

The Answer to Daniel's Prayer

Daniel 9:20-27

- 20** Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God,
- 21** yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.
- 22** And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand.
- 23** At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:
- 24** "Seventy weeks are determined
For your people and for your holy city,
To finish the transgression,
To make an end of sins,
To make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness,
To seal up vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.
- 25** "Know therefore and understand,
That from the going forth of the command
To restore and build Jerusalem
Until Messiah the Prince,
There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;
The street shall be built again, and the wall,
Even in troublesome times.
- 26** "And after the sixty-two weeks
Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;
And the people of the prince who is to come
Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.
The end of it shall be with a flood,
And till the end of the war desolations are determined.
- 27** Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;
But in the middle of the week
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,
Even until the consummation, which is determined,
Is poured out on the desolate."

In the ninth chapter of Daniel, Daniel concludes after reading Jeremiah the prophet that the 70-year period of Israel's captivity must be virtually over, and that return of Jews to their own land surely is imminent. With this hope, Daniel prayed for himself and his people. We studied His prayer of confession and intercession. It is a great example of an effective fervent prayer of a righteous man. When we get to verse 20, we find that God answers Daniel's prayer but certainly not in a way Daniel would have expected. God sent Gabriel, His angel, to give Daniel understanding and insight into the vision he had received. God wanted Daniel to understand the relationship between Israel's soon return to the land and the rebuilding of the temple—in the light of God's promise to restore His people and establish His kingdom on the earth. God wanted Daniel to know that Israel's imminent return to the land was not the coming of the kingdom of God.

Gabriel's announcement provides Daniel and his reader with an increasing level of understanding of the vision God had previously revealed. Verses 24-27 begin to spell out future events in detail rather than with vague, mysterious symbols as in the visions. While not all Christians agree on the meaning of these verses, I think it is safe to say that all Christians would agree that they provide very important information concerning the last times.

I. The Appearance of Gabriel (9:20-23)

Gabriel's appearance interrupted Daniel who was still praying.

A. Summary of Daniel's Prayer (9:20)

Verse 20 gives us a summary of Daniel's prayer which we studied last time.

20 Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God,

Daniel sums up the content of his prayer with the use of four Hebrew verbs that he used throughout his prayer in verse 3 to 19. "**While I was speaking**," he was conversing with God. Prayer is speaking, it's talking with God. "**Praying**" means to intervene, to mediate, to intercede for others. "**And confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel**," and there's the confessing aspect of prayer. "**And presenting my supplication**," has to do with carrying to God the burden of the heart. What a great picture of prayer: speaking with God, praying on behalf of others, confessing our sin, and presenting to God the burdens of our hearts.

Daniel has been praying because he believes the word of God. He knows that God is going to keep His word and return His people and restore righteousness in the land, and that's the burden of His heart.

At the end of verse 20, it tells us that he was praying for "**the holy mountain of my God**." This must be the mount in Jerusalem on which the city and the temple sat. Daniel prayed because it was not just the city of the Jews, it was God's city, it was God's holy mountain, and it was God's name that was at stake.

B. The Arrival of Gabriel (9:21-23)

21 yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.

It is clear that Gabriel's appearance and announcement was in answer to Daniel's prayers. In fact the answer comes quickly, while Daniel is still praying. The answer comes "**about the time of the evening offering.**" This would have been about 3:00 in the afternoon. Even though it had been nearly 70 years and Daniel was just a young man when he was dragged away from Jerusalem, he still prays at the time when the evening sacrifice would have been offered to God. By the way it is the same time of day (the ninth hour) when over five centuries later Jesus would die for sins as the spotless lamb of God on the cross.

The answer comes through **the man Gabriel**. This is the same "**holy one**" Daniel saw in chapter 8 that explained the vision of the ram, the goat, and the little horn. So there is a very clear connection between the arrival and announcement of Gabriel in chapter 9 and the vision Daniel received in chapter 8, even though it happened 12 or more years earlier.

When Daniel received his vision of the "ram" and the "goat" in chapter 8, he could not understand it. Gabriel was instructed to explain the vision to Daniel, but even after he had done so, the vision was still a mystery to him. The closing words of chapter 8 underscore this:

And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king's business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it. (Daniel 8:27).

Gabriel's first appearance to Daniel came in the actual vision with Gabriel standing near to Daniel. During this second appearance here in chapter 9, Gabriel did not come as a part of any vision. He appeared to Daniel looking like a man.

Gabriel informed Daniel of the purpose of his visit in verses 22-23.

22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand.

23 At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:

Gabriel was sent by the command of God (v. 23). He came to give Daniel "**skill to understand**" so that Daniel could "**consider the matter, and understand the vision**" (v.23).

