

Series: The End Of The World As We Know It | **Title:** Turn To The Lord |

Scripture: Daniel 9:1-23 ESV

Follow Along/Take Notes: Back of the worship guide or in the church app

Opening Line: We are in week three of our series 'The End Of The World As We Know It'. I strongly encourage you to go back and watch or listen to the previous messages in this series. I believe it they will help lay the foundation for how we as Christians should approach this conversation about the end of the world and the return of Christ.

- I want to start this message by reading the Word together.

Scripture: Daniel 9:1-23 NLT

Introduction: This chapter is one of the most famous chapters of biblical prophecy. There is so much prophetic richness backed into these verses. And when we talk about the end times or the second coming of Christ, it can become easy to get caught up in the details.

- Who is the anti-Christ? What name does 666 spell out? Is America, China, or Russia being talked about in Revelation? Can I accidentally get the mark of the beast? What are all of these dates and lengths of time about?
- While some of these fascinations are important, we have to make sure as followers of Christ they aren't the primary purpose for these prophetic writings.
 - o The prophecies about the return of Christ are not meant to scratch a supernatural itch by predicting and explaining future events.
 - o The purpose of these Scriptures are to turn people to the Lord!

Supporting Thought: The Purpose Of The Scriptures Are To Turn Us To The Lord.

In the chapter we just read, Daniel cries out to the Lord in repentance. Asking for forgiveness and restoration, not just from his sins, but the sins of Israel.

- What was it that pushed Him towards this act of repentance? It was the word of God!

Read: Daniel 9:2-3 NLT

Right here, we see Daniel meditating on the Word of God, reading the book of Jeremiah.

- He is in his daily devotion.

And in the middle of his devotion, the Holy Spirit taught Daniel what Jeremiah meant in Jeremiah 25.

- And this realization wasn't just special knowledge given to Daniel to make him a "superior believer" or some unique perspective, it was given to him so he could turn his eyes back to the Lord!

These prophetic words of Daniel about the end of the world are meant to turn us to the Lord, not satisfy our curiosity of the future.

- Before these words become prescriptive about the future, they must become personal for us.

Question: When was the last time you asked yourself how the return of Christ will affect you?

- How would you be affected if Jesus returned tomorrow? Would you be ready?
- Daniel, a prophet of the Lord, still felt the need to turn to the Lord in repentance and prayer! And you and I must do the same thing.

Supporting Thought: Turn To The Lord In Prayer.

When you and I start thinking about the prophetic words about Christ's return, and the reality that He could come at any moment, we must immediately turn to the Lord in prayer!

- **Prayer is a spiritual sacrifice to the Lord.**

Prayer, especially repentance, is you laying down your thoughts, your passions, your fears, your faults, and your sin on the altar of God and offering everything you have inside you to the Lord.

We see this beautiful prayer that Daniel prayed that shows us just how we should turn to the Lord in prayer.

- When we pray, we recognize who we are praying to (v. 4)
- We confess our sin (v.5-13)
- We realize God's justness (v. 14)

Not only that, but we also pray for others.

- Daniel didn't just pray for himself, but for all of Israel. He knew that God's judgment was just and fair, but he didn't want anyone to miss out on God's deliverance and salvation from the Babylonians.

When you begin to think about Christ's return, and what it truly means, it should immediately drop us to our knees as we confess our sin to the Lord, and cry out for his mercy, his grace, his righteousness and justness!

- Not spending our time trying to figure out if Jesus is returning before the tribulation or after, and how long until the anti-Christ reveals himself, and who the dragon with seven heads and 10 horns is, and all of these other prophetic interpretations.
- Turn to the Lord in prayer!

What we do know is this: that we are living in the last days. Our time is short before Christ returns.

- Verse 1 says that "Jerusalem must lie desolate for 70 years."
- For Jeremiah and Daniel, this was a literal 70 years that God said Israel would be in captivity within Babylon before they are released and Jerusalem will be rebuilt.
- And Daniel knew the 70 years was coming to an end. He was truly in the last days!

But, 70 years also has prophetic meaning. 70 years also means "a generation".

- So we know that Jerusalem will lie desolate for "a generation".
 - o Or, a short period of time.
 - o Right now, we are living in that time. We, as humanity are living in the last days!

- Maybe not a little 70 years, but in the last days leading up to Christ's return.

So we must pray. But we don't pray in vein.

Supporting Thought: When You Turn To The Lord, The Lord Moves!

Read: Daniel 9:21-23 NLT

There truly is power in your prayers!

- Because the moment you begin to pray, commands are given!
- The moment you fall on your face before the Lord, when you turn to Him and you have no other place to turn to or place your hope in, the Lord begins to move!

He has millions upon millions of angels at his disposal, commanding them in the supernatural realm to come to your aid and to answer your prayers.

- The Holy Spirit begins to work in your situation, bringing about healing and restoration that only He can provide.
 - o All because you turned to the Lord, and placed your faith and hope entirely in Him!

You may be thinking this morning, but why would God do that?

- Why would He send out a command to answer my prayer?
 - o I'm not worthy, I don't deserve it! Look at verse 23 again.

Read: Daniel 9:23b

Final Thought: You Are Precious To God.

Think about it. If you weren't precious to God:

- Why would he give us prophetic insight into the future?
- Why would he tell us to get our souls ready because He is returning to redeem those who have placed their faith in Him?
- Why would He explain how we would know that Jesus' return is almost here?
- Why would He answer our prayers on this earth until we get to be with Him in eternity?

The answer is simple: because you are precious to Him.

- God loves you. He cares about you.
 - o Your pain, hurt, sorrow, physical body, your emotions, your relationships with others. He cares about your life here on earth, not just life in eternity.

You are precious to God, and when you turn to Him, give him everything you have, you will experience the overwhelming love and comfort of God.

Spiritual Response: I believe the Lord wants us to take the next few moments and turn to him.

- Turn to him in worship and in prayer.
- As we begin to worship to this song, I want to turn your prayer into a spiritual sacrifice before the Lord.
 - o That may mean coming up to the front to the altar, and laying your prayer or your worship before the Lord.
 - o And when you do that, get ready for God to move in your life!

Worship Song: Waymaker