

CAPITOL STUDIES

MARCH 13, 2024 • WEEK 10



DANIEL: CHRIST'S CIVIL SERVANT IN BABYLON

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Verse of the Week

Daniel 9:9

To the Lord
our God belong
compassion and
forgiveness, for
we have rebelled
against Him.

Calendar of World Events: Seventy Weeks



THE NINTH CHAPTER OF DANIEL, more explicitly and concisely than any other chapter in Scripture, outlines for us a chronology of coming events in the providence of God. For this reason, it is important to study this passage carefully and prayerfully. We see in this chapter that human history is the outworking of a divine program for the Jewish nation. The events on this calendar all combine to fulfill God's purposes for His special people, Israel. Daniel was turned to sorrow by what he learned about the future of his erring people.

In reading the book of Jeremiah, Daniel learned that the Jewish captivity would last for 70 years. The Jews had not observed the seventh year of Sabbath rest for 490 years, meaning the land missed this yearly rest, required by law, 70 times (Leviticus 26:34-35, 43). So, God sent them into exile and caused their land to lie desolate for the number of years equivalent to those unobserved Sabbath rest years.

Pastor Arin Hess, *Chaplain, Capitol Studies*



INTRODUCTION

Jeremiah 25:11

This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

Jeremiah 29:10-14

For thus says the LORD, “When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place. ¹¹For I know the plans that I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. ¹²Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. ¹⁴I will be found by you,” declares the LORD, “and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,” declares the LORD, “and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.”¹

The study of Jeremiah’s prophecy motivated Daniel to prayer and penitence. At the time of his prayer in chapter 9, Daniel was probably between 85 and 87 years old. He was again the Chief Minister of State, but now in the new world-empire which had overtaken Babylon. He still opened the windows toward Jerusalem every day as he prayed. This tells us much about Daniel’s prayer life. Private prayer, intercessory prayer, and persistent prayer were all a part. Daniel believed God, and therefore, he knew that God would do as He had said. Seven times, Daniel addressed his prayer “to the LORD”—Yahweh, the particular name of the gracious, covenant-keeping God of Israel.

I. THE PRAYER OF DANIEL

Daniel 9:1-3

In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans—²in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. ³So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes.

A new king now ruled in Babylon: Darius the Mede (539–538 BC). He came to power with the death of Belshazzar. Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylonian empire, the head of gold, was conquered by the Medo-Persian empire, the chest and arms of silver.

Daniel knew only a few months remained before the 70 years would be fulfilled. He must have also known that the city of Jerusalem would be rebuilt under the sanction of Cyrus (Isaiah 44:26–45:4). This knowledge struck Daniel with mingled grief and gladness. Though in captivity, the hearts of the Jewish people as a whole had not yet returned to the God of their fathers. So, Daniel gave his attention to the Lord God, determined to seek Him with supplication, fasting, sackcloth, and ashes,



or in other words with great humility and brokenness. As we look at Daniel's prayer, we see four areas that true effectual praying should include: adoration, confession, intercession, and petition.

A. Adoration

Daniel 9:4

I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said, "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and loving-kindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments...."

Daniel recognized the greatness of God's person and power. He worshiped the great and awesome God. He continued with testimonies of God's character—God is faithful and does not break covenant, for He is merciful. This is the great, awesome, faithful, loving God of Israel.

B. Confession

Daniel 9:5-15

We have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances. ⁶Moreover, we have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes, our fathers and all the people of the land. ⁷Righteousness belongs to You, O Lord, but to us open shame, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of their unfaithful deeds which they have committed against You. ⁸Open shame belongs to us, O Lord, to our kings, our princes and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. ⁹To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him; ¹⁰nor have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His teachings which He set before us through His servants the prophets. ¹¹Indeed all Israel has transgressed Your law and turned aside, not obeying Your voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him. ¹²Thus He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us and against our rulers who ruled us, to bring on us great calamity; for under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what was done to Jerusalem. ¹³As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us; yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth. ¹⁴Therefore the LORD has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us; for the LORD our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done, but we have not obeyed His voice. ¹⁵And now, O Lord our God, who have brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and have made a name for Yourself, as it is this day—we have sinned, we have been wicked.

Daniel **confessed** the sins of the nation, including himself. To confess sin means to say the same thing God says about it—to agree with Him. Daniel used some of the strongest words in the Hebrew vocabulary to





describe the offenses committed by the Jews: sin (missed the mark), committed iniquity (engaged in distorted and crooked conduct), acted wickedly (disturbed the peace), rebelled (revolted and attacked), and turned aside from God's commandments and ordinances (disobeying, refusing to follow). Compare Daniel's words to words we use to describe sin today: mistake, weakness, bad habit, mess-up. Do you see a problem?

