

The Praying Prophet

Daniel 9:1-19

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There are three famous prayer chapters in the Old Testament that I wanted to mention. They are Ezra 9, Nehemiah 9, and Daniel 9—three 9s. I call them the three nines. (You outta write that down, look them up, and read them.) There are three ninth chapters in the Old Testament that have some of the greatest and grandest prayers in the Bible—again, Ezra 9, Nehemiah 9, and Daniel 9.

The chronology of this chapter is that it appears shortly after Daniel 5. As I pointed out a few weeks ago, the chronology of the chapters of the book of Daniel are not as we have them in our Bibles; that is, chapter 1, chapter 2, chapter 3 up to chapter 12, but they jump into different ways. I'll actually give you a list of that next week. What we're reading tonight would've taken place shortly after Belshazzar's drunken feast and the Babylonians fell to the Medo-Persian Empire, because I want you to notice in verses 1-2 the promptings of the prayer. It says, "In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans," which is a reference to Babylon. So, in the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, who was king of the Medo-Persian Empire is the timeframe for when this happened. In verse 2 it says, "In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood..." catch this "... by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem."

This is fascinating to me! Daniel is now up in years, some say he's 80, some say he's 90, actually (sorry about that) some say he's about 65. I think he's in his late 80s, getting close to his 90s. At this point, Daniel had received visions and dreams and all of these things that God had showed him, (catch this point) and was still a man of the Word. He was still a man who read his Bible as he possessed it in Babylon. It's not the same Bible entirely that we have, but he had the Old Testament scriptures in a scroll. They didn't have chapters and verses, so he doesn't mention Jeremiah 25, but Daniel was reading his Bible. The reason he was reading his Bible is because at the end of chapter 8 (I want you to notice there) he was given these visions. In this vision it really upset him. It says that "...he fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it." When Daniel received visions and dreams, they took its toll on him, and he was really shaken by them. The thing that moves me is that Daniel prayed. He got on his knees, opened his Bible, and sought the Lord. He didn't just rest on his knowledge, visions, and information, he dug into God's Word and wanted to know more. He was hungry for God to give him insight and understanding. I believe that Daniel was praying and wondering, "God, what is the future for the nation of Israel?" We will see this so clearly next week when we look at the 70-Years Prophecy or Seventy Sevens Prophecy of the nation of Israel.

Prophecy revolves around the nation of Israel. It is God's time clock, so to speak. If you remove Israel from the equation of Bible prophecy, you won't be able to understand it. It won't

make sense. All the other prophetic occurrences fit into God's relationship with dealing with the Gentile nations, the church, and Israel. Those are three separate groups that you have to piece together in prophecy. The Gentile nations, and we got those with Nebuchadnezzar's vision and the different animals depicting the different Gentile world powers; the church, which is not in view in the book of Daniel on your chart that I gave you. It's there, after the cross and before the rapture. It's a parenthesis that has now been over 2000 years, and God is bringing people together in the body of Christ, the bride of Christ—Jew and Gentile. Once that church is complete and caught up to be with the Lord, the last seven years of Daniel's prophecy that we get again next week will be fulfilled leading up to the Second Coming and then into the Kingdom Age or the Millennial reign of Christ. What I wanted to say, (I said all that to say this) is that Daniel was a student of the Bible. He was a student of the Scriptures. We never outgrow the need to study God's Word. "Well, I've been a Christian 40 years," or "I've already read the book of Daniel," or "I've already studied that before. I know all this." We never outgrow the need to continue to dig deeper into God's Word and gain more understanding.

Daniel had visions, yet he was also devoted to the Scriptures. They are referred to as, "...by books..." and in the books he discovered the number of years that the "...word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem." When we opened the book of Daniel, I pointed out that the people of Israel (actually known as Judah at that time, the southern kingdom) were carried away captive to Babylon because they had failed to give to God Sabbath years. You say, "What's the Sabbath year?" Every seven years they were instructed by God that the land of Israel was to lie fallow—you wouldn't harvest, plow, or plant it. You would let the ground rest, which actually turns out that it's good for the soil, but it was a Sabbath year. Every seven years they would take a year off. I kind of like that idea, don't you? Every seven years you get a year vacation. Then, every 50 years you get another vacation for a whole year. That was called the Year of Jubilee. Every seven years was the Sabbath year, and every 50th year was the Year of Jubilee.

