

Intro: Today we start Daniel Ch. 9, which is mostly Daniel praying, and then he receives another vision, that was the answer to his prayers.

- * As Daniel wrote, the Holy Spirit led him to place the stories at the start of the book in Ch 1-6.
 - (1) Judah's capture, (2) King Neb's dream, (3) Daniel's 3 friends in the furnace,
 - (4) Neb. humbled to repent, (5) Babylon fell to Persia, (6) Daniel - lion's den.
- * Following that, Daniel listed his own visions at the end of the book in Ch.'s 7-12.
- * So, most of Daniel's visions fall within the timeline that runs from Daniel 1 through Ch. 6.

Notice- The timeline, read Ch. 5:30-31 -- 6:1-3, Now read 9:1-3.

- * We learn here, that the start of these 2 chapters happened within weeks or just a few months of one another, in the first year of Persia's rulership.
- * Daniel's ch. 7 vision happened about 12 years back, and his ch. 8 vision about 10 years back.
- * At the time of those 2 visions, he was still in the Babylonian Empire.
- * At this point, it's a decade later, Persia has just over taken Babylon (Ch.5), Daniel is in his 80's, and Darius of Persia has just placed Daniel in high leadership. (c 6)
- * His promotion caused Daniel's enemies to coax Darius to outlaw prayer to anyone but him.
- * Then Daniel got thrown in the lion's den because he continued to pray faithfully 3 times a day.
- * Dan. 9:1-19 shows us what Daniel was so faithfully praying about, that got him in trouble.
- * And this is 1 of the longest, most serious prayers in the bible, teaching us much about prayer.

Notice- Why would Daniel record his personal fervent prayers?

Was he trying to flaunt how spiritually dedicated he was, to be honored?

- * Jesus taught we should pray in secret and let God reward us openly, which was different from the religious leaders, who deliberately prayed in public so people would honor them.
- * Jesus said that because they prayed to flaunt their spirituality, they got their reward, which was the praise of men, rather than any answer from God.
- * But Jesus didn't condemn public prayer, because He did so before the disciples and people.
- * Daniel didn't need to flaunt his spiritual life, it shined like a light in a dark place. (6:3)
- * And our life ought to do the same. Anyone who has to practice open religious ritual to be considered righteous, has a big problem in their practical living.

1 **So why did he record the prayer**

@ Obviously the main reason Daniel recorded this prayer - was the Holy Spirit led him to, and there's at least 2 good reasons why.

1. God wanted Daniel to example the truth that God answers prayer.

- In this chapter, Daniel prayed, and then God sent the angel Gabriel with an answer.
- This is one of the greatest lessons in scripture about prayer. God answers prayer.
- We learn from Daniel that we need God, and we need to rely on Him in prayer.
- And Daniel shows us that he prayed boldly, continually, and fervently, even when his life was in danger, so this is written to encourage us to pray.

2. God wanted Daniel to demonstrate to God's children, HOW to pray.

- As a godly man, Daniel was well qualified to be a great example of what genuine prayer looks like.
- 100 years later in Nehemiah 7, The Priests and Levites who had returned to Jerusalem, patterned their prayers after Daniel's prayer, and were blessed greatly because of it.
- As the Holy Spirit opens the door and lets us into us Daniel's prayer closet, He not only teaches us TO pray, but He shows us HOW to pray.

@ The chapter divides in 2 parts.

PART 1- DANIEL'S PRAYER. (1-19)

PART 2- GOD'S ANSWER. (20-27) (Another very interesting vision)

PART 1- DANIEL'S PRAYER. (1-19)

3 parts- Why Daniel prayed. How Daniel prepared to pray. What Daniel focused on in prayer.

I. WHY DANIEL PRAYED. The text and also truth Daniel knew, give us 3 reasons he prayed.

A. DANIEL PRAYED BECAUSE HE UNDERSTOOD GOD'S WORD. (read v2a)

- * God's Word is not just to give us truth, it's also to motivate us to seek God and ask that what we learn will change ours and others lives. (not just academic, but heart changing)
- * Scripture shows this- In Neh. 8, after more Jews returned to the land, they stood for 6 hours while Ezra read the whole law. Then they worshipped God and acted on what they learned.
- * Then in ch. 9, 24 days later, they did the same thing again, and then for another 6 hours, they worshipped and confessed Israel's sin, in prayer to God.
- * Daniel is praying because vs 2b says he understood some things from God's Word.

@ There are 2 prophecies that influenced him to pray,
1 he mentions, one he does not.

1. Daniel knew Isaiah's prophecy. (Isa 44:24a, 28) (not mentioned) (45:1-3)

- 200 yrs earlier, long before Cyrus was ever born, God said through Isaiah that He would lead a man named Cyrus to rebuild Jerusalem and its Temple.
- When Isaiah wrote this, Jerusalem and its Temple were flourishing, and Babylon and Persia were only small eastern powers, and Assyria was the main power (Syria, NE of Israel).
- Then 100 years later, when Babylon finally took all of Judah into captivity, Nebuchadnezzar had Jerusalem and its Temple destroyed.
- But now in Dan 6:1, 9:1, Persia has just conquered Babylon, and 1 of its leaders was Cyrus.
- And Daniel already knew from Isaiah, that Cyrus would let Israel return and rebuild.