Israel deserved all the calamity and curses which had come upon them. God carried out the punishment of His people in faithfulness to His Word. Though they had broken the Mosaic law, Daniel still looked for the fulfillment of blessing based on the Mosaic promised land and Davidic covenants. Because of these, he knew God would always keep His Word.

C. Intercession

Daniel 9:16

O Lord, in accordance with all Your righteous acts, let now Your anger and Your wrath turn away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; for because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people have become a reproach to all those around us.

Daniel first **confessed** the sins of the nation. Now he **intercedes** for it, asking God to turn away His anger.

D. Petition

Daniel 9:17-19

So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, and for Your sake, O Lord, let Your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary. ¹⁸O my God, incline Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Your name; for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion. ¹⁹O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name.

Daniel pled for God to pardon the sin, restore the city and the sanctuary, and return the people to their promised land. He prayed with fervency and expectation, reaching a passionate crescendo with the following plea: "Incline Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see. Forgive. Listen and take action! Do not delay."

God has also given believers today the responsibility to pray and intercede for their nation (1 Timothy 2:1-5). Former Lincoln pastor Robert Culver stated, "If we are to pray intelligently for our nation, we must recognize that we depend entirely upon God's grace and mercy—not on personal or national merit. Whatever God gives is of grace: He owes our nation nothing; any notion that God is obligated to bless our country is likely to prove a barrier to effective prayer."²



II. THE ANSWER FROM GABRIEL

Daniel 9:20-23

Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my God, ²¹while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. ²²He gave me instruction and talked with me and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding. ²³At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed; so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision."

God's response to Daniel's prayer was immediate. Gabriel was dispatched to answer and encourage him with information regarding his nation's future. While Daniel was still praying for God to forgive and restore His people, the answer to his prayer was on its way. What a great encouragement to pray expectantly! Of course, the source of the prophecy was God. But Daniel was a man highly esteemed ("greatly beloved" in the KJV) of God. He was a very special treasure and was precious to the LORD; therefore, God chose to give him a vision of Israel's future. He would be given special insight and understanding.

Daniel 9:24-27

Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. ²⁵So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. ²⁶Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. ²⁷And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.

The objects of the prophecy are your people and your holy city. That these refer primarily to Israel and Jerusalem seems clear. As a Jew seeking light from Jewish prophecy, Daniel would certainly understand the words of Gabriel in this way.

The substance of the prophecy was clearly shared. With an admonition to Daniel to consider the vision, the angel began to unfold a chronology of events to come.³





1. The history is restricted to 70 seven-year periods or 490 years.
2. This period has a specific point of beginning and ending. It commences with the decree of Artaxerxes to rebuild the **city** of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:1-8). The earlier edicts of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes do not qualify as a starting point for this 490-year history because none of them relate to the city; they only provided for the rebuilding of the **temple**.
3. The 490 years are divided into three segments, and the angel indicates what activities will transpire during these three parts. During the first 7 weeks (49 years), the city and its streets, walls, etc., will be rebuilt; then 62 weeks (434 years) will be added to the 7 weeks before the Messiah arrives. A total of 483 years will expire from the time of the king's commandment until the time of Christ's coming as King. The termination of these 483 years came close to the day of the triumphal entry in AD 33 (March-April) when Jesus Christ, for the first and only time, presented Himself officially as Israel's Prince and Messianic King. This was on what is now called Palm Sunday, when the crowds chanted, "Hosanna, in the Highest."
4. At the end of the 69 weeks (483 years), the Messiah is cut off (His crucifixion). Instead of entering into the era of His kingly reign, He is rejected by Israel. Israel rejects Christ's claims to the throne of David and sentences Him to death on the cross.
5. The six purposes which God intends to accomplish in the nation in the course of the 490-year period were deferred to the last week (7 years). But, between the 69th and 70th week, we have an indeterminate period during which Jerusalem will suffer from a flood of invaders. The 70th week has been postponed. During this long interval between the 69th and 70th week, Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman Emperor Titus in AD 70. A continual succession of Gentile rulers trampling upon the Jewish nation has followed. This desolation will continue through the present church age right into the tribulation period. The prophetic clock will not tick again for Israel until the present church age ends and the 70th week begins. That 70th week is called the time of the Tribulation.

CONCLUSION

Daniel was given a message of assurance that **God has not cast off His people**. While God permits the captivity and even the great tribulation, there is a deliverance to be wrought in a day to come. God will never cast off His people in any age. You can rest in the assurance of His mercy, longsuffering, and grace.

