

Lesson 10

Daniel's Prayer For His People and The Prophecy of the Seven Weeks

Daniel 9

Begin today's lesson asking the Holy Spirit to illumine your mind and to teach you His precepts.

Before you answer the questions for this week, read through all of Daniel 9.

1. Approximately how old is Daniel as the scene in Daniel 9 unfolds? Mark it on your timeline on page 77. Record the chapter number and the basic theme of the chapter.
2. Approximately how long have the Israelites been in captivity in Babylon?
3. What did Daniel discover as he read Jeremiah 25:1-13? See also II Chronicles 36:15-21.
4. When Daniel makes this discovery in the Word of God, what is his response? What does this teach you about the will of God, "fate" and prayer?
5. Using Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 30:15-20, discuss the clarity of the choices and consequences that were set before the Israelites by God.

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

Philippians 4:6

6. Take some time to meditate upon the prayer of Daniel. What was Daniel's attitude in the prayer? Give words and actions that reflect his attitude.
7. What do you learn about the character of God from this prayer?
8. The Greek word for confess means "to say the same thing." What does Daniel confess in this prayer and with whom is he agreeing?
9. On what basis does Daniel make his appeal? What do you learn from this?
10. Read II Chronicles 7:14. Discuss God's sovereignty and man's free will as they relate to the concept of prayer.
11. Review the information on Gabriel in Lesson 9, question 3. According to Daniel 9:23, what happens as Daniel begins to pray and what is the result?
12. How does Daniel's model of one who prays and "things happen" encourage you in your daily life?

Daniel 9:20-27 is often called the prophecy of 70 sevens or 70 weeks. In the context, Daniel has just prayed about Jerusalem, the holy mountain (the temple mount and the temple) and "Thy people" (the Jews) in Daniel 9:16-19. In Daniel 9:22-23, Gabriel has come to give insight and understanding.

Here Gabriel focuses on "your people"-the Jews, and "your holy city"-Jerusalem. Many believe he is bringing a prophetic outline for Israel's future.

Most scholars agree that the "seventy sevens" or "seventy weeks" refer to years. One week therefore equals seven years. This fits with the context because Daniel is considering Jeremiah's

prophecy concerning seventy years. Seventy sevens would therefore mean 490 years ($70 \times 7 = 490$). Also note that a Jewish year is 360 days.

13. Seventy sevens (490 years) have been decreed for the Jews and Jerusalem to do six things. List these things from Daniel 9:24.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)

14. Daniel 9:25 is a prophecy concerning the first coming of the Messiah. Two time periods are given. What are they? Convert them to years.

15. Daniel 9:25 also mentions a decree. What will it declare?

King Artaxerxes issued this decree in March of 445 B.C. Read about this in Nehemiah 2:1-10. It then took 49 years to rebuild the temple (seven sevens).

After the temple is completed, 62 more sevens will pass (434 years).

16. According to Daniel 9:26:

- ❖ What will happen then to the Messiah?

- ❖ What will happen to the city and the temple?

- ❖ Who will do this?

17. Daniel 9:27 mentions one more week (7 years).

- ❖ What will “the prince who is to come” make for 7 years?

- ❖ With whom will he make this?

- ❖ What will happen in the middle of the “week”? (after 3½ years).
18. Jesus speaks about signs of the end of the age in Matthew 24:3-51. Read this passage. Verse 15 focuses on the “Abomination of Desolation.” Look up II Thessalonians 2:3-4, and describe what this abomination might be.
19. What do the verses of Matthew 24 and the parables of Matthew 25 teach us about our attitude as we observe the signs of His coming?
20. From Daniel 9:27, what is the final end of “the prince who is to come”? See II Thessalonians 2:8 and Revelation 19:20.
21. As you look back over this lesson about Daniel 9, what do you want to remember?
22. Consider the following scriptures and meditate on them using the prayer exercise that is explained on page 81.
- ❖ Scriptures: **Psalm 31:15-16, 19-20**
 - ❖ Word or phrase:
 - ❖ Amplification:
 - ❖ Invitation:

Thoughts From Martha:

O.K. something *big* happened here! Daniel said a prayer and not only did it penetrate the very throne room of God, but it *immediately* moved heaven into action! *That*, my friends, was some kinda prayer!

I have to admit in our 21st Century, modern-day mentality, we are hard pressed to understand the ‘sackcloth and ashes’ bit. “*Sounds a little melodramatic,*” you say? “*A little on the whiney side ... you know ... all those parts about how dirty-rotten-stickin’ God’s people had behaved and how good and wonderful God was and perfectly justified to punish them.*” Well, since it’s probably safe to assume God doesn’t respond in such a radical way to poor-miserable-me prayers nor is He manipulated by superficial words of flattery, it is only reasonable to conclude there must be something more to his prayer – something worth looking at.

I suppose our first question should be: Why the big, long prayer? What prompted Daniel to pray in the first place? In the first few verses of Chapter 9, Daniel writes that he observed something in God’s word that caused him to give his “*attention to the Lord God to seek Him in prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes.*” Something happened when Daniel read God’s word. Like the author of Hebrews says, “*... the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and **piercing**...*” (*emphasis mine*). Jeremiah’s words so pierced Daniel’s heart that it caused a mighty burden and wrestling sufficient to move him to agonize and travail in prayer.

Daniel was not only awakened to the depravity of his people, but also to the utter holiness and righteousness of God. “*Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips...*” were the desperate words of Isaiah, but could have easily been Daniel’s heart cry as well. Daniel’s prayer was an expression of his overwhelming hunger and burden for God and His sovereign will. He saw there was no hope for God’s people apart from His great mercy. They were a sorry lot. All of them. They were rebellious and evil and Daniel couldn’t stop talking about it. Over and over and he confessed their wickedness: “*we have sinned, and done wrong ... we have been wicked and rebelled... have not listened ... are covered with shame ... an object of scorn.*”

But Daniel was also aware of God’s faithfulness and the greatness of His mercy and he couldn’t stop talking about *THAT* either: “*O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love ... the Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him ... We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy.*” Daniel knew that God would manifest the greatness of His name through His mercy, and he prayed with all his heart, soul, and strength for God to fulfill His word and be glorified.

So what does one do with a heart like that? Well, we know what God did. He made an immediate and personal appearance through Gabriel, and THEN He did something that was just *so God* -- so in keeping with His character: He gave abundantly beyond what Daniel asked or imagined. What Daniel asked for was God’s mercy to play out in the judging and redeeming of the *Babylonian Jews*. BUT God’s answer to Daniel’s prayer pointed far beyond that, to a future and greater judgment (and subsequent redemption) that would be for all people! Perhaps God had stirred, in the very depths of Daniel’s spirit, an unspoken prayer -- a desire -- that was deeper and higher than his own understanding. Perhaps it was another case of what Paul wrote in the 8th

chapter of Romans, “*we do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.*” Daniel’s prayer was no ordinary pray. It was an agonizing, laboring prayer that brought him to the point of “extreme weariness” (verse 21). And what was the result of his labor? It brought forth something new -- a new and further revelation of the mystery of God’s plan! It was the lifting of a veil so all the world would one day see the fullness of God’s power and glory as first revealed through His prophet, Daniel.

A little melodramatic? A little too much sackcloth and ashes? I think not! It was a prayer that touched the heart and moved the hand of God and we would do well to remember it whenever we bow our heads or bend the knee.

Way to go Daniel!

Lecture Notes: