

## DANIEL: A Powerful Prayer Daniel 9:1-23<sup>i</sup>

### INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, Trinity! For those of you that are guests, we want to say a special welcome to you. My name is Chris Wigley, and I serve as one of the Pastors here at Trinity. Whether you are in the room or you are joining us online, we are excited to have you with us today. And on behalf of our church family, and our staff team, we say welcome you today.

We would love the opportunity to connect with you and you can do that in a couple ways. You can text the keyword, “TBCMP,” that stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mt. Pleasant, to the number 94-000. When you do that, a reply text will be sent with a link you can click on. That will direct you to a form that will then provide us with basic contact information to follow up with you.

Or you can fill out the connect card in your seat and drop it in the offering boxes located at each of the exits or bring it by our Guest Experience center in the Fellowship Area. Again, we would love the opportunity to connect with and to pray for you plus we have a gift for you.

### SERIES OVERVIEW:

We are in the middle of a teaching series where we are walking our way through the Old Testament book of Daniel. We have studied the historical happenings surrounding Daniel’s life and began looking at key prophecies he recorded. Some of those prophecies have been fulfilled while some are yet to come to pass.

Today, we come to chapter 9 of Daniel. We are going to approach this chapter over the course of the next two weeks. As Daniel writes, he gives us some practical principles on prayer. Then in the final verses of Chapter 9, he reveals another prophecy. The prophecy is a result of his prayer. So, I want to take our cues from Daniel this morning as today we will look at the practical prayer principles and then next week, we will examine the prophecy recorded in Daniel 9. I have entitled today’s message, “A Powerful Prayer.”

Let’s jump right in and read Daniel chapter 9 verses 1 and 2. *In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, [Ah-Has-You-Err-us] by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—<sup>2</sup> in the first year of his*

*reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.*

### BACKGROUND:

Daniel, again, gives us the date of when the events of Chapter 9 take place. The first year of Darius’ reign. We know this to be 538 B.C.<sup>ii</sup> Remember that In Daniel 5, the handwriting on the wall, that Babylon fell to the Medes and the Persians. That was 539 B.C. Darius then takes over and he has the ascension year and then 538 B.C. was his first year.

Another way to look at this in the chronology of Daniel is that Chapter 9 runs concurrent to Chapter 6, which is when Daniel was thrown into the lion’s den for what? Praying.

We also learn a little bit about who Darius is; the son of Ahasuerus [Ah-Has-You-Err-us]. Maybe your Bible says Xerxes. It is the same person. Ahasuerus is the Hebrew rendering and Xerxes is the Greek.<sup>iii</sup>

We talked about this person when we studied chapter 6 and that Darius may be translated as Lord, as in superior, and that this could allude to Cyrus. There is debate as to whether this is Cyrus, or another man named Darius put in a position of ruling the province of Babylon that was conquered.

We also learn in verse 2 that Daniel is studying Scripture. In particular, the book of Jeremiah. He acknowledges that this book is Holy Scripture as he refers to it as, quote, *“the Word of the Lord to Jeremiah.”*

Jeremiah and Daniel are somewhat contemporaries. Jeremiah was about 32 years older than Daniel.<sup>iv</sup> And Jeremiah predicted and recorded the prophecy about the fall of Judah to Babylon that Daniel had to live through. And specifically, he predicted that the exile would last 70 years. Well, we know the exile began in 605 B.C. and Darius’ first year reigning is 538 B.C. When you do the math, we come to realize that 67 years in exile have occurred at this point. If Daniel was 15 when he was taken captive, he is now 82 years old. And we also know that the time of the Jews return to Jerusalem is just 3 years away.<sup>v</sup> Ezra tells us that Cyrus made a proclamation that the Jews can return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple.<sup>vi</sup>

Now, if you've been following along, you might be confused. You might be saying, wait a minute, how does all this fit in a timeline? Let me give you a little rundown of what we've studied to this point to maybe help us understand how these fits in the timeline of history. **Graphic** The graphic you see on the screen can be downloaded on our website. The download will have further explanation than what I am going to cover today. So, if you are interested in that, tomorrow, swing by [trinitytx.org/sermons](http://trinitytx.org/sermons) and click on the sermon from today. Below the audio file you will see downloadables. By the way, I post my notes there each week for those of you that want to torture yourself again, you can always download that. But at any rate.

