy.

Now the occasion of the prayer is clearly stated in **verse 2**—Daniel was studying the Bible. Daniel was carefully studying the Scriptures. In fact the noun “books” is articular in Hebrew and the Septuagint, meaning specific books which were God’s sacred books. We know from Daniel 1:5-6 that Daniel was a well-read man. However, the book he really intensely studied was God’s Word.

Daniel was carefully studying the O.T. book of Jeremiah, and he came across a specific number that Jeremiah used twice which was the number of seventy years (Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10). This number was the number of years that Jeremiah predicted that God would permit Israel to be dominated. Daniel was doing the math on this. He had been in captivity for sixty-six years and Jeremiah had predicted the captivity would last seventy years, so he realized there was the possibility that the time of captivity was just about up.

I want us to carefully observe something—**Daniel interpreted the prophetic Scriptures literally**. He took seventy years to literally mean seventy years.

When Daniel read seventy years and realized they were at year sixty-six, it caused him to get excited and pray. He realized that he was alive at the very time when God was about to do something major in His program with Israel. Daniel was about to claim the promise of God and actually see it fulfilled.

**Daniel 9:3-14** – The prayer of Daniel which leads to the revealed prophecy.

Daniel is a man of prayer (2:16-23; 6:10-11; 7:15; 8:15). He realizes that if God is going to lift a judgment, it must come by prayer, confession and repentance. Now I want to carefully point out that Daniel is not proudly and arrogantly naming it and claiming it and demanding that God do it. He is humbly going to God in prayer in an attitude of great humility and repentance.

**Verse 3** gives us a look at the humble attitude Daniel had in prayer. He gave his attention—undivided attention to going to the Lord in prayer. The word prayer refers to intercession and the word supplication refers to entreaty. The Hebrew word “attention” literally refers to giving yourself to something (B.D.B., pp. 678-679). It refers to “deliberate action.” Daniel deliberately humbled himself before God before he began his prayer.

- 1) With a physical humility of fasting.
- 2) With a clothing humility, wearing sackcloth and ashes—which is a sign of great humility, grief and repentance (Genesis 37:34; Nehemiah 9:1; Esther 4:1, 3; Isaiah 58:5; Jeremiah 49:3; Ezekiel 7:18; Joel 1:8; Jonah 3:5-6; Matthew 11:21).

Now the contents of the prayer occur in **verses 7-19**. The way the prayer breaks down is this way: **Verse 4** is an exaltation verse; **Verses 5-15** are confession verses; **Verses 16-19** are petition verses. What this means is that only four verses ask God to do something, but eleven verses confess how unworthy and undeserving God’s people are of having God do something.

For the most part then, this prayer is a confession. There is nothing in this prayer that tries to build up man or Israel. Daniel sees things accurately and honestly. God is a righteous God and His people aren't.

Carefully notice how Daniel addresses God in **verse 4**—he uses the covenantal name “Jehovah” (LORD) and identifies Him as his “God” (Elohim). Then he also refers to Him as “Adonai” (Lord)—which refers to master. So the three main O.T. nouns are used here by Daniel—Jehovah, Elohim, Adonai. This is the only chapter in Daniel where he uses the name Jehovah. In this one chapter it is used seven times (**9:2, 4, 10, 13, 14 (twice), 20**). Why? Because this is God's covenant name for Israel.

**Acknowledgment #1** - The prayer acknowledges the greatness of God. **9:4a**

The emphasis of the Hebrew word “awesome” is that God is a God to be feared. He is a God to be revered. Prayer that will move God is prayer that will elevate God.

**Acknowledgment #2** - The prayer acknowledges who God honors. **9:4b**

Daniel identifies those who can expect to see God do great things—those who love Him and obey Him.

**Acknowledgment #3** - The prayer acknowledges the sinfulness of Israel. **9:5**

Daniel is an old man and he confesses that he is as guilty as everyone else: “we” (**v. 5**); “us” (**v. 8**); “all” (**v. 11**); “we” (**v. 15**). In fact, four times in these verses this point is stressed—**9:5, 8, 11, 15**. Leon Wood says Daniel uses four different Hebrew verbs to stress the level of Israel's sin. He says those verbs teach that Israel was guilty of missing the mark, committing iniquity, acting perversely, rebelling and defying authority (Wood, p. 236). In every possible respect, Israel had grossly sinned against God and Daniel is acknowledging this reality.

No one will see God work powerfully who tries to dance around the sin reality.