What vision? What vision was Gabriel's appearance and announcement going to help Daniel to understand? No new vision is given to Daniel in chapter 9. Therefore, most likely, the vision Gabriel came to further explain and clarify was the vision of chapter 8. Daniel told us he did not understand it after Gabriel's first explanation (8:27). Gabriel now appears a second time to give a more complete

explanation of its meaning. The vision of chapter 8 gives us a context for the explanation in chapter 9.

Now, in light of the end of the 70 years of captivity, the overthrow of the Babylonian empire, and the soon return of the Jews to Israel, the meaning of this vision became more important. We are told three times in chapter 8, that the vision pertains to the end times (8:17, 19, 26).

Daniel is about to learn that the return of the captive Jews to their own land was not a part of the events of the end times. The return and restoration of Israel was not the commencement of the kingdom of God. And so Gabriel's announcement to Daniel focuses on the vision of chapter 8 to show that the events in the near future were not to be viewed as the beginning of the end.

II. The Announcement of Gabriel (9:24-27)

Gabriel's explanation begins in verse 24:

**24 "Seventy weeks are determined
For your people and for your holy city,
To finish the transgression,
To make an end of sins,
To make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness,
To seal up vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.**

A. The seventy weeks clarifies the timing of the kingdom.

Remember that Daniel's attention was fixed on the exile period of 70 years which came to an end with the overthrow of the Babylonian empire. Gabriel speaks not of those 70 years but of 70 weeks, or literally seventy sevens. Would Daniel and others think it was but a 70 year wait for the promised kingdom? No, Gabriel informs Daniel, it is not just those 70, but another 70 times 7, or 490 years. Daniel was thinking of a literal 70 years in fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy. Those years were fulfilled just as God had promised.

Now Daniel is told of another time frame, seventy sevens, or 490. Are these days or months or years or what? I agree with most conservative Biblical scholars that the seventy sevens refer to years. Since the 70 years of the exile were literal I think it is reasonable for us to consider that the seventy sevens are also literal and that they refer to years as well, thus the seventy sevens are 490 years.

Why is that important? Because if 490 years must pass before some of the promises pertaining to the kingdom were fulfilled, then no one should confuse Israel's soon return to their land to be the commencement of God's kingdom.

Just like Daniel had learned in the visions of chapter 2 and chapter 7, the kingdom of God which will crush all the earthly kingdoms of men would not come immediately. Daniel had already seen that four beastly kingdoms of men had to rise and fall before the everlasting kingdom of heaven would come to

consummation (Daniel 7). Now Daniel is given other prerequisites for the kingdom that pertain to Israel specifically.

B. The Jews and Jerusalem are the setting for the prophecy.

Now Daniel is also told a time frame, 490 years, for things that **“are determined For your people and for your holy city.”** The word **“determined”** is critical. It is a word that assumes a comprehensive plan of God. The word literally means to cut out. It's like God cuts out 490 years of time out of history to accomplish His plan **“For your people and for your holy city,”** as verse 24 says. “Your people” must refer to Daniel's people, the nation of Israel, the Jews. **“Your holy city”** is the same place that Daniel was praying for in verse 20, the city of Jerusalem. So the context for the fulfillment of the 490 years is clear. It pertains to the people of Israel and the city of Jerusalem.

C. The conditions of the kingdom are spiritual.

So the timing of the kingdom needed clarification, but also the nature of the kingdom, especially the prerequisites for it, needed further explanation. The kingdom of God would indeed commence, but not with the return to the land of Israel, nor with the building of the temple. Before the kingdom of God could come to the earth, there must be a solution to the great human dilemma of sin.

In verse 24, Gabriel informed Daniel that 70 sevens had been determined to accomplish six things for his people and his holy city:

**To finish the transgression,
To make an end of sins,
To make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness,
To seal up vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.**

In his prayer, recorded in verses 4-19, Daniel confessed his sins and those of his people. But confession did not remove these sins nor produce the righteousness required for men to live in the presence of a holy God. Gabriel let Daniel know that in the 490 years the spiritual foundation for the kingdom of God would be laid. This foundation was the removal of sin and the provision of everlasting righteousness. Daniel's prayer for his people and his city would be answered, there would be a spiritual restoration for his people. It just wasn't going to be completed in Daniel's day.

Let's look at what God determined would happen for his people. The first three deal with sin named in three ways: “the transgression,” “sins,” and “iniquity.”

1. To finish the transgression

The expression “to finish” means to restrict, restrain, or withhold with the sense of bringing to an end. Sin had run rampant during Israel's history; it almost seemed to run beyond any kind of boundaries. But it will be restrained, will be brought under divine control during this time.

