Prayer Meeting – May 8, 2024

Focus: **Daniel 9**

I. The prayer of Daniel.

A. (Daniel 9:1-2) Introduction: Daniel's reason for prayer.

1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans— 2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.

1. ***Observed in the books:*** Daniel 9 is one of the most amazing and significant prophetic passages in the Bible, and it begins with Daniel's understanding and application of prophecy.

   a. Daniel observed in the books — the specific words recorded in God-inspired books. Daniel couldn't read 2 Timothy 3:16, but he did believe the truth of it: ***All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.***

   b. "Oh! That you studied your Bibles more! Oh! That we all did! How we could plead the promises! How often we should prevail with God when we could hold him to his word, and say, 'Fulfill this word unto thy servant, whereon thou hast caused me to hope.' Oh! It is grand praying when our mouth is full of God's word, for there is no word that can prevail with him like his own." (Spurgeon)

2. ***The number of the years which was revealed as the word of the Lord to Jeremiah:*** Daniel knew that effective prayer comes out of knowing and praying both God's word and our present circumstances. His study of prophecy showed him a specific number — the 70 years described in Jeremiah 25:11-13 and Jeremiah 29:10, and his knowledge of the times led him to know those passages applied to his time.

   Jeremiah 25:11-13 11 This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 12 'Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,' declares the Lord, 'for their iniquity, and the land of the

Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation. 13 I will bring upon that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book which Jeremiah has prophesied against all the nations.

Jeremiah 29:10 For thus says the Lord, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place.

a. It is important to note that Daniel regarded these as real, literal years. They were in no way understood as symbolic years.

b. Daniel was undoubtedly also familiar with Isaiah's prophecies concerning Cyrus (Isaiah 44:28-45:4). He must have been encouraged to see a man named Cyrus rise in power over Persia.

3. ***For the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years:*** Daniel believed that God would accomplish seventy years of captivity, yet he prayed passionately that God would do what He promised to do. Daniel knew that God's promises invite our prayers and participation. They do not exclude our prayers and participation.

   a. Daniel wanted to prevail in prayer, asking God to take the earliest possible starting point to determine the 70 years. He wanted God's mercy to come to Israel 18 years earlier rather than 18 years later.

4. ***In the first year of Darius:*** This was still three or four years before 70 years had passed from 605 B.C. This was not too soon for Daniel to begin praying. Daniel had the foresight to look ahead three or four years and to begin praying.

5. ***The word of the Lord to Jeremiah:*** Even in God's eternal decrees, God has an essential role for people to play. God's plan of the ages is declared, yet Jeremiah made a prophecy; Daniel made a prayer, and Cyrus made a proclamation.

   a. "Do not, I pray you, get into the habit of neglecting the assembling of yourselves together for prayer. How often have I said, 'All our strength lies in prayer'! When we were very few, God multiplied us in answer to prayer." (Spurgeon)

B. (Daniel 9:3) Daniel's preparation for prayer.

3 So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes.

1. ***I gave my attention:*** This implies determination in prayer. Daniel had a goal to reach through prayer, and he approached God as a man who would not be denied. He did this because he was rightly convinced that his prayer was in the will of God, and knew it was not motivated by any selfish desire.

2. ***To seek Him by prayer and supplications:*** Daniel wasn't passive as God's prophetic plan unfolded before him. In his approach to God he made a request, asking God to perform His promise in the way that Daniel thought would bring God most glory.

3. ***With fasting, sackcloth and ashes***: This reflected Daniel's humble heart in approaching God. Fasting, sackcloth, and ashes are emblems of humiliation and mourning.

    a. Daniel was determined to do whatever it took to get this job done in prayer. He "left nothing undone that might possibly make his prayer more effective or more persuasive." (Walvoord)

C. (Daniel 9:4-15) Daniel confesses the sin of his people, and glorifies the goodness and righteousness of God.

4 I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed and said, "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, 5 we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances. 6 Moreover, we have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes, our fathers and all the people of the land. 7 "Righteousness belongs to You, O Lord, but to us open shame, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of their unfaithful deeds which they have committed against You. 8 Open shame belongs to us, O Lord, to our kings, our princes and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. 9 To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him; 10 nor have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His teachings which He set before us through His servants the prophets. 11 Indeed all Israel has transgressed Your law and turned aside, not obeying Your voice; so

the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him. 12 Thus He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us and against our rulers who ruled us, to bring on us great calamity; for under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what was done to Jerusalem. 13 As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us; yet we have not sought the favor of the Lord our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth. 14 Therefore the Lord has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us; for the Lord our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done, but we have not obeyed His voice. 15 "And now, O Lord our God, who have brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and have made a name for Yourself, as it is this day—we have sinned, we have been wicked.

