

Daniel's Prayer Answered

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Date: 27 November 2011

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[0:00] And making my request to the Lord my God for his holy hill, 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.

He instructed me and said to me, Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. 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. Seventy sevens are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish 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. Know and understand this. From the issue of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the anointed one, 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. After the sixty-two sevens, the anointed one will be cut off and will have nothing.

[1:34] 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.

He will confirm a covenant with many for one seven. In the middle of the seven, 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.

We sing, God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform.

He plants His footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm. Footsteps in the sea. They can't be tracked. We wish they could be.

We would like God's footsteps to be like footsteps in the snow, where we can see them clearly. So we look out on a snowy day, and we can see that someone has walked down to the mailbox and back, and it's as clear as can be.

[2:47] But in Daniel 9, in this passage, we're thrown into the sea. We're thrown into the mystery of God's ways. And at the end, we're supposed to come out of the water and say, who is like our God?

Who can know the mind of the Lord? Who can be His counselor? He's beyond me. He is great. And He is greatly to be praised. Daniel 9, 20-27 is a very difficult passage.

And I'm not going to pretend like I'm 100% sure about everything that it teaches, because I'm not. Jerome, the church father, from a long, long time ago in the 4th century, he wrote a commentary on this passage, and he came up with nine different options, or nine alternatives that people have said at one time or another, and he said, I can't choose between them.

And so, if we're a little bit confused, we're in good company. But I am sure that this passage is meant to give us insight and understanding.

That's what Gabriel says. Daniel, I've come to give you insight and understanding. And so, in the end, we are supposed to have a clear understanding of what God is going to do in the world and how He rules and reigns.

[4:10] And it's meant to lead us to worship Him. To worship Him as the one who is beyond us, who is above us, who reigns. And not only reigns, but He saves.

He saves. And so, this passage breaks down into three sections. And the first is the context. We see that in verses 20 through 23. The context is all important if we're going to understand that later section of the vision.

Because the vision is God's answer. It's God's response to Daniel's prayer. So, look at verse 20. While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sins and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the Lord, my God, for His holy hill, while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had

seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight.

And so, what is the context of Daniel's vision? Well, it's Daniel's prayer. It's a response to Daniel praying. So, remember a few weeks ago, we talked about Daniel's prayer.

It's a prayer of confession and repentance. He prays, Oh Lord, great and awesome God, we have sinned and we have done wrong.

[5:25] Remember, it's a prayer for revival and for restoration. Jeremiah had said that there's going to be 70 years of exile, but then there would be a restoration.

And so, Daniel was reading Jeremiah and he came across these passages and as he saw that the 70 years were nearly up, it moved him to pray. And so, the question comes to us, do God's promises make us slack?

Do we just wait and do nothing? Well, Daniel didn't do that. He presses in on prayer and he says, God, remember what you've said to do it, to restore Israel, to have mercy.

And Daniel's prayer is a prayer for revival. He longed for God to do something for Israel, to change them, to do something inside of them.

We even talked about it in our worship just now. In the new covenant, the Spirit was given. And so, Daniel was praying for something to happen, for the Spirit of God, the new covenant to take place.

[6:26] See, in Jeremiah chapter 29, God said 70 years. But in Jeremiah 31, God promised a new covenant. He was going to do something for his people.

And it wouldn't be like a covenant that he had made with the Israelites on Mount Sinai because they broke that covenant. God said, no, I'm going to put my law in their hearts.

Before it had been on the stone tablets and it wasn't in their hearts. And so, when they came to it, it was good and right and true, but they couldn't obey it. The law promised life for obedience, but they couldn't obey.

They disobeyed. But this new covenant, it was going to be different. It would be different. The law would be in their hearts. It wouldn't be a covenant that they could break and come under condemnation.

No, God's law would be their joy and their delight. Everyone would know the Lord. Jeremiah said under that, under the new covenant. And sin once and for all would be forgiven.

[7:29] I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more. And so Daniel has these verses in his mind and he's praying for these things. He's praying, Oh Lord, forgive. Oh Lord, hear and act.

Do something for us. And so that's the context of Daniel's vision. Daniel's praying for Israel and he's praying. And while he's still praying, God answers.

That's an emphasis in this passage. Three times it says, while I was praying, I was still in prayer.