The people of Israel just shined God on and said, "We don't care what God says. We're going to work the soil and we're going to grow our crops, and we're going to labor and do what we want to do." For actually 490 years, they failed to give God His Sabbath years. These numbers are significant. So, what God says, "You disobeyed Me. You've turned away from My commandments, as I said in My covenant with you, I'm going to have you be carried away captives. As you are carried away from your homeland, captive in Babylon, I'm going to get My 70 years." They owed God 70 years. It wasn't like God was just saying, "I want My 70 years, and I'm going to send you away so that I can have it." God also wanted to free the people of Israel from their idolatry. They had turned away from God and were worshipping idols. The Babylonian captivity completely freed Israel from their idolatry. Even in the time of Jesus, though they didn't recognize Him as their Messiah, they were not idolatrous. They were freed from idolatry from that Babylonian captivity.

We're going to go to Jeremiah in just a minute, and I'll show you what Jeremiah prophesied, but notice the reference to Jeremiah in verse 2. "...the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet," and said that the captivity they were experiencing (Daniel was one of the young men

who was taken away captive to Babylon) would last for 70 years. He's reading his Bible, he's reading Jeremiah, and discovers that it's almost time for the captivity to end. He realizes by the study of God's Word that it's about 68, 69, some say 67 years within a few years, but he knew that it was getting close to when their captivity would be over. Because of that he wanted to know, "Then what? What is God going to do with Israel?" He would start to pray, and God would give him this revelation of these 70 weeks of Daniel.

Turn with me to Jeremiah (turn left in your Bible to the book of Jeremiah) 25, and I'll show you what I'm talking about. There are two places in Jeremiah where the 70 years is mentioned—Jeremiah 25 and 29. Let's look at Jeremiah 25:8. "Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts," which is Jehovah Sabaoth. Unless I forget when we go back to Daniel 9, the only place in the book of Daniel where the LORD is called Jehovah—LORD all capitals, which is the covenant name of God—is in Daniel 9. It is the only place that the word Jehovah (the covenant name of God) is used in the book of Daniel. It's dealing with Israel as a nation and His covenants with them. In Jeremiah 25:8, "Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts," Jehovah Sabaoth, the Lord of angels, "Because ye have not heard my words, 9 Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations. 10 Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle. 11 And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years." There it is. This is what Daniel was reading. What a fascinating thought to think that the same book of Jeremiah that we read, Daniel was reading. Daniel was living it out. He was in Babylon and he's reading Jeremiah 25, (which wasn't Jeremiah 25 it was just part of the scroll) and he realized that their captivity was almost over. That's why Daniel got so excited and began to pray.

Go back with me to Daniel 9. This is the promptings of the prayer. He realized it was 70 years of desolations and that God would through Cyrus give them permission to leave Babylon and go back to Jerusalem under Ezra the priest, Zerubbabel, and Nehemiah and rebuild the city of Jerusalem. Just another little interesting thought; that is, Daniel read in the Bible that God promised that the captivity would be 70 years, yet he didn't just kind of kick back and say, "Okay, God said it. It's going to happen—nothing for me to do." He believed that he could participate by praying.

Some people think that because of the sovereignty of God we need not pray—that we can't play a part or we have no role or we have no involvement. Take, for example, people's salvation. God is going to save whomever He will save. God elects some and chooses some. If they're going to be chosen, God's going to save them no matter what so why pray, why evangelize, why preach the gospel? We really see here an example of how Daniel realized that he needed to pray, seek the Lord, and be involved in this process rather than just kicking back saying, "God promised it. It'll happen." God wants us to pray. I believe that the God who ordains the end, the salvation of sinners, has ordained the means to that end—that we pray, we

preach, and we reach out and offer them the gospel of Jesus Christ. God has ordained the end, their salvation, but God has ordained the means to that end that we pray and participate in bringing them to Jesus Christ.