1. ***O Lord, the great and awesome God:*** Daniel began his prayer where we all should — by recognizing the greatness and goodness of God. Sometimes we approach God as if He were a stingy person who must be persuaded to give us anything. But Daniel knew the problem was not with God. God keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him.

2. ***We have sinned, committed iniquity:*** As Daniel confessed Israel's sin he prayed as if he were as bad as the rest of Israel. This was a confession of we, not they. In this sense, they prayers never really reach God; genuine we prayers see self correctly and see our fellow saints with compassion.

3. ***Righteousness belongs to You, O Lord, but to us open shame:*** Daniel knew that Israel's sin was not God's fault; God was utterly righteous and blameless. Any shame of face belonged to Israel, not to God.

4. ***Nor have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God:*** Daniel did not make the slightest excuse for Israel's sin. He knew the fault belonged to Israel and Israel alone. We are prone to make excuses for our sin and often even make excuses in our "confessions."

5. ***Thus He has confirmed His words … As it is written in the law of Moses:*** Daniel realized that even in His judgment against Israel, God was totally faithful to His Word. He promised that curses would come upon a disobedient Israel (in passages like Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28) and they did.

6. ***All this calamity has come on us; yet we have not sought the favor of the Lord our God:*** As Daniel confessed his sin and the sin of Israel, he remembered the sin of prayerlessness. Even when they faced great trial and calamity, Israel still did not make their prayer before the LORD. When we sense trial or difficulty, it should drive us immediately to prayer — when we are not so driven, it should be a wake-up call to the coldness of our heart.

7. ***O Lord our God, who have brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand:*** As Daniel prayed he remembered that the LORD delivered Israel from Egypt. He remembers the Old Testament standard of God's power, the deliverance from Egypt. The New Testament standard of God's power is the resurrection of Jesus (Ephesians 1:19-20***)***.

D. (Daniel 9:16-19) Daniel asks God to forgive and to restore Jerusalem.

16 O Lord, in accordance with all Your righteous acts, let now Your anger and Your wrath turn away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; for because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people have become a reproach to all those around us. 17 So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, and for Your sake, O Lord, let Your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary. 18 O my God, incline Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Your name; for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion. 19 O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name.".

1. ***Let now Your anger and Your wrath turn away from Your city Jerusalem:*** After his confession of Israel's sin and God's great righteousness, Daniel simply asked God to mercifully turn His kind attention to Jerusalem and the temple (cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary). He also asked that God would do this without delay (do not delay for your own sake).

2. ***O Lord, let Your face shine:*** This was the heart of Daniel's plea. He knew that God's people needed much, but all their need could be summed up in this: they need God's face to shine upon them.

3. ***For Your sake, O Lord, let Your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary … For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay:*** Daniel's prayer was consumed with the glory of God, not primarily with the benefit

of man. His purpose in prayer was to see God's work accomplished and His cause glorified.

4. ***We are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion:*** Even before the time of the New Testament, Daniel prayed on firm New Testament ground. His confidence wasn't in his goodness, but in God's goodness.

5. ***O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action!:*** Daniel prayed like a great wrestler, eager to gain an advantage. He sensed God's openness to each request and he responded with many rapid requests.

II. Gabriel brings the answer to Daniel's prayer.

A. (Daniel 9:20-21) Daniel's prayer is interrupted by an angelic visit.

20 Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my God, 21 while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering.

1. ***Now while I was speaking and praying:*** This dramatic answer to prayer came even as Daniel prayed. Jesus said, your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him (Matthew 6:8). Whenever there seems to be a delay in answer to prayer, there is reason for the delay. When it is right to do it, God can answer prayer immediately.

    a. ***Sometimes God answers prayer even before we pray. It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear (Isaiah 65:24)***.

2. ***About the time of the evening offering:*** This was a special time of day, when Moses offered the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:6) and when Jesus was crucified (Matthew 27:45).

B. (Daniel 9:22-23) Gabriel announces that he has come to bring Daniel an answer to his prayer.

22 He gave me instruction and talked with me and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding. 23 At

the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed; so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision.

1. ***I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding:*** In his prayer, Daniel didn't ask for understanding. His prayer demonstrated that his heart was close to God's heart, so as a friend, God revealed many things to Daniel (John 15:15).

2. ***For you are highly esteemed:*** Both Daniel and the Apostle John (John 13:23) were noted for their love-relationship with God. Both Daniel and John were also noted for receiving amazing prophetic messages.

III. The prophecy of the Seventy Weeks.

A. (Daniel 9:24) Seventy weeks are determined for the Jews and Jerusalem and what will be accomplished in the seventy weeks.

24 "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place.

1. ***Seventy weeks have been decreed:*** There is almost universal agreement among Bible scholars and commentators that this refers to seventy sets of seven years, or weeks of years.