2. **To make an end of sins**

This second aspect of the program may be taken either in the sense of taking away sins or bringing sin to final judgment. God will judge sin finally and completely.

3. **To make reconciliation for iniquity**

The third one is to make reconciliation or literally, to cover iniquity. This is atonement, the covering that removes sin from God's sight and God's judgment.

4. **To bring in everlasting righteousness**

Having done away with sin, he's gonna bring in literally the righteousness of the ages and ages, final righteousness, eternal righteousness.

5. **To seal up vision and prophecy**

The expression "to seal up" indicates that no more is to be added and that what has been predicted will be fulfilled. All the prophecies of the Bible, Old Testament and New Testament will be completely fulfilled. The kingdom of God promised to Israel will come.

6. **And to anoint the Most Holy**

Literally, the text says to anoint "a holy of holies." It could refer to a place or a person. Most often it refers to the most holy place in the temple.

Now for us who know the New Testament, when we read those six things we automatically think of Jesus Christ and what He accomplished through His death and resurrection.

Jesus is the one who finishes the transgression and makes an end of sins.

Romans 6:5-7 says this about what Jesus did for us: **5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be [in the likeness] of [His] resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with [Him], that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin.**

He made atonement for our sins. Covered them completely with His blood. He made reconciliation for us. 1John 2:2d says about Jesus, **"2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. Rom 3:23-25, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth [as] a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness ... "**

He brought in everlasting righteousness. (Heb 1:8 NKJV) **8 But to the Son [He says]: "Your throne, O God, [is] forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness [is] the scepter of Your kingdom. (Rom 5:17 NKJV) 17 For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)**

All of these things began with the coming of the Messiah and through His death and resurrection. We know that His death on the cross made atonement for our sin and brought in a righteousness from God that we receive by faith.

There is a sense in which all this has been accomplished for Israel and for us. Provision has been made for all six of these things in the first coming of Jesus Christ. But the ultimate fulfillment of them awaits His second coming. That is why as we have been studying in 1 Peter on Wednesdays the Bible speaks about **“salvation ready to be revealed in the last time,”** and **“the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”** That is why we still pray for the coming of the kingdom of heaven. Because although Christ has come and through His death and resurrection has brought forgiveness of sins and the gift of righteousness to us, what all this really means we will only experience when Christ returns in His glory and death and Hades are thrown into the lake of fire along with the devil and all those who are disobedient to the gospel of Christ.

So have all six of these things been accomplished? Yes and no. Yes, Jesus Christ has come and has made provision for all of it. He is the fulfillment of every prophecy. But the consummation of it all will finally come when Jesus comes again.

When will that be?

You'll have to come back next week when we deal with verses 25-27.

The end times and the coming of God's eternal kingdom were not imminent for Daniel or his fellow-Israelites. Certain necessary events had to precede the coming of the kingdom, and these things were not to take place for many years. Sin had to be atoned for and put away. Righteousness had to be provided for those who would enter into God's kingdom. This was to happen many years in the future through the substitutionary death of the Messiah, who would bear our sins on the cross of Calvary. In order for the Messiah to die, He would have to be opposed and even appear to have lost the struggle. Only after this preparatory work could God's kingdom come to the earth for His people.

In addition to this, God's purpose of bringing the good news of salvation to the Gentiles would have to be fulfilled. During the past 2,000 years, the gospel has been proclaimed, and many Gentiles have come to faith in Jesus as the Savior. Soon, when those Gentiles whom God has chosen have been saved, the times of the Gentiles will end, and the events of the last days will commence, leading up to the defeat of God's foes and the establishment of His eternal kingdom.

Are you ready for the King to come to the earth? Will you stand in the day of judgment? If you have trusted in Jesus Christ as your Savior, your Messiah, then you will not fear His coming; you will welcome Him as King. Because Jesus has already paid the penalty for sin and provided the righteousness God requires, all who are in Him by faith do not dread but look forward to His return.

Daniel's prayer provides a marvelous model for all who would repent and turn to God for salvation. His prayer begins with a recognition of the perfections and

holiness of God and a recognition of our own sinfulness. It recognizes God is just in punishing us for our sins. It comes to God not on the basis of our own deeds or righteousness, but on the basis of His character and His covenant. He is merciful and compassionate, so we may come to Him for mercy and grace. He is also the One who has instituted a new covenant through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. All who come to Him for mercy, grace, and salvation through Christ He will not turn away or cast out. There is no other way to come to God and enter into His kingdom. Even the godly man Daniel knew this to be the way.