We move from verses 1-2, the promptings of prayer, to verses 3-6, the penitence in his prayer mixed with some worship as well. He says (verse 3), "And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: And I prayed unto the LORD," notice whenever you have "LORD" (all capitals) that is Jehovah or Yahweh. He prayed unto Jehovah "my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; 5 We," Daniel says, "have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: 6 Neither have we," Daniel includes himself "hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land."

Daniel was a man in the Bible that was presented with a spotless character. There are few Bible characters that are presented in such a way that they really don't name, mention, or point out any sins or mistakes that they ever made. We know that they had them. We know that they weren't perfect—there's only one Person that ever lived that never sinned. You know Who that was, right? Jesus Christ. No one without suffering but only one without sin. That's Jesus Christ. Yet, Daniel is a man who repented and confessed his sins. He uses that personal pronoun there in the plural "we." He includes himself. Usually when we're praying we're like, "Lord, those sinners. Those wicked people," or "This America is so bad. Lord, just heal our nation. Just cause people to quit sinning." Instead of, "Lord, we have sinned. We have turned away from You. We have thrown Your law behind our backs. We've disregarded Your Word." So, verse 3, "...by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes," here's another point I want to make. This is perhaps one of the most important. Don't miss it.

Bible study and prayer go together. It's not enough just to study your Bible. You gotta get on your knees and ask God to make it alive and real in your heart and life and help you to live it out. Sunday morning, when we taught through the book of Colossians, Paul prayed for the believers in Colossae, that they would have spiritual knowledge and understanding in wisdom and the things of God. He then prayed that they would walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work. He goes from knowledge to walking worthy. Daniel gets the Bible, opens it up, and he studies. What does it do? It motivates him to get on his knees and pray. Bible study and prayer go together. Effective Bible study is when we pray while we're studying, before we study, and as a result of our Bible study it forces us to get on our knees and pray that God would make it real and alive in our own lives.

Notice Daniel's prayer was coupled with humility and confession. This is seen in his fasting, supplications, sackcloth was a sign of mourning, and the spreading of ashes (verse 3) over himself. He confessed his sin. He said, "O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to..." he acknowledged that God keeps His promises and that God is a God of mercy "...to them that love him, and to them that keeps his commandments." Notice

that he says (verse 5), "We have sinned." That expression is used all through this chapter. It's used in verses 8, 11, and 15. "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: 6 Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land."

I'd love to hear a President pray this prayer over the United States. I would love to have a President that feared the Lord and honored God and His Word. Can you imagine this being prayed at a Presidential Inauguration? It'd be an amazing prayer! Calling out to God. The prophets that they rejected would include Isaiah and Jeremiah, who Daniel would have lived in the time of Jeremiah, who prophesied in Judah just before the Babylonian captivity. He told them, "You're going to be taken captive. You're going to go to Babylon. Rest and just await because it'll be 70 years and then God will bring you back."

I want you to notice the particulars of the prayer (verses 7-15). Daniel is still praying and says, "O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee," he's been a captive in Babylon for almost his entire adult life. He was a young teenaged boy and a God-fearing man, but he wasn't bitter or angry toward God that this happened to him. He wasn't saying, "God, why did you let this happen to me? I didn't do anything wrong. It's not fair. Why should I pay for other people's sins?" He acknowledges freely (verse 7) that God is righteous, "but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee," that is, violating and breaking God's laws. "O Lord," (verse 8) "to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee," again acknowledging his sin with the other nation. "To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; 10 Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. 11 Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. 12 And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. 13 As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil has come upon us; yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. 14 Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice. 15 And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and has gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly."

I want you to notice that Daniel acknowledges that they had sinned, but notice in verse 9, "To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses," that's a beautiful prayer. "God, we don't come to You because we deserve it. We deserve the punishment and the judgment that has come upon us. We're asking You for mercy." You've probably heard it before, but grace is God

giving us what we don't deserve. Mercy is God not giving us what we do deserve, so we want God to be gracious. We want God to give us what we don't deserve, but we want God to be merciful and for God not to give us what we do deserve. What do we deserve? We deserve judgment. We deserve hell. We deserve death, and so we pray for mercy. "God, don't give me what I deserve." Daniel acknowledges that God is merciful and forgives. He mentions (verse 11) that Israel has "transgressed thy law," stepped over the line "...by departing that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us," he mentions this curse (verse 11) and then in verse 13, "As it is written in the law of Moses." What curse is he talking about?

