Bible Study Daniel 9

[PPT 1]Our goal with this study is to learn how to be more effective in our prayers.

Vs1) This chapter is in 538 BC., which is the first year of the Persian empire (Ezra 1:1) ruled by Cyrus. Daniel tells us Darius "*<u>was made king</u> over the realm of the Chaldeans*". This indicates that Darius was appointed as the King of Babylonia as the representative of the King of Persia, Cyrus the Great.

[PPT 2] Daniel does not write of events as they happened to him in chronological order. This is the book of Daniel rearranged in chronological order.

[PPT 3] The time indicator of verse 1 means Daniel's chapter 9 takes place at least 12 years after he received his second vision in chapter 8, last weeks lesson. In the vision of chapter 8, he learned of Persia's future fall to Greece represented by the male goat.

Vs2) [PPT 4] Jeremiah the prophet wrote his prophecies shortly before Jerusalem's destruction by Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah was taken captive by a group of Jews that were rebelling against Nebuchadnezzar and he was taken by them to Egypt against his will where he later died and was buried in an unmarked grave. Despite that, the Scriptures he wrote found their way across the deserts and mountains from Egypt to Babylon and came to the hands of Daniel. Jeremiah had warned the Jews for years that God's judgment was coming in the form of Babylonian captivity. When it came, the false prophets tried to assure the people it would be for a very short period. However, Jeremiah warned that the length of Judah's captivity would be 70 years.

[PPT 5] In Jeremiah 25:11-12 Daniel would read "*This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,' declares the LORD* (by Persia)*, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans* (Babylonia)*; and I will make it an everlasting desolation.*"

[PPT 6] Daniel's captivity occurred in 605 B.C. (left of timeline). Verse 2 is in 538 B.C. Daniel has been in captivity for 67 years. From reading Jer. 25 Daniel now knows the 70-year period of captivity is almost over. Soon Cyrus the Persian will allow the Jews to return to Israel.

Vs3) [PPT 7] Daniel chapter 9 has a double theme, one of prayer in Vs 4-19 and a second of prophecy in Vs 20-27. It seems today that prophecy gets the most attention, but the main emphasis of chapter 9 is on Prayer. A good Bible study tool is to determine the emphasis of the chapter by the number of verses spent on a subject or person.

[PPT 8] In Daniel 9 there are 15 verses on prayer while there are 7 on prophecy. After reading about the 70 years in Jeremiah 25, later in Jeremiah chapter 29 Daniel would have read in verses 12-14:

[PPT 9] "*Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. I 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*." Daniel took scripture and applied it to himself as you and I should.

It was based on Jeremiah's prophecies that Daniel was encouraged to pray, as Jeremiah wrote, "*with all your heart*" for the restoration of Jerusalem and the regathering of the people of Israel.

Notice that after Daniel had read Jeremiah, he not only will pray but he will pray for the very thing the Bible told him is going to happen.

There are some, not all but some who in their theology I would label as hyper Calvinists who would assume that since God had decreed three more years of captivity before a return to Jerusalem, there would be nothing they could do. They could only sit back for three years and let God do what he said he will do.

Daniel knows that God is sovereign and works all things according to his timetable. But Daniel also knows He does it through people, through their acts and attitudes, and especially through their prayers.

By the way, Calvin knew better than some of today's Calvinists also. In his two-volume commentary on Daniel, he has a fifty-page commentary on this prayer in which he insists that it is the knowledge of God's promises that stirs us to prayer rather than causing us to become disengaged from God's moving. Notice Daniel's preparation before he makes any requests of God in verse 3.

[PPT 10] First, he says, "*I gave my attention to (Lit. set my face unto) the Lord God*." He does this both spiritually and physically. Daniel begins by turning away from and setting other things aside to concentrate on his prayer time with the Lord.

Would you like to have a prayer life as strong as Daniel's? Do you have the discipline that is needed to setting other things aside so you can have set times for prayer?

The words *"<u>Gave my attention to</u>"* is an idiom that shows

[PPT 11] The personal intimacy of prayer. Prayer is not a monologue, but an intimate dialogue between you and God. Daniel is morning Israel's captivity, her sin and rebelliousness in a personal intimate way before the LORD.

[PPT 12] Daniel set his *face unto the Lord God* by physically facing the ruined temple in Jerusalem when he prayed as if God's presence still remained there (6:10-11).

[PPT 13] Jeremiah wrote, "*You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart*." Daniel did this but, to help him do this he also added to this:

[PPT 14] "*with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes*" These are outward Jewish signs of inward mourning and humility before the Lord (Isa. 58:5; Jonah 3:5-6; Esther 4:1-3).