In 605 B.C. Babylon invades Judah and conquers. Daniel is exiled. Nebuchadnezzar has a dream of a polymetallic statue which is recorded in Daniel chapter 2. The gold head represents Babylon rule.

Then in 539 B.C., that's Daniel chapter 5, the handwriting on the wall, Babylon is overtaken by the Medo-Persian kingdom. The Medes and the Persians are represented by the chest of silver on the statue, the Bear in chapter 7 and the ram in chapter 8. Cyrus ruled Persia and allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple in 538 B.C. The temple was restored about 20 years later. Fun fact, Cyrus' dad is Xerxes, and he is mentioned in Esther.

Alexander the Great of Greece conquered Persia in 334 B.C.<sup>vii</sup> Greece is represented by the torso of bronze on the statue, the 4-headed leopard with wings in chapter 7 and the goat in chapter 8. Antiochus desecrated the Temple in 167 B.C.<sup>viii</sup> He is the little horn in chapter 8. Judas Maccabeus led a revolt in 164 B.C.<sup>ix</sup> and restored the temple then.

Rome then conquered Greece in 146 B.C.<sup>x</sup> Rome is represented by the 4<sup>th</sup> beast that is unlike anything in Daniel's chapter 7 vision. Rome destroyed the temple in 70 A.D.<sup>xi</sup>

The little horn that is mentioned in chapter 7 with eyes and a mouth represents the unfulfilled prophecy of Daniel that is echoed in Revelation 13 which is the Antichrist. That is yet to come.

We not only learn of the book that Daniel is reading from, but exactly where in the book he is reading. Verse 2 tell us that Daniel is looking over the prophecy

regarding the desolations of Jerusalem for a time period of seventy years. That prophecy is contained in Jeremiah 25 and 29.<sup>xii</sup>

Daniel's reading results in an amazing prayer that is recorded for us here in Daniel 9. The prophecy that we will cover next week will be the result of Daniel's prayer. Like I mentioned, we will get into that next week. But let's now look at principles of prayer that we learn from Daniel here in Chapter 9.

### **MESSAGE:**

The first principle we see is...

#### **1) The Prominence of Prayer.**

Prominence meaning the focus Daniel put on prayer. Let's read together Daniel verse 3 of Daniel 9. *<sup>3</sup> Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.*

Here we catch Daniel praying, yet again. This is a habit for him. He always prays, not just when he's in a pickle. We saw in Daniel 2 he went to The Lord in prayer to discern Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and in chapter 6 he gets thrown into the Lion's Den because he is praying. He is a man of prayer.

And notice what it was that caused him to pray. Reading Scripture, specifically Jeremiah, prompted him to pray. And what we learn about that is that prayer is two-way communication with God. God speaks to Daniel through His Holy Word. Daniel then speaks to God by way of prayer and pleas. And, as we are going to see in a moment, God responds to Daniel's prayer by sending His angel to Daniel. My point is that you see the dialogue between God and Daniel.

Now, I think there is a temptation to think that Daniel must have had more free time to devote to prayer. Daniel was one of the governors. He was the Prime Minister. This man probably had people that managed his calendar. The reason Daniel prayed is because it was something of prominence in his life.

I also want you to notice the preparation that went into Daniel's prayer. Not only did he voice a prayer, but he also fasted and put on sackcloth and ashes. In other words, Daniel prepared himself both physically and spiritually to spend time in prayer.<sup>xiii</sup> The putting on of sackcloth and ashes was common to illustrate a posture of repentance.

We tend to rush prayer, don't we? Good God, good food, good meat, let's eat. Am I right?

But prayer was prominent in Daniel's life. Those that we look to as spiritual giants understand the value of prayer. Billy Graham once said, "Prayer is the most important thing we can ever do, and if I could do my ministry over again, I would pray more than I preached."<sup>xiv</sup>

The second principle we see regarding prayer in Daniel's life is...

## 2) The Parts of Prayer

Not only did Daniel model for us the prominence of prayer, but also what should be included in our prayers. What is included in Daniel's prayer is echoed in Jesus' teaching on how to pray, the Lord's Prayer. He follows perhaps what you have learned before, the ACTS model of praying. Adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication. Let's look those contents of Daniel's prayer and apply that to our prayer lives as well.

First is **Adoration**. Adoration is praising God.

Daniel starts off his prayer this way. Look at verse 4 of Daniel 9. *4 I **prayed** to the **LORD** my God and made confession, saying, "O Lord, **the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments,**"*

The word, "prayed," is emphatic in the original language.<sup>xv</sup> What that means is that Daniel is trying to communicate the intensity of his prayer. The intensity has already been modeled in his preparation of prayer. He fasted and put on sackcloth and ashes. That's intense prayer

We also see the adoration part of Daniel's prayer in his addressing of God. He calls Him, "LORD." How many of you, in your Bible, have LORD in all caps? I do as well. That is referring to God's personal covenant name, Yahweh.<sup>xvi</sup>

After referring to Yahweh, Daniel calls Him his God. Daniel, a child of God, is adoring God for being the one true God, the only God, and the God of the covenant of his people.

Then Daniel ascribes the worth of God. He is great and awesome and keeps His covenants. We overuse the word "Awesome" today. But that word means a

holy fear.<sup>xvii</sup> In other words, The Lord is worthy of our great respect because of who He is.

It is important to begin our prayers in the same way. When we pray, we need to be reminded of who it is that we are praying to. By praying, we are entering into the spiritual realm where our words are being heard by a very holy God.

You might say, of course we know that. But what's the big deal about voicing it? One commentator I read this week said it this way, **"When we see the greatness and glory of God, it helps us to put our own burdens and needs in proper perspective."**<sup>xviii</sup> Adoration is vitally important.

The second part of Daniel's prayer is **Confession**.

After Daniel acknowledges being in the presence of an awesome God, he began to confess sin. Look at verses 5 through 14. I want you to notice key words of confession in this part of Daniel's prayer and I read. *5 **we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules.** 6 **We have not listened** to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. 7 To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us **open shame**, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of **the treachery that they have committed against you.** 8 To us, O Lord, belongs **open shame**, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because **we have sinned against you.** 9 To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have **rebelled against him** 10 and **have not obeyed** the voice of the Lord our God by walking in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. 11 All Israel has **transgressed** your law and **turned aside, refusing to obey your voice.** And the curse and oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because **we have sinned against him.** 12 He has confirmed his words, which he spoke against us and against our rulers who ruled us, by bringing upon us a great calamity. For under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what has been done against Jerusalem, 13 As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us; yet **we have not entreated the favor of the Lord our God,** turning from our iniquities and gaining insight by your truth. 14 Therefore the Lord has kept ready*

*the calamity and has brought it upon us, for the Lord our God is righteous in all the works that he has done, and **we have not obeyed his voice.***

A couple of interesting things about this part of Daniel's prayer. First, Daniel mentions 7 ways Israel has sinned. He uses the words, "sinned," "done wrong," "acted wickedly," "rebelled," "turned away," "not listened," and "not obeyed."<sup>xix</sup>

We see in this list the sins of commission and the sins of omission. Sin of commission are acts we do, sins we commit. These are sins of, doing of wrong, acting wickedly, rebelling, turning away and not listening to God's Word. The sin of omission is different in that they are sins lacking action. Daniel says in this prayer a couple of times, "we have not obeyed your voice," or "we refuse to obey your voice." When God speaks and we do not carry that out, we commit sins of omission.

The other thing that is interesting to me is the way in which Daniel includes himself in these sins. In just that section of his prayer, Daniel uses the words, "we," and "us," 16 times by my count.

Now, based on what we have studied about Daniel and his life, would you describe Daniel the way he does here? No way! Daniel was obedient, faithful, prayerful, and giving ear to what God spoke to him. In fact, Ezekiel 14:14 describes Daniel as one of the three most righteous people to ever live.<sup>xx</sup> Certainly, Daniel wasn't perfect. There is none that is righteous, no not one. But he wasn't those things.

By identifying with the sin of his people, Daniel is not passing blame, he is owning the mistakes they made. The leaders of his nation did these things and Daniel is asking for God's forgiveness. When we tend to be blame shifters, when Daniel is an owner. He owns the sins of his people and is seeking corporate repentance. We would be wise to take Daniel's lead here and own up to our failures and sin as a nation and on behalf of our people seek The Lord's forgiveness.

#### **ILLUSTRATION: Our Kid's mistakes.<sup>xxi</sup>**

Let me see if I can illustrate this for us. When my kids make a mistake, is it my fault? No, it is their fault. And while it may not be my fault, it is my responsibility to help them correct their mistakes. This is what we see Daniel doing in this confession.