In Deuteronomy 30 Moses gave what are called the "blessings and the cursings." The "blessings" are if you keep My word, My commandments, and you serve, obey, follow, and love Me—what is going to come upon you is blessings. The cursings were if you disobey, disregard, and turn away from Me—you will be cursed. That was the covenant God made with the nation of Israel. It was premised upon their keeping God's laws and obeying God's commands—either blessings or cursings. They pronounced that there upon the nation of Israel. That is what Jeremiah is referring back to, what is known as the "blessings and the cursings" given by Moses, which is the law of retribution—what you sow you reap. It's not karma, by the way, it's the law of retribution—what you plant in the ground comes up. You sow to the flesh, you reap corruption. You disobey God, you reap what you've sown.

I meet people all the time whose lives are just a mess because they've sown to the flesh. I know that sometimes ignorantly and foolishly you maybe aren't a believer and you live in darkness and God can forgive your sins, but a lot of times what we've sown is still going to come to harvest. Sometimes we want to sow our wild oats and we pray that God won't let them come to harvest. "Lord, just kill them in the ground. Don't let them come to harvest." Do you know that God forgives your sins but the consequences can remain? You need to be careful. If you want a blessed life, it's just the law of retribution, walk in obedience. Honor God. Put Him first in your life.

If I were speaking to young people that still had a lot of life to live ahead of them I'd say, "Look, it's an easy thing. Just love the Lord, obey Him, and walk with Him. You'll have a blessed life!" It won't be smooth, and it may not be everything you want, but you'll be blessed. God will take care of you. God's ways are good and perfect! God will honor and bless you. Don't marry out of the will of God. What do I mean by that? The Bible says, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." I meet people that have so many problems because they disobeyed God—they were a Christian and they married a non-Christian. If you're a child of God and you marry a child of the devil, you're going to have problems with your new father-in-law. It ain't gonna work! You get married and, "Let's go to church." "I don't want to go to church." "Let's pray. Let's give some money to the Lord's work." "You're not giving any of our money to the Lord's work!" "Let's tell our kids about Jesus." "You're not going to tell our kids about Jesus." I mean, think about that. Where are your values? Where are your priorities? It spills out in so many different areas—don't lie, don't steal, don't cheat, don't commit adultery, don't covet. Just take the Ten Commandments and do those. We're going to do a series on Sunday mornings through the Ten Commandments. We're going to take 11 weeks looking at the Ten

Commandments—God's Laws That Liberate—not to be accepted by God but to be blessed. God's laws are good and righteous. They reflect His character. If you want to have a blessed life just be obedient to God.

Israel was suffering righteously, but God have mercy on us and forgive us! We have not "obeyed (verse 10) the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets...we have transgressed," (verse 11) and as a result we have reaped what we have sown, the curse that Moses predicted in the book of Deuteronomy has come upon us because (verse 12) God keeps His Word. "And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us." What God said would happen has indeed happened. So, he says, "And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly." In verse 14, he acknowledges the righteousness of God. In verse 15 he says, "But God, we are Your people."

By the way, Daniel is pleading the promises of God. God had made promises that even if they sinned and were carried away that God wouldn't forget them. God would heal and restore them (we're going to see in Jeremiah 29 in just a second). He's actually praying pleading the promises of God. That's one of the most effective ways to pray. Find something God as promised, make sure that you meet the conditions of that promise, and then plead that promise on your behalf. The prayer here is, "God, you promised, so we ask You to take care of us because You brought us (verse 15) "forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand," he's referring to the Exodus, "and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly." "God, we've shamed You, but we want You to get honor for what You've done."

In closing (verses 16-19), we have the petitions—the particular petitions that Daniel gets in. Up to this point it has been mostly confession of sin. In verses 16-19, he begins to petition God (and I'll point them out). He says, "O Lord, according to all thy righteousness," again acknowledging that God is righteous, "I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. 17 Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. 18 O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. 19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name."