And so we have a peek here into God's heart. God is ready to answer prayer.

Daniel doesn't even say, in Jesus name, amen. And God's answer is already on its way. He's still praying. And as soon as you began to pray, the words were just starting to come out.

The answer was given. And perhaps we, we don't see things like that right away like Daniel did. An answer immediately. Perhaps the angel doesn't visit us. But God answers.

[8:32] And sometimes we ask for the wrong things and he gives us something better. And so sometimes we ask for snakes and he gives us the fish instead. And sometimes the present that he gives us, it takes a while for it to unwrap itself.

And sometimes he makes us wait. But your father never ignores your prayers. He loved Daniel.

That's what he said. Daniel, the Lord loves you.

And so he's answering you. And your father in heaven loves you. He loves you. And so brother and sister, he's brought you into his family.

And he loves to give you good gifts. He loves to give you good gifts. We got our referral this week and so we had this picture of this baby boy.

And so all week I've been fighting this urge to go to the store and buy. Buy things. I want to go give him something. So I went to Walmart on Black Friday. It was madness.

[9:33] In the toy section at least. The grocery section was completely empty. So I'm looking at there and I'm looking at all these baby boy toys and boy toys wanting to buy. And on December 7th the family's going to go over and we're going to be able to give them a gift.

Give him a gift. And we're excited about that. And Jesus said, if you then, though you are evil, if you know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good

gifts to you who ask him.

So God didn't even let Daniel finish praying and he sends Daniel the answer and Gabriel is shooting across the sky like an arrow with God's answer. So that's the context.

Daniel's prayer. It's prayer for the new covenant, restoration, revival to forgive sin. Then in verse 24 we have the second section.

We have good news. We have the good news. So let's look at it. Seventy-sevens are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish 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, probably the most holy one, probably talking about a person.

[10:57] And so Daniel is, he's praying for new covenant mercies, for restoration and God says, it's going to happen. It's going to happen.

Those things that you are longing for, Daniel, that change that you're longing for, the forgiveness that you're seeking, it's all going to come true. Daniel, it's going to come true. The day is going to come when God is going to act to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness on the part of God's people.

And see, under the old covenant, there was always more sin. It was never completely atoned for. All the blood of bulls can never completely wash it away from God's people.

And Gabriel tells Daniel, the day is coming when sin will be atoned for. Final. Period. The end. There's going to be no more doubts.

No more sacrifices. They're not going to be needed once and for all. In Zechariah, he says, in a single day, in a single day, I will remove sin from this land.

[12:06] And so, in the place of wickedness, there's going to be everlasting righteousness. And it won't be a once in a while thing. It won't come and go for God's people. It's going to be everlasting.

It will be forever. And he says, but more than that, vision and prophecy will be sealed up. And what does that mean? Well, it means it's going to come to an end.

It's going to be, it's going to all be fulfilled. It's going to come to an end because it's all going to be fulfilled. And that's what we're going to see. At the end of the 77s, the very last seven, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, comes.

And the whole Old Testament is pointing towards him. And this passage is pointing towards him.

And when he comes, prophecy is over because he's the last and the greatest prophet.

Everything is pointing towards him. And so he's the one who Moses promised. He's the one that Isaiah proclaimed. He's the one that Daniel has shown us time and time again.

[13:08] He's the son of man, the king on the kingdom, on the throne of the kingdom of heaven. And so when Jesus comes, vision and prophecy are sealed up.

They're finished. They're fulfilled. And so they're stopped. And finally, by the end of the 77s, the most holy one will be anointed.

In other words, Christ, the Messiah, will come. The long-expected anointed one. That's what Messiah means, an anointed one. The ruler.

The ruler. The long-expected king. David's son and David's lord. The prince of God's people. The great high priest. The final prophet. He will be anointed and he will take his throne forever.

He will take up his rule. And God says, Daniel, it's coming. All that you have longed for, it is coming. But, it's going to be a while.

[14:12] It's going to be a while. It's not going to be immediately. It's going to be 77s. And there's all sorts of debate about what that exactly means.

A lot of people, some people at least, have thought that it refers to 70 groups of seven years. So we're talking a literal 490 years. And they have all sorts of different ways of trying to make that work with what they know.

no way actually comes out to mean any good number. 490 years from when Daniel is like 155 BC, which nothing happened then.