**Acknowledgment #4** - The prayer acknowledges the refusal to listen to God's men. **9:6**

Israel would not listen to God's prophets and servants who preached God's Word. God sent His men with His message and Israel would not listen. In fact, Israel did this very thing to the very prophet Daniel had been reading—Jeremiah (Jeremiah 18:18-21).

**Acknowledgment #5** - The prayer acknowledges that God is righteous. **9:7a**

In contrast to an unrighteous people, God is a righteous God. Everything God does is righteous.

**Acknowledgment #6** - The prayer acknowledges that God's people deserve open shame.  
**9:7b-8**

By putting shame after an acknowledgment of God's righteousness, it is clearly a statement that one cannot blame God for the sin which brings one to shame.

**Acknowledgment #7** - The prayer acknowledges that God is forgiving and compassionate.  
**9:9a**

God is righteous and just but He also is gracious and merciful. The words forgiveness and compassion are both plural in Hebrew which speaks of a fullness. Full forgiveness and full compassion are found with God. Full pardon of sin belongs to the Lord. But one must first face the sin before Him.

**Acknowledgment #8** - The prayer acknowledges that God's people have rebelled and not obeyed. **9:9b-10**

Notice "all" had transgressed. Israel, as a nation, had chosen not to obey the teachings of God and that is why she found herself dominated by sinful Gentile powers.

**Acknowledgment #9** - The prayer acknowledges that God's people have transgressed and sinned against God's Law. **9:11**

Moses, in the Law, said that blessing would come to the nation if it obeyed God's Law, but cursing would come if she didn't (i.e. Deuteronomy 30). Israel transgressed God's Law and had come under God's curse.

**Acknowledgment #10** - The prayer acknowledges that God's people deserve to be punished with calamity. **9:12-14**

No sugar coating of sin will move God to do anything. Daniel knew the book of Jeremiah and he knew God is the One who causes the calamity to fall on Israel, which she deserved (Jeremiah 18:11-17). In these verses, Daniel itemizes the evil God brought on Israel. God punished Israel and she refused to turn to Him.

No one will ever get anywhere in prayer to God or in a relationship with God until there is honesty and humility.

Prayer is a key to seeing God do great and mighty things—but to move God one must deal with sin.

### **DANIEL 9:15-23**

One of the first things that we see when we look at this part of the prayer is that Daniel does not use Israel's covenantal name for God "LORD" (Jehovah), but "Lord" (Adonai) and "God" (Elohim). This is, in my opinion, an important fact. Daniel is opting to appeal to the fact that God is plural Deity ("God") and God is the Supreme Master/Lord ("Lord"), rather than the Sovereign, Self-Existing "I AM" which is so important to Israel. At this point, Israel did not deserve a covenantal relationship with God and by not using LORD (Jehovah) this is established. **A critical key to God answering this prayer is the total humility and honesty of Daniel.**

**IN VIEW OF DANIEL'S HUMILITY BEFORE GOD AND HIS HONESTY CONCERNING THE PEOPLE'S SIN, DANIEL ASKS GOD TO SPECIFICALLY FORGIVE AND RESTORE ISRAEL AND GOD IMMEDIATELY SENDS AN ANGEL TO GIVE A DIRECT ANSWER TO HIS PRAYER.**

Now the assumption that Daniel makes when he prays this prayer is that God has the power and ability to get Israel, as a nation, out of her terrible situation. This is an assumption we should always have when we go to God with any prayer—God is capable of reversing negative things for His people. But His people will not see Him reverse things unless they are honest and humble before Him.

This is truly an unusual prayer and answer to prayer. Now this prayer may be analyzed under three main divisions:

- 1) The confession of Daniel—**9:4-14**
- 2) The petition of Daniel—**9:15-19**
- 3) God's answer to Daniel—**9:20-27**

**Daniel 9:4-14** – The confession of Daniel—we saw this last time.

Daniel named specific sin: **v. 5**—sin, iniquity, wicked, rebel, turn aside; **v. 6**—not listen; **v. 7**—unfaithful deeds committed against you; **v. 10**—not obey, not walk in teachings; **v. 11**—transgress, turn aside.

**Daniel 9:15-19** – The petition of Daniel.

**Request #1** - Daniel asks God for deliverance in view of God's previous deliverance of Israel. **9:15**

In the O.T. God's power was demonstrated by deliverance of Israel; in the N.T. it is demonstrated by resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:4; Ephesians 1:19-20). The fact that God delivered Israel from her sin as a nation proves He can deliver you from your sin as an individual.