[PPT 15] *Fasting*, so that he might not be sidetracked from time spent in prayer by preparing food and having a meal. He is saying this is more urgent and important than my physical body's desires. His is not a quick 3 min prayer but much longer going even through his mealtime.

[PPT 16] *Sackcloth*, a putting aside of ordinary comfortable clothing in favor of a poor person's rough cloth is physically and outwardly expressing inward complete need and repentance. What physical thing might help remind you of your complete dependance upon the Lord?

[PPT 17] Putting on *Ashes* was another traditional symbol of grief and humility. The fasting, sackcloth, and ashes were not done for an outward show before other people but for Daniel to outwardly express to God the inward, the sincerity of his heart.

[PPT 18] Vs4a, *I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed saying, O Lord, the great and awesome God….*

I realize there are exceptions but too often I rush into God's presence and ask for things, without first pausing to worship Him. If we are going to have a prayer life as powerful as Daniel's it's important that we focus on the character of God and who he is that we are coming before first and not become so overly preoccupied with ourselves and our problems that we forget to worship before asking.

[PPT 19] Vs4b … *who keeps covenant and steadfast love with <u>those who</u> love Him and keep His commandments*.

This is the essence of the Mosaic covenant (Deut. 7:10; 27-29).

Love and loyalty on God's part are meant to reproduce themselves in His covenant people as they in turn loved Him and kept His word. However, in contrast to the description of God as keeping "*Covenant and steadfast love*" in Vs 5 Daniel's people are said to:

[PPT 20] "*have sinned, and done wrong and acted wickedly, and rebelled turning aside from your commandments and rules*". This is Daniel's burden he brings before God in prayer.

Daniel's goal is to confess all their sin, by naming every category. Today, as we allow him, God is conforming you and me under the new covenant to the image of Christ to love Him and keep His word. How are you doing with loving Him and keeping His word? In chapter 9 Daniel has written it down in his book, what would you write in your book today? I am going to walk us through Daniel's list of sins confessed in verse 5 and my goal is change through conviction. But, if there is conviction it is from our conscience and our Lord, not me.

[PPT 21] First from verse 5 when was the last time you confessed your sin? Confessing your sin means naming that sin specifically and agreeing with God that you missed the mark of God's word in that area.

[PPT 22] When was the last time you confessed that you: "*Committed iniquity*" meaning, to be bent in your acts or thoughts?

[PPT 23] When was the last time you confessed that you had "*Acted wickedly*" in that you had been morally loose in your living?

[PPT 24] When was the last time you confessed that you had"*Rebelled*" by way of knowingly committing acts of disobedience?

[PPT 25] When was the last time you confessed you knowingly departing from a clear path of God's word?

[PPT 26] Remember there is no real confession without repentance. Repentance means to turn around. It means our confession was only empty words unless there is some turning, some change in our life concerning that sin that was named before the Lord.

Vs6-8Notes) The depravity of their sin is amplified by the fact that all classes of the people of Israel from kings to common people are said to have disregarded the prophets which God sent to them. The Jews were not ignorant or uninformed about God's covenant they had agreed to.

In contrast to God's righteous judgment, Israel's shame of face was due to their continual covenant infidelity which resulted not only in judgment for them but also a misunderstanding of YHWH by the Gentile world.

Vs9-12 Notes) [PPT 27] The Mosaic Law was made up of blessings for obedience and curses for rebellious disobedience which Daniel speaks of in vs 9-12. All sin is ultimately against a personal God. When we sin, we have not just broken His rules, we have broken our relationship with the One in whose image we were created (Gen. 1:26-27). Sin destroys the heart of why we were created, fellowship with God. Restoration comes by way of honest confession and repentance.

Vs13-14 Notes) There was something even worse than the sins that brought divine punishment to Israel. It was the refusal of the Jews to confess their sins and repent even after being taken captive! According to Ps. 137 they spent their time praying for judgment against Babylon rather than seeking God's face and asking for His forgiveness.

What Daniel is saying is that even though a God is a God of mercy He had no alternative; because when God's mercy is rejected, judgment is inevitable. Jehovah was being faithful in keeping His word both in the blessings and in the cursing's of the Mosaic covenant.

Vs15) [PPT 28] Exo 9:16 *But indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared <u>in</u> <u>all</u> <u>the</u> <u>earth</u>.* Israel went into the Babylonian captivity ultimately because they failed their Lord here.

