Seventy Years of Desolations are Nearly Fulfilled

Daniel 9:1-19

Last week we finished our study on Daniel 8 which contained the Ram with two horns (the Medo-Persian empire) and the male goat (Grecian Empire) with the single horn (Alexander the Great) and the little horn that grew out of one of those horns (Antiochus IV).

We now come to chapter 9. This chapter contains one of the greatest prophecies about the coming Messiah in the entire scriptures. This prophecy is a prophecy that sets the time of the one who would **bring in everlasting righteousness** and **put an end to sin**.

Before we come to one of the greatest prophecies in the entire Bible, we will look at one of the greatest prayers in the entire Bible. It provides great lessons on prayer, a beautiful picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, and an awesome reminder of our great and mighty God! Then next week (Lord willing) we will look at this amazing prophecy!

In YouVerse this week I posted:

*As we come to Daniel chapter 9:1-19, we arrive at one of the greatest prayers in the entire Bible. Daniel’s prayer is amazing for three reasons, and it breaks into three component parts. First let’s talk about what makes it amazing:*

1. *It is a prayer of corporate confession of sin against Yahweh God and serves as a model of how we should never see ourselves outside of all humanity’s problems, but rather as part of them. As you look at verses 5-9, as Daniel confesses the sins of the people notice how many times he says “us” or “we”. Daniel does not see himself outside of Israel’s sin problem, but part of it.*
2. *This prayer is a prayer that recognizes the majesty, awesomeness, righteousness, and holiness of God as an expression of His character. Here you see Daniel, as he is praying, openly declaring God’s awesomeness and His faithfulness.*
3. *Daniel is not simply rambling of his thoughts about God, rather in his prayer he is quoting or alluding to a number of different scriptural references. In this short prayer he quotes or alludes to verses from Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, I Kings, II Kings, Psalms, etc. This is not the ramblings of an old man, but a man who is praying the realities of the scriptures (both in the person of God and in the realities of the current situation).*

*Second this prayer breaks into three movements or three components:*

1. *Adoration (vs 4)*
2. *Confession (vs 5-15)*
3. *Petition (vs 16-19)*

*This is the model prayer, found here in the Old Testament in the book of Daniel and can serve to teach us a great deal about prayer!*

*For similar prayers, go check out Ezra 9 and Nehemiah 9.*

So last week the year was 550BC(ish), as we will see it is now 539BC, approximately 11 years since the vision of chapter 8.

Daniel has watched Babylonian kings come and Babylonian kings go. He has watched the Babylonian empire come and he has watched the Babylonian empire fall to the Medo-Persian Empire, the very night that he read and interpreted to Belshazzar the writing on the wall **(MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN)**.

**As we work to put ourselves into the shoes of Daniel, he is now 83ish, he has been in captivity 66 years, and the temple was destroyed 47 years ago. Surely, he is beginning to wonder how God will correct all this.**

So that you know what else is going on this year….

*“****1*** *¶ In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing:* ***2*** *"Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.* ***3*** *Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel —  he is the God who is in Jerusalem.* ***4*** *And let each survivor, in whatever place he sojourns, be assisted by the men of his place with silver and gold, with goods and with beasts, besides freewill offerings for the house of God that is in Jerusalem."* ***5*** *¶ Then rose up the heads of the fathers’ houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, everyone whose spirit God had stirred to go up to rebuild the house of the LORD that is in Jerusalem.* ***6*** *And all who were about them aided them with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, with beasts, and with costly wares, besides all that was freely offered.* ***7*** *Cyrus the king also brought out the vessels of the house of the LORD that Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and placed in the house of his gods.” (Ezr 1:1-7 ESV)*

The year is 539-538BC, the first year of the reign of Cyrus the Great.

Even this is in fulfillment of prophecy **(740BC – 681BC)**:

*“who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose’; saying of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be built,’ and of the temple, ‘Your foundation shall be laid.’"” (Isa 44:28 ESV)*

**To our text!**

***9:1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans —  2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.***

It is 539-538 B.C, the Babylonian empire has just recently fallen.

We have talked about possible identities for Darius and if you have additional questions, please refer you to that lesson (Daniel 6). But the best idea is that Darius the Mede was “made king” by Cyrus the Great over just the realm of the Chaldeans.