God has a track record of bailing Israel out of trouble when she finally admits she has sinned against Him. He did it in Egypt. He took His mighty hand and delivered Israel and notice carefully Daniel reminds God why He did it—to make “a name for Thyself.” In other words, God did not deliver Israel from Egypt because she was so wonderful; He did it for Himself. Daniel is really concerned about God's reputation. This is the fourth time that Daniel admits to God that they have sinned against Him (**9:5, 8, 11**).

**Request #2** - Daniel asks God to turn away His anger and wrath from His holy places and people. **9:16**

He knew God was angry with His people and that is why He allowed those things to happen. **This was disciplinary judgment against His people for their sin and rebellion.** What Daniel does here is acknowledge this and ask God to lift the discipline.

There are many churches today that make God out to be a loving God who will never get mad at his people.

**Request #3** - Daniel asks God to shine His blessings on His own Temple in Jerusalem. **9:17**

Daniel has spent many years in Babylon, but he longed to see worship restored again in the Temple in Jerusalem.

Now again, notice carefully the motive Daniel gives for him doing this—"for Thy sake." God's people did not deserve the blessings of God in their worship services. They had rebelled against God and they deserved His anger. But God, for His own purposes, could shine His blessings on their worship and that is precisely what Daniel asks God to do.

**Request #4** - Daniel asks God to listen to His prayer because of His compassion, not because of His people's faithfulness. **9:18**

Daniel said there is nothing in us that merits God being good to us; we appeal to grace.

God in His mercy does not give us what we deserve.  
God in His grace does give us what we don't deserve.

We don't merit anything from God except judgment and wrath.

Daniel does not tell God what He must do. All he asks God is to listen to his prayer and take a look at Israel's situation. She certainly was not flourishing as the people of God. The only hope Israel has for God answering this prayer is His compassion, not Israel's faithfulness.

**Request #5** - Daniel asks God to forgive His people and intervene on their behalf. **9:19**

- 1) Hear
- 2) Forgive
- 3) Listen
- 4) Take action
- 5) Do not delay

Notice again the motive—"for Thine own sake," because it is "Thy city," because they are "Thy people."

**Daniel 9:20** – God's answer to Daniel.

**Observation #1** - The answer came while Daniel was praying. **9:20**

There is specific data given about the prayer—Daniel was actually speaking, confessing his own sin and Israel's sin and presenting his petition before God in behalf of the holy mountain of God. There is no place in Scripture where any sin of Daniel is mentioned. In fact, when leaders tried to find something against Daniel, they couldn't.

**Observation #2** - The answer came through the angel Gabriel, who was sent by God. **9:21**

Gabriel was used in a previous vision—Daniel 8:16. There are a couple of things to note about Daniel: 1) He was extremely weary—this prayer was draining; 2) Daniel is apparently still observing the morning and evening time of sacrifice, even though he could not actually be in Jerusalem to offer it (Exodus 19:38-39; Numbers 28:3-4). Gabriel appears in the form of a man. If you ever see an angel, you won't know it (Hebrews 13:2). Gabriel appears at the time of the "evening offering." There had been no evening offering since 568 B.C. when the Temple was destroyed. But Daniel, as a young man, had seen it and never forgot it and he was praying at that time.

**Observation #3** - The answer came through verbal instruction that brought understanding.  
**9:22**

The language of angels is an understandable language.

Gabriel's purpose was to give Daniel insight into understanding God's Word.

**Observation #4** - The command to give an answer was decided at the beginning of Daniel's prayer. **9:23**

This is amazing sovereignty. Even before Daniel had made the entirety of the request, God had decided to answer it. He knew what Daniel was thinking and what He was going to pray.

Now the answer came through a careful understanding of God's Word. In other words, Gabriel was sent to give understanding to God's Word. This is often how God will answer prayer—through an understanding of His Word.

Think of how God used Daniel:

- 1) Advisor to four kings
- 2) Intercessor for Israel
- 3) Faithful witness for God
- 4) Revealer of prophecy
- 5) Writer of inspired O.T. book

Daniel was not a priest and not a "religious leader." He was a believer living and working in a heathen world. But he was the one man who could move God. Why?

- 1) He was godly
- 2) He was a man of prayer
- 3) He was a man who carefully studied God's Word



**STUDY QUESTIONS – LECTURE #11**  
**(Daniel 9:1-23)**

1. When Daniel read in Jeremiah the number of 70 years, how did he interpret it?

Literally

2. What is the three fold pattern of Daniel's prayer?

Exaltation; Confession; Petition

3. What is so amazing about verse 23?

God is so Sovereign that He knew what Daniel was thinking and going to pray before he even prayed and decided to answer.