2. ***For your people and your holy city:*** The seventy weeks were focused upon Daniel's people (the Jews) and his holy city (Jerusalem).

3. ***To finish the transgression:*** This says that transgression itself will be finished. Taken literally, this means establishing an entirely new order on earth, with an end to man's rebellion against God.

4. ***To make an end of sin:*** Taking these words at face value, this means not only the end of the guilt of sin, but an end of sin itself. It means to "seal up" or to "restrain" sins. This looks to a new, redeemed world.

5. ***To make atonement for iniquity:*** Man's iniquity must be reconciled to God's justice and holiness. This work was clearly accomplished at the cross.

6. ***To bring in everlasting righteousness:*** One might take this in an individual sense, but there have always been righteous individuals. Taking

the statement at face value, this means a new order of society brought in by the Messiah.

7. ***To seal up vision and prophecy:*** This speaks of both the ending and fulfillment of prophecy, concluding the final stage of human history and culminating with the reign of the Son of God.

8. ***To anoint the most holy place:*** Taken at its simple, literal meaning, this refers to a place, not a person. There is a most holy place — the most holy place of the temple — that will be anointed and blessed.

B. (Daniel 9:25) The course and dividing of the seventy weeks.

25 So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.

1. ***From the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem:*** Here Gabriel revealed to Daniel the starting point for the seventy-weeks prophecy. There was a command to restore and build Jerusalem in history that started this specific period of time.

   a. Artaxerxes made a decree giving Nehemiah permission, safe passage and supplies to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the city and the walls in 445 B.C. (Nehemiah 2:1-8).

2. ***Until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks:*** Gabriel's message to Daniel was simple and striking. 483 years — that is, 69 units of seven years — would pass from the time of the command recorded in Nehemiah 2:1-8 until the appearance of Messiah the Prince.

3. ***Until Messiah the Prince:*** Taking Anderson's calculations as reliable, we see a remarkable fulfillment of prophecy. A Gentile king made a decree and 483 years later to the day, Jesus presented Himself as Messiah the Prince to Israel.

4. ***It will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress:*** This indicates that the rebuilding of the streets and wall of Jerusalem would happen in the first seven weeks mentioned. Then would follow another 62 weeks of years until the coming of Messiah the Prince.

C. (Daniel 9:26) What happens after the first sixty-nine weeks.

26 Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.

1. ***After the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off:*** The Biblical term cut off is sometimes used to describe execution (see Genesis 9:11 and Exodus 31:14). Gabriel told Daniel that the Messiah will be cut off for the sake of others, not for Himself.

2. ***Will destroy the city and the sanctuary:*** After the Messiah was cut off, Jerusalem and her temple would be destroyed again by an overwhelming army (with a flood). Most all Bible scholars and commentators agree that this was fulfilled in the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

3. ***The people of the prince who is to come will destroy:*** The destroying army is made up of the people of the prince who is to come. This coming prince is described more in Daniel 9:27.

D. (Daniel 9:27) The events of the seventieth week.

27 And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

1. ***And he will make a firm covenant:*** The "he" Gabriel described is the prince who is to come mentioned in the previous verse. If we know that the prince's people destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70, then we know this coming prince has his ancestral roots in the soil of the ancient Roman Empire.

    a. Therefore, the prince who is to come will in some way be an heir to the Romans, even as the final world government is an heir to the Roman Empire (Daniel 7).

2. ***And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week:*** The coming prince will make a covenant with Israel for the final unit of seven years, completing the seventy weeks prophesied for the Jewish people and Jerusalem.

a. The word many here is a specific reference to Israel, not a general reference to a group. The ancient Hebrew says, "covenant with the many."

b. With this covenant Israel will embrace the Antichrist as a political messiah, if not the literal Messiah. Jesus predicted this in John 5:43: ***I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.***

c. Taking the description of what would be accomplished in the 70 Weeks from Daniel 9:24, we know that the 70 Weeks are not yet complete. Yet the events promised in the first 69 weeks are fulfilled, indicated that there is a lengthy "pause" in the 70 Weeks, between the 69th week and the 70th week. The 70th week will begin when the coming prince shall confirm a covenant with the Jewish people. These gaps or pauses in prophecy may seem strange to us, but they are common. Comparing Isaiah 9:6 and Luke 1:31-33 shows another significant pause or gap in prophecy regarding the coming of the Messiah.

3. ***In the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering:*** The coming prince will break the covenant with Israel in the middle of the seven years, the final week (period of seven years).

4. ***On the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate:*** The ending of sacrifice will come with abominations, followed by tremendous desolation.

5. ***Even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate:*** This breaking of the covenant and abomination of desolation has a promised consummation. Before the 70th week is completed, each of the things described in Daniel 9:24 will be accomplished and everlasting righteousness will reign.