In Christ's first coming, He was scorned and rejected; in the second He will be worshipped and accepted as the Messiah, for Israel will look upon Him whom they have pierced. God deals in specifics—He is a God of **details**. God keeps His promises—He is a God of **integrity**.

Prayer is essential—there is no substitute! Daniel's prayer was no ritual; it was personal, honest, brief, but very specific.⁴



Questions:

1. How much time do you spend in disciplined and fervent prayer?
2. What bearing does believing prayer have on God's eternal purposes?
3. Does prayer change God's mind?
4. What relationships now exist between Israel and the West that might have a bearing upon prophecy and the events of the future?

Pastor Arin Hess

FOOTNOTES

1. All Scripture quotations, unless noted, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, 1995 Update.
2. Robert Culver, *Bible Knowledge: Daniel*, Scripture Press, 1960, pg. 92.
3. For a more detailed understanding of this passage, see Adam Lloyd Johnson, "Was the Messiah Predicted in the Old Testament?" *Convincing Proof*, <https://convincingproof.org/was-the-messiah-predicted-in-the-old-testament/> and Adam Lloyd Johnson, "Seventy Weeks of Years: A Commentary on Daniel 9:24-27," *Convincing Proof*, <https://convincingproof.org/seventy-weeks-of-years/>.
4. Some of this material is taken from Edward Watke, Jr., *Study of the Book of Daniel*, Revival in the Home Ministries, Augusta, GA, 1992.

APPENDIX

Daniel's "70 Weeks of Years" prophecy can be tricky to understand, especially since several calendars might be at play, including the Jewish calendar, the Julian calendar, and a type of "prophetic calendar."

Ancient calendars such as the Babylonian and Jewish calendars were not always as astronomically precise as our modern Gregorian calendar. The "prophetic calendar" in Daniel seems to be similar, as it seems to assign an even 360 days to each year. This can be seen in passages like Daniel 7:25, where it refers to "a time [one year], times [two years], and half a time [six months]" making 3.5 years altogether. This 3.5-year period is referenced in Rev. 12:14 with the same language as in Daniel, and it is equated with 42 months (Rev. 11:2, 13:5) and 1,260 days (Rev. 11:3, 12:6). This makes one year equivalent to 360 days as $1,260 / 3.5 = 360$. Applying this to Daniel's prophecy, that means his $7 + 62 = 69$ "weeks" of years, 483 prophetic years, totals $483 * 360 = 173,880$ days.

Historians are divided about the year that Jesus died, some preferring AD 30 and others AD 33. However, AD 33 seems to be the more likely candidate, as Luke 3:1 reports that Jesus began his ministry during the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, which would be AD 29. Since Jesus' ministry lasted ~3 years, this would not leave enough time for Him to have been crucified in the spring of AD 30. Thus, AD 33 seems to be the likely year for Jesus' triumphal entry, crucifixion, and resurrection.



Theme Verse

Daniel said,

“Let the name of God be **blessed** forever and ever,

For **wisdom** and **power** belong to Him.

It is He who changes the **times** and the **epochs**;

He **removes** kings and **establishes** kings;

He gives **wisdom** to wise men and **knowledge** to men of understanding.”

Daniel 2:20-21



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As for the start of Daniel's period of 69 “weeks,” it is from the decree of Artaxerxes I Longimanus to Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem. This is recorded in Nehemiah 2:1 as taking place in “the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes.” Artaxerxes' 20th year happened to be in 444 BC, and historical sources tell us the month of Nisan would have corresponded to a time around the month of March in that year.

If we count back 173,880 days from the date of Jesus' triumphal entry (Palm Sunday, March 29, AD 33, on the Julian calendar), we arrive at March 8, 444 BC, which is exactly around the time when Artaxerxes I would have issued his decree. (You can verify that result with NASA's historical date calculator: <https://core2.gsfc.nasa.gov/time/julian.html>.) It is impossible to be exactly precise with dates using ancient records, but this plausible, very close result is stunning!

Timeline (Dispensational, Premillennial Interpretation):

444 BC | 396 BC | AD 33 | Future TBA

Seven Weeks	Sixty-Two Weeks	Church Age (Now)	70 th Wk	Millennial Kingdom
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For more details about this interpretation, see the resources by Adam Lloyd Johnson, “Was the Messiah Predicted in the Old Testament?” at <https://convincingproof.org/was-the-messiah-predicted-in-the-old-testament/> and “Seventy Weeks of Years: A Commentary on Daniel 9:24-27,” <https://convincingproof.org/seventy-weeks-of-years/>. You can also consult the work of Nathan Jarrett at <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1208&context=eleu>.

This appendix was written by Joel Mohrmann.

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

Meeting during the
108th Legislature's
Second Session

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6:45–7:45 A.M. Wednesdays
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STAFF

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