So, we see adoration and confession. Thirdly, we see **Thanksgiving**. Daniel was thankful for God's grace and mercy. Look at verse 9 and then verse 15 of Daniel 9. <sup>9</sup>*To the Lord our God belong **mercy and forgiveness.*** [Skip down to verse 15] <sup>15</sup>*And now, O Lord our God, **who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand,** and have made a name for yourself, as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly.*

What is Daniel doing in these verses? He is expressing gratitude for God being a God of mercy and forgiveness. And he is remembering that God has always worked in the lives of his people. He makes a specific reference to being brought out of slavery in Egypt.

Remembering God's goodness and faithfulness in prayer, voicing those to Him, are important as they serve as reminders that if God has been faithful in the past, He will be faithful now and always. What do you have to be thankful to God for?

We've looked at adoration, confession and thanksgiving. The last part of Daniel's prayer is **Supplication**. When I say supplication I mean our requests. What are Daniel's requests? After adoring God, confessing sin, and expressing thanks, does Daniel finally present his requests.

Verses 16-19 of Daniel 9. <sup>16</sup>*O Lord, according to all your righteous acts, **let your anger and your wrath turn away** from your city Jerusalem, your holy hill, because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a byword among all who are around us. <sup>17</sup>Now therefore, O our God, **listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy,** and for your own sake, O Lord, **make your face to shine upon your sanctuary,** which is desolate. <sup>18</sup>O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. <sup>19</sup>O Lord, hear; O Lord, **forgive.** O Lord, **pay attention and act. Delay not,** for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name."*

Daniel's requests were for forgiveness, the restoration of his nation, and the rebuilding of the Temple. He understands that God's judgment on them was warranted. But his ask was to now lift that judgment and restore.



These were big asks considering what all Daniel had been given in visions. He knew that other nations would rule over the Jews, but Daniel was asking God for favor. In view of your mercy, God, forgive us, allows us to return to Jerusalem and provide the opportunity to rebuild the temple that now lays in ruins. Big asks.

My time is short today. We've looked at the prominence of prayer and the parts of prayer. Now let's look at...

### 3) The Power of Prayer.

Perhaps the best part of this chapter points to the power of prayer. Read with me verses 20-23. *<sup>20</sup> While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea before the Lord my God for the holy hill of my God, <sup>21</sup> while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice. <sup>22</sup> He made me understand, speaking with me and saying, "O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding. <sup>23</sup> At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly loved. Therefore consider the word and understand the vision.* Now, I love this, a whole lot! A couple things and we're done.

First, God loves to answer prayer. Before Daniel could finish his prayer, God was already answering. In the form of Gabriel coming in SWIFT flight. Notice what Gabriel said in the first part of verse 23. "At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out." Did you catch that? When Daniel started praying, Heaven started responding. And Daniel's prayer was answered before he finished his request. That's amazing.

Beloved, you need to know that when you pray, God hears. And we don't know what Daniel was thinking when he started praying. Maybe he was wondering if prayer was even working. Am I just talking to myself? Is this really doing anything? Are my prayers going anywhere?

We know that this prayer was in the evening and that it coincides with chapter 6 when Daniel was thrown in the Lion's Den. Now, this is merely speculation, but I imagine that Daniel is praying this prayer as he is on his way to the Lion's Den. Hello?! God?! Are my prayers getting past the ceiling?! Can you relate?

Listen, God hears you when you pray. And the moment you bow your head and begin, "Lord," a word goes out. When you and I pray, the God of Heaven hears, and He convenes the angels of heaven and sends them out. That's what Daniel 9 teaches us. Now, the answer and the response are not always what we want. But that doesn't mean that God is silent. You need to know that when you pray, God hears.

You might read this passage and say, "How come I don't get an angel sent when I pray?" Let me just say this, maybe you have. Hebrews 13:2 says, "*Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unaware.*"<sup>xxii</sup> It is possible that God has dispatched His angels in answer to your prayer, you just are unaware. There is power in prayer. God desires to answer the prayers of His people.

This second thing about this passage I want you to see is what Gabriel says to Daniel. Verse 23 again. *<sup>23</sup> At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly loved.* How awesome is that?