**Vs 2a** – Daniel came to understand a critical point for himself and the people of God all because he **“perceived in the books…”**

**Vs 2b –** In the second part of Vs 2, we see what Daniel learned, namely: **“the number of years that, according to the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.”**

Daniel was reading material from Jeremiah, who was a contemporary with him, but dead by now, and he came to realize and understand that the **“desolations of Jerusalem”** had a promised end!

The word translated desolation is the Hebrew word **“*khor-baw”*** it literally **means ruin, waste, laid waste, or desolation**. Daniel at this moment, through studying the letter from Jeremiah realized that the time of Jerusalem’s **“desolation”** (which by the way would include the destruction of the temple and the exile of many into a foreign land).

**OK, a few questions probably come to mind.**

1. Where does it say this in Jeremiah?
2. How long has he been in captivity already? When does the seventy-year period end?

Question #1 - The prophet Jeremiah predicted the nation of Judah would fall to the newly established Babylonian Empire. He predicted the city of Jerusalem and its temple would be destroyed, and he warned that the Jews would be force-marched into exile. **He also issued this remarkable prediction** – that after 70 years the Jews would return to Judah, repopulate Jerusalem, and rebuild their temple ([Jeremiah 25:11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jer%2025.11) and [29:10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jeremiah%2029.10)).

*“****1*** *¶ The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah* (605 BC) *(that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon),* ***2*** *which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem:* ***3*** *"For twenty-three years, from the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, to this day, the word of the LORD has come to me, and I have spoken persistently to you, but you have not listened.* ***4*** *You have neither listened nor inclined your ears to hear, although the LORD persistently sent to you all his servants the prophets,* ***5*** *saying, ‘Turn now, every one of you, from his evil way and evil deeds, and dwell upon the land that the LORD has given to you and your fathers from of old and forever.* ***6*** *Do not go after other gods to serve and worship them, or provoke me to anger with the work of your hands. Then I will do you no harm.’* ***7*** *Yet you have not listened to me, declares the LORD, that you might provoke me to anger with the work of your hands to your own harm.* ***8*** *¶ "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Because you have not obeyed my words,* ***9*** *behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the LORD, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants, and against all these surrounding nations. I will devote them to destruction, and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting desolation.* ***10*** *Moreover, I will banish from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the grinding of the millstones and the light of the lamp.* ***11 This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.”*** *(Jer 25:1-11 ESV)*

Now this prophecy was written around the same time as the first deportation. When we read that Daniel learned this from the prophet Jeremiah, it is not like we learn things. These prophecies were given in real time. When did Daniel first learn of this prophecy given in 605BC, the same year he went into captivity? We do not know. But understand how real time this was!

*“****1*** *¶ These are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders of the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.* ***2*** *This was after King Jeconiah and the queen mother, the eunuchs, the officials of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen, and the metal workers had departed from Jerusalem (after second deportation in 597BC).* ***3*** *The letter was sent by the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. It said:* ***4*** *"Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon:* ***5*** *Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce.* ***6*** *Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease.* ***7*** *But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.* ***8*** *¶ For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream,* ***9*** *for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the LORD.* ***10*** *"For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place.* ***11*** *For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.* ***12*** *Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you.* ***13*** *You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.* ***14*** *I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.” (Jer 29:1-14 ESV)*

This prophecy was written around 597BC and sent to those in exile in Babylon. Daniel studied [**Jeremiah 25**](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jer%2025.11) or the letter from Jeremiah that is now **Jer** [**29**](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jeremiah%2029.10) (or both). He realized the time was at hand for the fulfillment of these promises, and began to pray. He began to call out to God and confess the sins of his people!

When would they go back? That depends on the starting date. We have some important dates to consider:

* 609 (The Assyrian empire falls to the Babylonian empire) – 539BC
* 605 (first deportation) – 535BC
* 597 (Second deportation) – 527 BC
* 586 (Final deportation and temple destroyed) - 516BC

**Now we have the advantage of history, Daniel was no doubt looking at all these as possible date options:**

1. 609 – 539 Rise of the Babylonian empire to the fall of the Babylonian empire in 539BC (70 years).
2. 605 – 535 First deportation to the temple foundation being laid in 536BC (~ 70 years).
3. 597 – 527 Second deportation and I cannot find anything of significance at 70 years point.
4. 586 – 516 Temple destroyed to temple rebuild which was completed in 516BC (70 years).

**So, which one of the three is it?** We opened with Ezra 1:1-7 (539-538ish). Clearly, number one I correct. But #2, from the from the first deportation to the temple foundation being complete is roughly 70 years and number #4, the temple being destroyed to the temple rebuild being completed is 70 years. WOW! Number 1 is for sure true, but look what God is doing here!

However you calculate it, we can build a strong case for the supernatural prophetic utterance of Jeremiah, and we can learn a valuable lesson in [Daniel 9 ab](https://biblia.com/bible/ab/Dan%209)out how we should study the Scriptures.

**If this does not strike you as utterly amazing, I have failed to properly communicate!**

So, you are in Daniel’s shoes, you have just learned all this. What would you do next?

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***3 Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. 4 ¶ I prayed to the LORD my God and made confession, saying, "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, 5 we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. 6 We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. 7 To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you. 8 To us, O LORD, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you. 9 To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him 10 and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God by walking in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.***

**Vs 3 –** Daniel realizes the time length of God’s punishment, he comes to realize that it has a set end, with the duration being 70 years. By way of implication, it would seem in Daniel’s mind, the end of the seventy years is either at hand or at least close.

God’s revelation led to his servant’s humility and prayer. Sackcloth and ashes, and prayer.

This is a right understanding of responsibility and sovereignty.

**Daniel’s prayer breaks into three movements or three heads:**

1. **Vs 4 – Adoration…** ¶ I prayed to the LORD (Yahwey) my God (Eloheim) and made confession, saying, "O Lord (Adonay), the great and awesome God (El), who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments,

**Notice the prayer is directed to Yahway, Daniel’s God. The adoration is focused on Adonay who is great (large or intense), awesome (to be feared or dreadful), and a God who keeps covenant and shows mercy.**

Interesting note. In the book of Daniel, this is the first time the covenant name of God (Yahway) is used. It will be used a total of seven times, only here in Daniel 9. No other chapter in Daniel.

Another interesting note: In this one verse we see God called **Yehwey, Eloheim, Adonay, and El**.

It is easy to allow this world, the unfairness, and the hostility of this world to poison us, and cause us to forget the greatness, the majesty, and the mercy of Adonay (the Lord Jesus Christ). May it never be so from here out. May we see even the darkest days as reminder that our God is great and awesome, he keeps his promises, and he is abundant in mercy!

**Vs 4 –** Danielrecognized what had befallen Israel was not a breach of covenant on God’s part, but rather their sin was a breach of covenant on their side!

1. There was not only adoration, but **confession of corporate sin**. We will walk thought the verses, **but Vs 5 alone could be no clearer.**

**Vs 5 –** Now the confession: ***we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules.***

Now Daniel does not blame the compromisers, blame those who had took up false worship, blame those who had spurned God’s law, but instead says: ***We have sinned!***

**Vs 6 -** The confession continues and even intensifies! He makes the point that God sent prophets, they spoke to all the people, and **we blew them off.**

**Vs 7 –** Daniel juxtaposes the nation of Israel against God and there is no comparison: ***To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame, as at this day***

**Vs 8 –** For to us belongs shame because of our sins.

Notice, the “us” and “we” that Daniel uses. This is a good lesson for us, when we pray?

**Vs 10 -** Sums up this whole horrible tragedy: ***and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God by walking in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.***

To stop here in Daniel’s prayer and make a few observations:

1. Daniel is among the we, the us, whose are guilty of every form of transgression.
2. Obviously he serves as a beautiful picture of Jesus Christ, who though He knew no sin, became sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God.
3. Read verses 5-9 (just these 5 verses) again and see the first person plural pronouns (where Daniel is including himself) in the lot of those who have rebelled:

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***11 All Israel has transgressed your law and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice. And the curse and oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him. 12 He has confirmed his words, which he spoke against us and against our rulers who ruled us, by bringing upon us a great calamity. For under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what has been done against Jerusalem. 13 As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us; yet we have not entreated the favor of the LORD our God, turning from our iniquities and gaining insight by your truth. 14 Therefore the LORD has kept ready the calamity and has brought it upon us, for the LORD our God is righteous in all the works that he has done, and we have not obeyed his voice. 15 And now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly.***

**Vs 11** - All Israel has transgressed, turned aside, refused to obey!

Last week, Grace brought up when Israel entered the promise land how the priests were split in two groups to pronounce blessing from Mount Gerizim and curses from Mount Nebal. The curses are first mentioned in (Lev 26:14 – 45) and the actual event is contained in (Deut 27:11 – 28:37). Time permitting, we will review at the end of the lesson. If we are unable, please take time to review this week. Daniel understands the curse was poured out on them.

**Vs 12 -** God held to His word and did what he said! God proved himself to be true!A disaster that no one has seen the likes of… Because of OUR SIN!

**Vs 13 -** In spite of the promised calamity, we have not turned back to God!

**Your temporal judgments have not had the effect they should have had in causing us to pray, in turning us from our sin… The unspoken truth, because we are so deep in our sins!**

**Vs 15 – You see the sum of the matter:**

We have seen adoration, confession, and next we see petitions:

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***16 "O Lord, according to all your righteous acts, let your anger and your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy hill, because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a byword among all who are around us. 17 Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy, and for your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate. 18 O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. 19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name."***

Here we see the third part of Daniel’s prayer. First adoration, then confession, now petition to the God of Heaven, petition to the Sovereign of the Universe.

**Vs 16** – You see Daniel’s plea for mercy. He owns their sins and cries out for mercy! Please let your anger be turned away… Keep in mind, he has just learned that God’s anger will be turned and even a rough idea of when. **But you see his cries for mercy.**

**Vs 17 –** Please listen (God always listens, he always hears, but Daniel was asking God to listen and respond). For the Lord’s sake **(Adonay)** cause your face to shine on your sanctuary. **The sanctuary that is now desolate.**

**Vs 18 -** The petitions go further:

1. Incline your ear and hear
2. Open your eyes and see our desolations
3. See the city that is called by your name
4. ***For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy.***

**Vs 19** **–** Even further:

1. Please Lord **(Adonay)** - hear
2. Please Lord **(Adonay)** - forgive
3. Please Lord **(Adonay)** – pay attention (listen) and act
4. Please Lord **(Adonay)** – do not delay –
5. For your own sake, do not delay
6. Please God **(Eloheim)** (act for your city)
7. Please God **(Eloheim)** (act on behalf) of the people who are called by your name!

Daniel Akin wrote this in summation of verse 19: *“You (God) ruined your reputation to drive us to repentance. Restore your name and reputation for your sake. We are not worthy. But Lord you are.*

**This may well be one of the greatest and most powerful prayers in the entire Bible**, not only for the God centered structure (adoration, confession, and then petition), and not only for the **God centered words** that comprise the prayer. But for the heart, a **God centered and humble heart of the man who is making these petitions.**

Here is a man, pouring out his heart, for the people and more importantly, the glory of God!

A few observations about prayer are relevant here:

1. Knowing that God was going to do what He said he was going to do did not cause Daniel to shrink away from prayer, but instead to plead with God in prayer.
2. Daniel did not have the us (holy) and them (unholy) approach to prayer, rather, in spite of his walk with God, he lumped himself in with the rebels.
3. Daniel saw that what happened to Israel was their fault, not God’s.
4. Daniel is asking God to forgive, for His own glory. He acknowledges they do not deserve forgiveness!
5. The moment Daniel started praying God dispatched the answer. You will see this in verse 20!

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***20 While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea before the LORD my God for the holy hill of my God, 21 while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice.***

**Vs 20** – While Daniel was praying, speaking, confessing and presenting supplications…

**Vs 21** – Gabriel flew to him and reached him at the time of the evening offering **(3pm in the afternoon).**

It is interesting that sacrifices have **not** occurred since **586** and it is now **539-538**, Daniel is still thinking of the times of the day as it relates to the worship of **Yahwey God.**

**Pictures of Jesus:**

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**Lessons on Prayer:**

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