2. Daniel knew more from Jeremiah's prophecies. (stated in Dan 9:1-2- read)

2. Daniel knew more from Jeremiah's prophecies. (read vs. 1-2-)

- In v2 Daniel knew God's promise through Jeremiah, that captivity would only last 70 years.
- Jeremiah lived during Daniel's time, and went into captivity when Judah was taken.

(read- Jeremiah 25:11, 29:10)

- At this time, Persia under Cyrus had just conquered Babylon, and guess what, **this year was the 70th year** from the time king Neb. of Babylon conquered Judah.
- So Daniel believed that very soon, Cyrus would allow them to return and rebuild the city and Temple. (And Ezra 1:1-7 shows that he did. - read later)

Sum- Here we learn some truth about prophecy.

- * The bible tells us this about scripture in 2 Tim. 3:16-17.

'All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.'

- * Often, prophecy either bores people, or it just raises their curiosity about the future.
- * But as Daniel studied prophecy, it moved him to pray for the spiritual life of his people.

- * Prophecy should motivate us to pray for those involved in it, whether it's the Jews, or believers, or the lost.

- * God's truth about the future, affects people who need to be prayed for.

- * As we have learned through the years (Rev, Daniel) about what will happen in the future with the antichrist and the tribulation, it should motivate us to pray for the lost.

B. DANIEL PRAYED TO MOTIVATE GOD TO KEEP HIS PROMISE.

- * To grasp what's going on here, it's important to know that God has 2 types of promises-
There are Conditional promises- meaning- "if you do this, then I'll do that". (Deut 28)
Then there are Unconditional promises, where God states something He will definitely do in the future, regardless of how people respond to His plan or will. (Christ / Israel)
- * God's promise through Jeremiah to bring Israel back after 70 years, was unconditional, because if God decided to change His mind, then Jeremiah would be a false prophet.
- * In fact, the prophecy of Jer. 29:10 was Jeremiah's rebuke of Judah's false prophets who told the Jews to relax and build a life in Babylon, so they could stay there. (29:1-9)
- * In 29:10, Jeremiah challenged the Jews not to get comfortable, because in 70 years God would call them back to their land to be re-established there.

Question- If this prophecy of returning this year was unconditional, why did Daniel pray for days, risking his life, for what God would do anyway? Why not just relax? 3 reasons.

1. Daniel knew that even though God is sovereign, and will accomplish His purposes, in some strange divine way, God uses our prayers to accomplish His will.

- We can't completely understand this, but it all makes sense to an infinite God.
- Rv 22- Jesus told John- "behold I come quickly", John prayed- "even so come Lord Jesus".

Q- God's sovereign purposes are never given in the bible as excuses for our idleness. They are to motivate us to pray for and work toward the fulfillment of God's plans.

2. God's will has 2 forms- Gods has a will of purpose which includes what He may allow, He has a will of strongest desire which is what He wants above all else. (your will be done)

- In the bible, God's people prayed, believing they could move God to change what He might allow, so that He would do what He desires the most.
- We shouldn't pray with a fatalistic attitude, as if our prayers don't really matter.
- We're to pray to move God's heart to do the best thing spiritually, for a situation or person.
- And the Lord knows if we really care about a situation or person, by how we pray about it.

* It's good for us to ask ourselves, do we pray as if we really care for God to move and do great things, or are we just satisfied with things like they are in a given situation?

* Daniel risked his life, because he wanted God to do great things in fulfilling these prophecies.

3. We are to pray so God can use us to answer our prayers. Remember the story??

- God promised that He would bring Israel back to the land this year.
- Daniel dedicated himself to pray for this promise, 3 times daily, which was illegal.
- Next, Daniel's enemies got prayer outlawed, and got Daniel thrown into the lion's den.
- Then, God delivered Daniel with a miracle, which changed the king's heart about God.
- This motivated these 2 pagan co-rulers, Darius and Cyrus, to favor Daniel's God, and the result was- they decreed the Jews could return home. (why would pagan kings do this?)
- God used Daniel's godly life, and then His trial and deliverance to turn the hearts of these pagan kings, which is seen in how they spoke about God afterward.
(Darius- Dan. 6:24-28. Cyrus- Ezra 1:1-4.)

Lesson- When we pray for God to work to keep His promises, He may send us to the lion's den, to use our godly life to accomplish His plans.

- * Why would God make us face the lions? To make us more like Him so that we glorify Him, so that the hearts of others are affected to pay attention to God. (our purpose)

C. DANIEL PRAYED BECAUSE ISRAEL WAS SPIRITUALLY ASLEEP.

- * At this time there were millions of Jews scattered all over the Empire, from the area of Lebanon and Syria just North and NE of Israel, all the way to Babylon in the East (Iraq today)
- * We said in Ch. 8 that when Israel was allowed to return, only 50,000 of the millions, pulled up stakes and went back to the land.
- * Jeremiah was in captivity with Daniel, and he had warned the Jews not to listen to the false prophets which encouraged them to put down roots and make Babylon their home.
- * Daniel had been here 70 years, most of the time in high position, and he knew all too well, how spiritually asleep and comfortable the Jews had become.
- * They had intermarried, raised kids and grandkids, and most never turned from their paganism when they were captured, they just adopted Babylonian paganism.
- * Daniel prayed because he was grieved to think that when the decree was given to return, it might be that NO ONE would want to go back.

Q- They had learned little from their exile, most had not confessed their sin, and were not praying to return, so Daniel prayed and confessed their sin and petitioned God to take some back.

Did God answer? **Read Ezra 1:5-7**