And so there's all sorts of different ways. And I think the problem with that, and the reason that people keep on running into this wall of trying to make these numbers work literally, is because it just, when you think about it like that, it ignores the kind of, the idea of numbers in Daniel and Revelation and apocalyptic literature.

Remember, Daniel's visions, they're given from God's perspective. Apocalypse is history from God's viewpoint. They're meant to show us God's timetable, and that very rarely ever comes down

to compute into something literal in our calendar system in normal earthly times.

[15:39] So for example, I could give you several examples, but I don't want to take the time, and it would just kind of get confusing. So Nebuchadnezzar is told that he is going to go insane for seven, until seven times pass him by.

Seven times pass him by. And there's no indication that that means years or months or anything like that. It's times. It's times from God's perspective. Seven is the number of completion, and so when the whole time, when all the times necessary, when they take place, when Nebuchadnezzar confesses that God is king and that he is nothing, then the time will be over.

And so these 77s, they're God's timetable. It's history viewed from God's perspective. And the point is, the point of the 77s is this is going to be a long time.

Daniel, if you're hoping for a quick answer, if you're looking for this all to take place right now, immediately, you're going to have to wait.

And our timetable, haven't you seen this, our timetables rarely ever match God's timetable, do they? I mean, we want things now.

[16:55] And when it doesn't seem like we're getting the things that we're asking for, and God doesn't give us a clear answer in a day, we say, well, God, I thought you were going to answer my prayer.

I thought you were, I thought you answered prayer when all the time God has answered and maybe it just hasn't arrived yet. Daniel 9 teaches us not to lose heart when we don't think things are happening fast enough.

Daniel, I'm sure, would like to have seen all these things happen in his own day before his very eyes, but it wasn't God's timetable. He had something better. He had something wiser planned.

And so we can't lose heart. We can't lose heart with ourself when we see our sanctification taking so long. And we can't lose faith in God when we see this or that happening and we pray.

We want heaven. We want perfection. Now. But God is willing to wait. He's willing to wait. And so we need to learn to trust him.

[18:02] Trust him. Though it doesn't seem like your prayers are being answered. Though it doesn't seem like things are changing like you want them to. Trust him. Daniel and Israel would have to wait seventy sevens before the long expected Messiah would come.

Before the fullness of time. But in the fullness of time as Paul said the Messiah did come. He was born in a small town to a peasant girl.

And for thirty years he lived quietly and hardly anyone knew about him. He didn't do anything spectacular. He worked a job and he took care of his mom.

And he went to the synagogue and then finally he came to the river to be baptized. And the spirit came upon him. And from that point on he preached the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Repent. And just like that just like that the branch the branch of David bloomed. All the promises came true.

[19:12] The kingdom of God that Israel and Daniel had been looking for started to happen. And all the promises came true. And so we need to learn to trust God even though it takes a while.

It takes a long time. It doesn't seem like it's ever going to happen. Wait. Trust. God's timetable might be a lot bigger than ours. And so that's the good news.

All the things Daniel you're hoping for they're going to happen. So we've seen the context. We've seen the good news. Now we see God's surprising method.

And that's the end part. God's surprising method. God moves in mysterious ways. And that's what we see in this passage. We see it here. So how are all these things in verse 24?

The finishing of transgression the putting of end to send all the rest. How are those things going to happen? Well first he says the 77's this time period it's going to be broken down into three parts.

[20:13] it's not all going to happen at once. It's going to take time to unravel. And so the first seven the first seven sevens we'll say it's for the rebuilding of the temple in the city.

And that's what happened. Darius issued a decree and the exile started to return to Jerusalem. And they started rebuilding the temple.

that's what David or Daniel had prayed for. There were delays. There were starts and stops.

Nehemiah came and Ezra came and they worked on rebuilding the city.

And about a hundred years after Daniel came the city was rebuilt with streets and a trench. And then for years and years sixty two sevens that's a pretty long time.

Nothing much happened. It was rebuilt but it was in a time of trouble. Gabriel says it will be rebuilt but it will be in times of trouble.

[21:23] And there were wars and there were invasions and Judah passed from one empire to another and briefly they gained their independence and there was hope in that time but they lost it soon enough it was a time of trouble and that's all there really is to say.

But then at the end as the sixty nine seventh the sixty nine out of seventy sevens are passed the anointed one comes.

