

SESSION TWELVE

DANIEL 9:1-19

The Intercession of An Elderly Saint

INTRODUCTION

1. The Chronology of Daniel Chapters 7, 8, and 9

a. The Dates of the Chapters

- (1) Dan 7 - 553 BC (1st year of Belshazzar)
- (2) Dan 8 - 551/550 BC (3rd year of Belshazzar)
- (3) Dan 9 - 539-537 BC (1st year of Darius)

b. Implications of the Chronological Notices:

Since chapters 7-8 preceded ch 9 chronologically, Daniel would have already known the revelations from these chapters.

- (1) Dan 7 He learns that several major world empires will have domination over Israel, and that out of the last of these will come an evil ruler who will gain complete power for 3 1/2 years. But this evil ruler and his dominion will be replaced by the "Son of Man" and the Messianic kingdom.
- (2) Dan 8 This chapter focuses upon an historical figure that will arise out of the 3rd major kingdom (i.e., Greece) who will foreshadow the evil ruler revealed in the previous chapter.
- (3) Dan 9 In light of what is revealed in chapters 7 & 8, this chapter will clarify how these events will correlate with God's plan for Israel as a nation in light of the anticipation of Israel's restoration and Messiah's coming.

2. Other Factors To Be Correlated with the Revelations of Dan 7--8

a. The Promises of Repentance and Restoration

- (1) God's operational principle for Israel: Blessings / Curses (Deut 28:1--30:10)
 - (a) Deut 28:1-14 - Blessings for obedience
 - (b) Deut 28:15-68 - Curses for disobedience (cf. Lev 26:14-39)
- (2) Principle for Restoration: Deut 30:1-10

Regathering from exile and restoration of the land must be preceded by Israel's repentance.

b. The Limitation to the Present Exile

The present exile, begun in 605 BC, was to last for 70 years, because this had been previously revealed to the prophet Jeremiah.

c. Clarification of Messiah's Coming in Relation to God's Kingdom

If no other revelation from God were available, Daniel 7 might give the impression that Messiah would not come until the end of history and not until after the reign of the "evil ruler." However, Isaiah had predicted Messiah's suffering at least 150 years prior. Daniel nine will clarify how all these events correlate together, i.e., Israel's near restoration, the rebuilding of the city and temple, Messiah's initial coming, a further destruction of Jerusalem, and the eventual reign of the "evil ruler" (the Antichrist).

3. The Structure of Daniel Chapter Nine

Occasion For The Chapter	Daniel's Prayer	God's Response
9:1-2	9:3-19	9:20-27

A. THE OCCASION FOR THE CHAPTER (9:1-2)

1. Verse one - "*the first year of Darius*" [a regional king under Cyrus]
 - a. Since Babylon was conquered in 539 BC, the first year of Cyrus would be 539-38 BC (or 538-37 if this were his first regnal year).
 - b. Since the first deportation of Jews into exile took place in 605 BC (at which time Daniel was taken), about 67 years had elapsed. This is significant in light of Dan 9:2.
2. Verse two - Daniel's Study of the Writings of Jeremiah
 - a. Daniel would have also known about the predictions of Cyrus in Isaiah 44:28ff., so the conquest of Babylon in the recent past would have greatly stirred his curiosity for prophetic details.
 - b. Jeremiah's Writings

Jeremiah had probably died in Egypt a few decades prior to this event of Daniel 9. Nevertheless, his writings had made their way to Babylon and into the hands of Daniel.
 - c. Jeremiah 25:9-12 - "*shall serve the king of Babylon 70 years*"
 - (1) The fall of Babylon would basically correspond to the 70 years of Judah in exile. Thus, if Daniel had been in exile for 67 years, and the Babylonian kingdom had been brought to an end, the time of release must be near. Something was about to happen.
 - (2) The explanation of 70 years
 - (a) 2 Chron 36:19-21 - The length of exile is determined on the basis of violation of the Sabbath rest of the land.
 - (b) Predicted in Leviticus 26:33-34,40-45 (esp. v 43)
 - (c) Biblical basis for the Sabbath rest of the land

Lev 25:2-5. Every Sabbath year, the land was to rest, i.e., not be used for agricultural practices.

(d) Resulting Judgment

This principle had been violated for about 490 years (approximately the length of the monarchy), and thus 70 Sabbath years had been skipped. God uses this for determining how long the exile will be (long enough for the land to be fallow and make up the 70 years).

d. Jeremiah 29:10-14

(1) Notice how this passage unites several themes:

- (a) 70 years of exile to Babylon (10)
- (b) A repentance and seeking of God (12-13)
- (c) Return to the land and restoration of blessing (14)

(2) Clearly unites the principles of Deut 30 to the exile in Babylon!

(3) Implication:

- (a) Daniel feels a need to prayerfully humble himself before God on behalf of his nation, which is exactly what we see him doing in Dan 9:3-19.
- (b) Although we can learn a lot about praying from Daniel's prayer in chapter 9, this is really a prayer about national repentance and restoration of Israel.

3. Correlation with Daniel 6:10-11

Although it is difficult to say which came first, Dan 6 and Dan 9 occur very close to the same time. Daniel, as a godly man well into his eighties, was a leading figure for Israel as he interceded for the nation and their restoration.

B. DANIEL'S PRAYER (9:3-19)

Observation: Notice that the emphasis of the prayer is on confession!

1. The Basis of Prayer (vv 3-4)

- a. Verse 3 - Humility and sincerity are key to approaching God.
- b. Verse 4 - God's promises and His faithfulness to His people by covenant.

Even a covenant people cannot be blessed if they disobey!

2. Confession of sin and acknowledgment that God is right (vv 5-14)

Lessons on proper confession:

- a. There must be an agreement that we are wrong (v 5).
To say, "Lord, I made a mistake" skirts the issue.
- b. Acknowledgment that God's counsel has been rejected (v 6).

The prophets were raised up by God for a disobedient people, hence they were tokens of God's grace. Rejecting them was to reject God's efforts of grace to turn the people back from sin.

- c. Admission that we get what we deserve - that sin always has a price (vv 7-11a)
- d. Admission that God's Word is right! He does discipline for disobedience (vv 11b-13)

"To Daniel it was more important for the God of Israel to retain his integrity and uphold his moral law than for his guilty people to escape the consequences of their infidelity."¹

- (1) Notice the references to the "Deut. Principle" (v 11)
- (2) Lev 26 - Israel's discipline had cycles of severity
- (3) Hebrews 12:7-11 - God disciplines us as a loving Father, not to get even with us, but that we may share in His holiness.
- e. God is not to blame for the suffering we incur when under discipline (v 14)
Only out of immaturity do we say "Oh God, how could you let this happen to me?" (as though God did not know what He was doing). When we pray, we should sense that God has a right to deal with us according to His character, attributing no blame or bitterness to Him!

C. DANIEL'S PETITION (9:15-19)

Observations:

1. The proper motivation for God to reverse the discipline is not for our comfort or our wants, but for His interests and His glory (note v 17). "*For their sake, O Lord*"
2. Whatever God decides to do is grace, we certainly do not merit His kindness, and we always get more than we deserve (v 18).

We have no right to ask for anything, until we see that we deserve nothing!

A Lesson for Our Life

Notice in Dan 9:18 that Daniel speaks of God's compassion as "*Thy great compassion.*" God's character is a perfect blend of righteousness and mercy, and He never allows them to become unbalanced. In the midst of discipline for the sake of His holiness, He is searching and longing to be compassionate with us. There is no end of His mercies to us!

¹Gleason Archer, "Daniel," in *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 7:110.