

Pray Like Daniel:
Comes The 70th Week
Daniel 9

Summary

In Daniel 9, we encounter two remarkable revelations: a great prayer and a great prophecy. Daniel's prayer teaches us the importance of cultivating a disciplined prayer life rooted in Scripture, beginning with worship and thanksgiving, practicing honest confession, and boldly claiming God's promises.

But in response to Daniel's prayer, God reveals that Israel's future will involve far more than the end of its seventy years of exile. Through the prophecy of the seventy weeks, Daniel is given a glimpse of God's unfolding plan, including the coming and sacrifice of the Messiah, the continuing struggle against evil, and the ultimate triumph of God's kingdom.

Part 1 – Daniel's Great Prayer (Daniel 9:1–23)

1. *Read the first 3 verses, then review the 3 Prayer Boosters we gave last week. For each one, write one sentence summarizing the point, then share what you wrote with the group.*

Prayer Booster #1: Before prayer becomes a delight for you, it must first become a discipline.

Prayer Booster #2: Prayer and the Word of God feed off of each other.

Prayer Booster #3: Prayer is seeking God and turning my face toward Him.

2. *Read verse 4.* **Prayer Booster #4** is: ***Try to always begin your prayer with worship and thanksgiving.***

Why is it helpful to begin our prayers with worship and thanksgiving, even when we're facing difficult circumstances? What's the difference between thanking God *for* everything and thanking Him *in* everything?

3. Read verses 4-7. **Prayer Booster #5** is: ***Take seriously in your praying the Call of Confession.***

Why does Daniel say *"we have sinned"?* He wasn't around back in the days when Israel was rebelling against God! Discuss why you think he does this.

Read Psalm 32:1-5. Why is regular confession important to spiritual growth? What do you think happens to our relationship with God when we continually make excuses for our sins rather than confessing them? (Remember: *"There is no excuse for sin, only a sacrifice."*)

4. Read verses 11-13 and 17-19. **Prayer Booster #6** is: ***When you pray, plead God's promises in Scripture.***

Daniel knew God's promises in the books of Moses that God would scatter the Jews to the nations if they sinned against him (Deut.28:58,64), and restore them to their land if they repented (Deuteronomy 30:1-3). He also knew God's promise through Jeremiah that the exile would last only 70 years (Jer. 29:10-12). How do you think this impacted the urgency with which he prayed in these verses?

Read 2 Corinthians 1:20. Would do you think this verse means? How might remembering it, impact the boldness with which you pray?

Part 2 – Daniel's Great Prophecy (Daniel 9:20–27)

5. In response to Daniel's prayer, God dispatches the angel Gabriel to come and share a difficult and perplexing prophecy with him. Read verses 24-27. Have you ever experienced a time when God's answer to prayer wasn't what you expected? What would it look like in our lives if we learned to fully trust His timetable rather than our own?

6. We said in the teaching, that this prophecy was in some ways more for us than for Daniel. Daniel had no clue what it was referring to. We however can look back, pinpoint a decree that was actually given to rebuild Jerusalem, then fast forward 483 years (7+62 “weeks of years”) and arrive precisely at the time when Jesus (the “anointed one”) began his ministry, and was “cut off. What does this passage contribute to your confidence that Jesus really is the promised Messiah? How does seeing God's plan unfold across centuries strengthen your faith?

7. We examined two different Christian interpretations of the seventieth week: one sees it as fulfilled through Christ, while the other sees it as a future seven-year period involving the Antichrist. Why is it important for Christians to be willing to wrestle with difficult passages of Scripture, even when sincere believers reach different conclusions? What should unite us despite our differences?

8. The prophecy reminds us that even after Christ's first coming, evil and suffering would continue until God's purposes are fully accomplished. How do you reconcile the reality of evil in our world with your belief that God is sovereign? What difference should that conviction make in the way we respond to the headlines and uncertainties of our day?

Prayer Requests:

Daniel 9 gives us two wonderful pictures of the Christian life:

- Daniel praying on his knees: A man who knows God's Word, confesses his sins, claims God's promises, and seeks God's face.
- Daniel looking into the future: A man who discovers that despite everything happening around him, God remains sovereign over history.

One teaches us how to live today. The other teaches us why we can trust God with tomorrow.

With this in mind, share prayer requests and pray for one another.