

OLDER DAYS: DANIEL 9

Daniel 9:1-11. Daniel seeks God. Around 538 before the Christ came to earth, when Daniel was about 82, during the first year of Darius,²¹ son of Xerxes, Daniel understood via Jeremiah the prophet that Jerusalem's desolation would last about 70 years. He turned to the Lord God Yahweh,²² and pleaded via prayer, fasting, petition, and while in sack-cloth & ashes prayed...

O Lord (Adonai), the great and awesome God, who keeps His word, His covenant of love with all who listen to His voice. We have sinned; we have done wrong. We have rebelled. We have been wicked. We have turned away from the Law and Your commands. We've ignored Your prophets, the very prophets who spoke in Your NAME to our kings, princes, our fathers, and to all people.

You, Lord (Adonai), are righteous. But, we today our faces are smeared with shame. All of Judah, and all of Israel, near and far, where You have scattered us because of our trespasses against You.

O Yahweh, we and our rulers, our ancestors—all our faces are smeared with shame—we have sinned against You. The Lord our God is compassionate, forgiving—even when **we** have been a marauder to You and Your purposes. We have not listened to Yahweh our God, nor have we kept the Law He gave us. All Israel has alienated itself from Your law; turning away, and refusing to listen to You.

- Q Why was Daniel moved to fast, pray and clothe himself in sackcloth & ashes? How do you “clothe yourself in sackcloth & ashes?”
- Q Why is the Lord God Yahweh characterized as “great and awesome?” How did that contrast with believers according to Daniel? How was that manifested then? Now?
- Q What smears our face with shame today? Why were we scattered throughout the world?
- Q Why is the Lord God merciful & forgiving, even though believers rebel against Him?

DANIEL 9:1-11

In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes [in Hebrew = *Ahasuerus*] (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian [or *Chaldean*] kingdom—² in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years.³ So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.

⁴I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed:

"O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands,⁵ we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. ⁶We 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"Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame—the men of Judah and people of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far, in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to you. ⁸O LORD, we and our kings, our princes and our fathers are covered with shame because we have sinned against you. ⁹The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him; ¹⁰we have not obeyed the LORD our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets.¹¹ All Israel has transgressed your law and turned away, refusing to obey you.

²¹The identity of this *Darius* is a major problem in correlating the biblical material with the extra-biblical records of this period. Most modern scholars treat the reference as a mistaken allusion to Darius Hystaspes (circa 522-486BC). Others have maintained instead that this name is a reference to the Persian governor Gubaru. Still others understand the reference to be to the Persian king Cyrus (cf. 6:28, where the vav (ו) may be understood as vav explicativum, meaning “even”). From NET notes.

²²The tetragrammaton (the four Hebrew letters which constitute the divine Name, YHWH) appears eight times in this chapter, and nowhere else in the book of Daniel. From NET notes.

DANIEL 9:11-19

Seeking God has its price—in pride. So what? All those curses & judgments promised in the Law? They've been poured out on us—because we have been indicted and convicted of offenses against You. You did what You said You would do, against us and our rulers. Disasters have come, great disasters. Nowhere else has disaster hit like it hit Jerusalem.

Just as the Law said, this disastrous adversity came because we sought not the favor of Yahweh our God; we simply needed to turn from our sins and pay attention to Your truth. Yahweh, the Lord God, did not hesitate to bring disaster—He is righteous in everything He does, yet we have become deaf to His voice.

Please, O Lord our God, You who brought us out of slavery and made a Name for Yourself that endures even today—we have sinned; we have done wrong. We are condemned. In keeping with Your righteous acts, please turn your wrath away from Jerusalem, Your city, Your holy hill. Our sins, our iniquities have made Jerusalem & Your people an object of scorn to all around us.²³

Hear our petitions, our God; for Your sake, O Lord, look with favor on Your desolate, lonely, deserted sanctuary. Listen, O God—open Your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears Your Name. We are not making such requests because we deserve Your favor, but because You have great mercy. O Lord, please listen! Oh, Lord, please forgive! Oh Lord, please hear! Oh Lord, please act! For Your sake, my God, please do not put this off. Your city, and Your people bear Your Name.

- Q How did we commit evil toward the Lord God (i.e., “sin against”)?
- Q Which of Daniel’s comments to the Lord God do you find most poignant? Most troubling?
- Q Why does/did the Lord God “visit disaster” on believers who “seek not His favor?”
- Q On what basis was Daniel arguing that the Lord God cease His wrath on Jerusalem?
- Q What was the primary argument Daniel used to convince the Lord God Yahweh that He should act in Israel’s favor, especially regarding Jerusalem?