So you see that after the seven and the sixty two the anointed one will come the Messiah that Christ came and he came with grace and truth but what happened what happened to him well this is a great surprise he's cut off he's cut off and he had nothing or he had no one he was cut off from his people and so Jesus was cut down he was cut off from his people he was taken outside of the city outside of the camp and he died under the curse of God to be cut off from God's people is to die under the curse of God and Daniel predicts that Christ when he comes he will be cut off and then there's going to be two effects two things are going!

from that cutting the second is it will destroy the city first it would establish a covenant it says in verse 27 he will confirm a covenant with many for one seven in the middle of the seven he will put an end to sacrifice and offering so what happened when Christ died when the anointed one died under the curse of God he established the new covenant the thing that Daniel longed for Christ death established it it became the guarantee of God's promise it became the way that sin was atoned for and there was forgiveness forever where there was everlasting righteousness brought in it's where we would get new hearts where he would put his law in us and so that we wouldn't break the covenant and so

Christ death confirmed that covenant it made it strong and so Daniel's prayer is going to be answered in a very surprising way Daniel I don't think could have ever imagined this being the way that the new covenant came in that the Messiah would die the anointed one would be cut off and so because there was no more sin because sin was done away with it was finished there was no more need for sacrifice and offering so in the end in the middle he takes away sacrifice and offering and so at his death the temple curtain was torn in two and now no longer do people have to go up to Jerusalem to offer up their sacrifices in order to be accepted to God that way is forever!

[24:48] done with because now we enter into the heavenly temple through of Christ and so all the pictures are swallowed up in reality all the shadows give way to the brilliant light of the gospel and so all those things are done away with when Christ comes and when he dies but it's it's even more surprising how would this covenant come into effect well it would be by his own people rejecting him and when they reject him they bring themselves under judgment so how did the new covenant come into effect well his people rejected him so why was Jesus crucified well the leaders rejected him the stone the builders rejected has become the capstone and the people his own people cut him off they cried out crucify him and

Pilate said well on what grounds why am I going to crucify him and they cried all the louder crucify him crucify him and finally they said let his blood be on our heads so could Daniel ever imagine in a million years that this was the way it's going to be the people that he prayed for the people that he was longing the people that he loved the city that anointed one and their stubbornness would lead many to life so now the gospel goes to the Gentiles and so the Gentiles all over the world are flooding into the kingdom of God but they themselves they would be destroyed and that's what we see the people in verse 26 the people of the ruler who will come so who's the ruler to come it's Christ it's the anointed one his people will destroy the city and the sanctuary they will destroy the city and the sanctuary yeah by their own disobedience their own disobedience their own rejection of the Messiah would put them into the place of judgment it would put them right back to where they were in Daniel's day destroyed scattered city temple and ashes they would destroy themselves just like they did before and in the end it's right back where it was desolation Daniel prayed in verse 18 you can look give your oh God in here open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your name and

God answered but there's more desolation to come there's more to come and that's clearly the point of verse 27 and the end it's very difficult to translate it's hard to know exactly who is doing what and what exactly is going on and I don't want to go into all the detail of all the possibilities but to just say thankfully we don't have to make actually the decision because Jesus actually teaches us how to understand this verse in Matthew chapter 24 he's talking about the destruction of Jerusalem he's

talking about it and of the temple specifically and he said this so when you see standing in the holy place the temple the abomination that causes desolation spoken of through the prophet Daniel let the reader understand so let the reader of

Daniel understand this then those then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains so when when Jesus says so when you see the abomination of that Daniel talked about the thing to do is to flee to the mountains because the city is about to be destroyed and so the point is just like before the enemies would march on Jerusalem they would surround it and eventually they would overrun it and they would defile the temple and that's exactly what happened in 70 AD the Romans under Titus surrounded the city and they eventually broke in and they entered the temple and they planted their Roman eagles their signs of idolatrous power these abominations these things that were in worship to Rome and they planted them in the temple and then they completely desolated the city what had happened when Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and led them into exile it was going to happen again because they didn't recognize the time of

[30:07] God's coming to them remember how Jesus wept for Jerusalem Jerusalem Jerusalem you who killed the prophets and stoned those sent to you how often have I long to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings but you are not willing look your house is left to you desolate so what have we seen well after a long time God would bring in the new covenant he would bring it in for his people and it would happen in a very surprising way the Messiah!