Think about it for a moment. Daniel has been taken from his home, lived under oppression the vast majority of his life, betrayed by his co-workers, thrown into the lion's den, witnessed the falling away of his people, yet he is greatly loved.

I heard one pastor say, "God's love for you is not measured by your life's ease." Daniel's life was not easy, yet he was greatly loved by God. And just because you go through hard times doesn't mean that God has abandoned you or forgotten you.<sup>xxiii</sup> If the testimony of Jesus' life tells you anything, it screams, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that WHOEVER believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life." The cross of Jesus is the announcement that you are greatly loved by God.

**CONCLUSION: Ask Band to Come Back Up**  
Gospel. Prayer. [PRAY]

## ENDNOTES:

<sup>i</sup> Works consulted in preparation of this message: Travis Agnew, “Daniel [Series Overview]”, article published on [travisagnew.org](http://travisagnew.org) on August 13, 2020; Stephen R. Miller, *The New American Commentary: Daniel*, B&H Publishing, Nashville, 1994; Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Resolute: OT Commentary on Daniel*, David C Cook Publishing, 2000; Gene Whithurst, “The Book of Daniel Commentary,” document sent to me via Gene; Troy Rackliffe, “Daniel part 10,” preached at Glade Community Church in Daniels, WV, October 2020; Mark Driscoll, “Kingdom Down #9: How to Live When the Future is Clearly Fuzzy,” preached at Trinity Church in Arizona on March 18, 2020; Skip Heitzig, “I Dare You: Pray!,” taught at Calvary Church Albuquerque on Sunday, May 26, 2013; J.D. Greear, “Shining in Babylon: Prayer And a Forgotten Pair of Air Jordans In Your Closet,” taught at The Summit Church on Sunday, July 18, 2021; Dr. Robert Jeffress, Pathway to Victory Podcast, episode: *The Invisible War parts 1 and 2*, accessed via apple podcasts <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/americas-coming-storm-part-1/id611239356?i=1000550759488>.

<sup>ii</sup> Stephen R. Miller, *The New American Commentary: Daniel*, B&H Publishing, Nashville, 1994, page 240.

<sup>iii</sup> Miller, 240.

<sup>iv</sup> Information taken from article that can be found here: <https://crossroadsbible.net/2019/11/19/daniel-and-the-70-years-of-jeremiah/>

<sup>v</sup> Miller, 241.

<sup>vi</sup> Ezra 1:1-4.

<sup>vii</sup> *Ancient Mesopotamia: The Persian Empire*, article found: [https://www.ducksters.com/history/mesopotamia/persian\\_empire.php](https://www.ducksters.com/history/mesopotamia/persian_empire.php)

<sup>viii</sup> Miller, 226.

<sup>ix</sup> Ibid, 230.

<sup>x</sup> *Ancient Greece: Decline and Fall*, article found: [https://www.ducksters.com/history/ancient\\_greece/decline\\_and\\_fall\\_of\\_ancient\\_greece.php](https://www.ducksters.com/history/ancient_greece/decline_and_fall_of_ancient_greece.php)

<sup>xi</sup> A.D. 70 Titus Destroys Jerusalem, Christianity Today, article accessed: <https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-28/ad-70-titus-destroys-jerusalem.html>

<sup>xii</sup> Miller, 241.

<sup>xiii</sup> The physical and spiritual preparation is pointed out in Gene Whithurst’s commentary on Daniel.

<sup>xiv</sup> John Avant, Five Things Billy Graham Did Not Do, article published by Life Action, February 28, 2018. Accessed here: <https://lifeaction.org/five-things-billy-graham-did-not-do/>

<sup>xv</sup> Miller, 243.

<sup>xvi</sup> Ibid, 244.

<sup>xvii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xviii</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Resolute: OT Commentary on Daniel*, David C Cook Publishing, 2000, pages 134-135.

<sup>xix</sup> Miller identified 6 but I see the 7<sup>th</sup> as the sin of omission. Miller, page 245.

<sup>xx</sup> This was pointed out in Pastor J.D. Greear’s sermon, “Shining in Babylon: Prayer And a Forgotten Pair of Air Jordans In Your Closet,” taught at The Summit Church on Sunday, July 18, 2021. Ezekiel 14:14.

<sup>xxi</sup> Illustration adapted from J.D. Greear.

<sup>xxii</sup> This example taken from Mark Driscoll’s sermon.

<sup>xxiii</sup> J.D. Greear.