DANIEL 9:11-19

“Therefore the curses and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against you. ¹²You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing upon us great disaster. Under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem.

¹³Just as it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us, yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth. ¹⁴The LORD did not hesitate to bring the disaster upon us, for the LORD our God is righteous in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him.

¹⁵“Now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of Egypt with a mighty hand and who made for yourself a name that endures to this day, we have sinned, we have done wrong. ¹⁶O Lord, in keeping with all your righteous acts, turn away your anger and your wrath from Jerusalem, your city, your holy hill. Our sins and the iniquities of our fathers have made Jerusalem and your people an object of scorn to all those around us.

¹⁷“Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, O Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary. ¹⁸Give ear, O God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy. ¹⁹O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name.”

²³Note the similarity to the argument presented by Moses to the Lord God when Yahweh sought to destroy us and start over with a new people—see Exodus 32:9-14, especially, “Moses sought the favor of the LORD his God. “O LORD,” he said, “why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, ‘It was with evil intent that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to wipe them off the face of the earth?’ Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people.”

DANIEL 9:20-27

Vision as an answer to prayer. Yahweh, the Lord God, answered Daniel via a vision while he was still in prayer. Toward the time of the evening sacrifice, Gideon, who he had seen in previous visions, said...

Daniel—I've come to instruct. As soon as you began to pray, an answer was provided—I've come to tell you, for you are highly regarded. Ergo, consider this message & understand the vision:

For seventy seven weeks are decreed for your people to quit their sin, to atone for their wickedness, to seal up prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.²⁴

Know this—from the issuing of this decree, Jerusalem will be rebuilt, restored over a period of seven and sixty-two weeks. It will have streets [a square] and a wall. After sixty two weeks, the anointed one will be cut off and will have nothing. The ruler's people will come and destroy the city, and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood, sudden, deadly; war will continue until the end, just as desolations have been decreed.

The anointed one will confirm a covenant with many, and in the middle of the seven, He will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And, on the wing of the temple,²⁵ he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.

DANIEL 9:20-27

While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the LORD my God for his holy hill—²¹ while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. ²² He instructed me and said to me, "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. ²³ As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision:

²⁴ "Seventy 'sevens' [or 'weeks'; also verses 25 and 26] are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish [or restrain] transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy. [or *Most Holy place or holy One*]

²⁵ "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree [or word] to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, [or *anointed one*, also verse 26] the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. ²⁶ After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. [or *off and will have no one; or off, but not for himself*] The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. ²⁷ He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' [or *week*] In the middle of the 'seven' [or *week*] he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him [or *it*]. [Some manuscripts additionally read: *And one who causes desolation will come upon the pinnacle of the abominable temple, until the end that is decreed is poured out on the desolated city*]

²⁴The time between the decree authorizing the rebuilding of Jerusalem (v. 25) and the coming of the Messiah ("the Anointed One") was to be 69 (7 plus 62) "sevens," or 483 years (see Ezra 7:11). The "seven 'sevens'" may refer to the period of the complete restoration of Jerusalem (partially narrated in Ezra and Nehemiah) and the "sixty-two 'sevens'" to the period between that restoration and the Messiah's coming to Israel. The final (70th) "seven" is not mentioned specifically until v. 27, following the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem by "the people of the ruler who will come" (Titus in 70AD). Therefore, while many hold that the 70th "seven" was fulfilled during Christ's earthly ministry and the years immediately following, others conclude that there is an indeterminate interval between the 69th and the 70th "seven"—a period of "war" and "desolation" (v. 26). According to this latter opinion, in the 70th "seven" the little horn or beast of the last days (referred to here as the one who sets up an "abomination that causes desolation" and who is the antitype of the Roman Titus) will establish a covenant for seven years with the Jews (the "many") but will violate the covenant halfway through that period. The cutting off of the Anointed One (v. 26) refers to the crucifixion of Christ. (Opinion from the NIV Commentary, © 1996).

²⁵The referent of the Hebrew word כְּנָף (kynaf, "wing") is unclear here. The LXX and Theodotion have "the temple." Some English versions (e.g., NAB, NIV) take this to mean "a wing of the temple," but this is not clear. (From *NET Notes*.)

- Q To what extent did you find Gabriel's vision enlightening, or even more troubling entropy and/or chaos?
- Q What is the argument for capitalizing "anointed one?" That is, who is the noun in verse 25 & 26 and "he" in verse 27?
- Q What is this "abomination" in the temple which will cause desolation? Is Gabriel speaking of the Christ or of Titus?
- Q What is the good news of Gabriel's message? The bad news?
- Q Were we able to "to finish [or *restrain*] transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy?" How so?