would be cut off the ruler to come would be cut off and that's surprising but his own people would do it and that's even more surprising and the result would be a new covenant the result would be Jerusalem destroyed so the kingdom of God would go to the nations remember Daniel has prophesied about this the Lord has shown him the vision that the kingdom of God is going to grow and fill the whole earth that is still going to happen but the surprising thing is Jerusalem and the Jews are going to have very little to do with it because of their rejection so the question is who but God could have planned something like that could have thought this idea up so is that the end of the story is that the end of God's dealings with the Jews I think we have an answer in Romans chapter 11 if you could turn over there I just want to read this passage and I think it kind of makes when we put these two passages together it kind of gives us some clarity because one speaks to the other Paul asked that exact question so the Jews they've rejected the Messiah they've stumbled are they past being brought back look at chapter 11 verse 11 again I ask did they the Jews did they stumble as those to fall beyond recovery not at all rather because of their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious but if their transgression means riches for the world and their loss means riches for the Gentiles how much greater riches will their fullness bring so is

Daniel 9 the end of the story I think Paul says no and he goes on look at verse 25 Israel has experienced this is the middle of the verse Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in and so all Israel will be saved as it is written the deliverer will come from Zion he will turn godlessness away from Jacob and this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins as far as the gospel is concerned their enemies on your account but as far as election is concerned they are loved on the account of the patriarchs for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable sorry I'm going to stumble over this irrevocable just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a

God will have mercy on the Jews again and it's by this twisted path of leaving the Gentiles out for years and years and now watching the Jews be hardened for years and years as they reject their Messiah it's by that twisted path that God is taking both Jews and Gentiles until they're all forced to say we're only here because of mercy we're only here because of mercy we've done everything to deserve wrath the Gentiles could say for thousands of years we've ignored the Lord we deserve nothing but wrath and the Jews are going to say for thousands of years we've rejected our Messiah we deserve nothing but wrath but he has given us mercy so praise him and all that leads to Paul saying oh the depths of the riches of the wisdom and understanding or the wisdom and knowledge of

[35:25] God so who would have thought such a plan his paths are beyond tracing out who has known the mind of the Lord or who has been his counselor now how does all this apply to you well Daniel 9 is meant to teach us wisdom and it does so by just showing by showing us just how small our minds and our view and our understanding of God really is the Jews couldn't believe that the

humble meek man was the Messiah but he was and brothers and sisters we can't judge God by our feeble brains and our limited ideas God calls us to trust him God may walk through the sea but his footsteps are for our good his ways may be unexplainable but they are good and so

I don't know what troubles you all of you I don't know where that point in your life where you are saying I don't understand why this is happening I don't see how this could be good or you're saying oh Lord how long how long is this going to be but wherever that point is here's hope because God's ways don't have to make perfect sense to us for them to be good for us and you don't know how you don't have to know the end from the beginning because God knows the end from the beginning your father knows the end from the beginning and so you don't have to see around every crooked corner in your life because your father who rules over all who is on high sees around every corner God's ways ways are past finding out but they are gracious ways they're good ways and so we can trust him let's pray our heavenly father we take our place at your feet and say teach us

Lord your word is difficult in some places and yet we know that all scripture is pointing to Jesus Christ in one way or the other and so if nothing else was right or true today will you help us to see Jesus Lord thank you that you are on high that your ways are unexplainable we can't even begin to understand the things that you do so much of the time and yet we don't criticize you we don't want to say Lord what are you doing we want to take our place and confess your ways are past ours your mind and your understanding is beyond measure and so you are worthy to be praised You are a God who is above us and we are glad of that we are glad that you are a

God who is for us thank you that you brought your son in the fullness of time to be our savior to atone for wickedness to bring in everlasting righteousness thank you you that all of the hopes and dreams of all the years were met in him and so when we have the Lord Jesus we have everything we need I pray Lord that we would trust you because you have loved us that we would trust you in the hard things of life because you sent your son to die for us and if you would go to such lengths a greater view of Christ a greater view of yourself as we go away from here that we would live our life for your glory that we would live our life depending upon you and not upon ourselves and our own ideas I ask these things in

Jesus name Amen Amen Let's stand and sing hymn 21 God moves in mysterious ways