By God's delivering the people of Israel from Egypt He not only manifested His forgiveness and power, but He had made a name for himself among the Gentile nations. The ultimate purpose of the Exodus was for world evangelism as well as to keep His promise to Israel of deliverance from Egypt.

Vs16) Daniel's prayer is focused on the fact that restoration will not <u>only</u> be an act of mercy but also one that will bring honor and glory to God and his testimony to the nations before whom Israel is at this time "*a reproach*."

Vs17-18 Notes) Some today would think Daniel's and Israel's situation would justify a "name it and claim it" approach to God's promises. You promised in scripture God and we claim it, now do it! By way of Jeremiah God <u>did</u> promise only 70 years of captivity, but Daniel is not "<u>claiming</u>" anything. He ***<u>pleaded</u>*** for mercy, as any sinner should and must do.

Vs18b-19) Daniel is not demanding or telling God what to do. Instead, he is asking God to hear, to see, and to act, <u>as it pleases and glorifies Him</u>.

In Daniel's words "*For Thine own sake*" his request is for *God to act in His own best interest and glory.* The tendency exists in Christian circles of thinking of God as being "there for us." The fact is we are "here for Him." He is using all creation and all of mankind, for His glory, not mine, ultimately it is all about Him.

Vs20-23 Notes) No new vision is given to Daniel in chapter 9. So, in verse 22 what vision was Gabriel going to give Daniel insight and understanding of? Daniel told us that he did not understand Gabriel's explanation of the vision back in 8:27.

It is now 12 years later in chapter 9 that it has become necessary for Daniel to have insight and understanding of the vision of chapter 8. This also is on God's timing, not Daniel's.

Vs24 No notes) [PPT 29] *How long is seventy weeks or units of seven?* The English word "*weeks*" is misleading. The Hebrew is the plural of the word for *seven.* It is literally 70 sevens without specifying whether it is days, months, or years. Today we think in units of tens or decades, Daniel's people thought in terms of sevens.

Daniel has been thinking of God's program for Israel after reading Jeremiah's prophecy that the exile would last 70 "years" (vs 1-2).

[PPT 30] Because of that it would have been normal for him to interpret these seventy times seven not as days or months but as 490 years.

Remember, prophecy has both a near-term and far-term fulfillment. One of the things God wants Daniel to understand, by way of His messenger Gabriel, is the time relationship between Israel's soon return to the land and God's promise in the far term to <u>establish His kingdom on the earth</u>.

God wanted Daniel to know that Israel's imminent or near-term return to the land will not result in the coming of the kingdom of God.

Theologically the important point of Gabriel's message for Daniel in verse 24 was that restoration indicated acceptance with the Lord, who, by restoring his people to their land, demonstrated that he had forgiven and reinstated them (Isa. 40). We can be so preoccupied with the numbers and the future that we miss the major truth these numbers were communicating to Daniel and his people in the near term.

Verse 24 gives Daniel six of God's objectives in the 70 sevens.

[PPT 31] First will be a program to *finish (or bringing to an end) the transgression*.

In the near term, Israel's captivity will end. After 70 years, it, the captivity will be brought to an end. However, Israel's apostasy and sin will be brought to completion in the far term, 490 years.

[PPT 32] Second, It will take 70 sevens of years "*to make an end of sins*," or bringing sin to final judgment, which also introduces the element of complete forgiveness.

[PPT 33] Third, "*to make reconciliation* (or atonement) *for iniquity*," which pictures the Cross of Christ in which Christ reconciled Israel as well as the Gentile world to Himself (2 Co 5:19). While the provision for reconciliation was made in the cross, the actual application of it, as far as the nation of Israel is concerned, is in the far term with the second advent of Christ.

[PPT 34] Fourth, "*to bring in everlasting righteousness*." This looks at the predicted millennial restoration or "age of righteousness" mentioned in Isaiah (1:26; 11:2-5; 32:17) Jeremiah (23:5-6; 33:15-18) and Ezekiel (36:17-38; 37:21-28) that reverses the national rejection of Israel's Messiah.

[PPT 35] Fifth, "*to seal up the vision and prophecy*". This expression *to seal up* indicates that nothing more is to be added and that what has been predicted will come to actual fulfillment.

[PPT 36] Sixth, "*to anoint the most holy* place looks to when Messiah returns in glory and builds the millennial Temple (Ezek. 40-48) which will be filled with the Divine Presence or Shekinah Glory (Ezek. 43:1-7) and will be consecrated for use throughout the Millennial Kingdom (Ezek. 43:11, 18-27; 44:11-28; 45:13-46:15; Isa. 56:6-7; 60:7; Jer. 33:18; Zech. 14:16-21).