I can just hear the emotion in Daniel's voice as he prayed. I can picture Daniel prostrate on the ground face down before God, ashes and sackcloth, repenting and calling out to the Lord. I want you to note in verse 16 that he prays, "...according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee," here's the petition, "let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain." "First of all, God, what I want You to do is turn away Your anger; turn away Your judgment from upon us." The second petition (verse 17) he says, "hear the prayer of thy

servant, and his supplications.” “God, turn away Your anger and wrath and hear us right now.” Thirdly, he says (verse 17), “...cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord’s sake.” “Lord, we pray that You will turn Your anger. We pray that You will open Your ear and eyes to hear and see. We pray that You will shine Your face upon Your sanctuary.”

Fourthly, (verse 18) Daniel says, “...incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations.” “Lord, will You look upon us? Will You see? God, will You be mindful of us?” Lastly, “... for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.” That is so amazing to me! Daniel, this righteous man beloved of the Lord, is saying, “I’m not pleading because I’m somebody special. I’m not pleading because I deserve or merit this or because I’m a wonderful prophet of God. I plead this because You are a God of mercy and righteousness. You’re a God who forgives and saves.” He’s not only pleading the promises but is calling on God to be consistent with the very nature of who He is. This is a real heart-felt prayer. It’s not us, but it’s God’s glory. It’s Your mercies. In verse 19, as he closes, “O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake,” “God, we’re praying for Your glory and for Your name’s sake, “O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.” I love the fact that Daniel is reminding God that they belong to God.

Do you know when you have a problem it’s really God’s problem? Do you know when you’re going through a difficulty, you belong to God? God needs to take care of that. “God, I’m Your child. I belong to You. You promised to take care of me. You promised to never leave me. You promised to never forsake me. You promised to provide for me. You promised to protect me. Lord, take care of me.”

I’ve shared with you that many years ago I was kidnapped in Los Angeles at gunpoint. I’ve had the unique experience of being abducted by gunpoint, forced into the car, (I was with two other guys, and three of us were kidnapped) by two guys with guns. We were driven around for a couple of hours and threatened to kill us. You know, that night I prayed like Daniel. I’ve never prayed so fervently, so sincerely, so earnestly, so humbly to the Lord. One of the things I was praying is, “Lord, we belong to You. We are Your children. We are serving You. Lord, we’re on Your mission.” We were on our way to Australia to do some preaching. “Lord, we’re going over there to preach. I’m supposed to speak at a conference, and if I get killed I can’t do that. Lord, this is Your problem, God. Check it out, Lord. Do You know what’s going on? Do You see what’s happening here?” I’m just calling and crying out to the Lord. It’s so similar to Daniel’s prayer here. He’s just, “O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord...” then he closes with “...thy people...” he reminds God that it’s Your city, they are Your people, and it’s all about Your name. “God, You don’t want to be looked at as a God who can’t take care of us. Lord, You don’t want people to say, ‘Aha, look at the God of Israel. He couldn’t take care of His people or provide for them.’” He is beseeching God.

One of the purposes of prayer (as we wrap this up) is God’s glory. The purpose of prayer is not to get our will done on earth, it’s to get God’s will done in heaven. “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” The purpose of prayer isn’t to get things and to make you rich. The purpose of prayer isn’t necessarily to change things. The purpose of prayer is to align

yourself with the plan, purpose, and will of God. You say, "Why pray?" Because God allows us to participate. I love E. Stanley Jones' illustration. Imagine yourself in a little rowboat, a little tiny rowboat on the lake. You're rowing over by the edge of the lake and you take from the boat and throw out an anchor. It hooks on shore. Then, you grab the rope as you're in the rowboat and pull on the rope. What happens? Do I pull the shore to myself or do I pull myself to the shore? Obviously, I don't pull the shore to myself. I don't reach out and hook the shore and pull it to me. I pull the boat towards the shore. That's exactly what prayer is! When you pray, you're not pulling God to your will. You don't have God's arm up behind His back, "Okay, God. You give it to me or I'm gonna bust Your arm." "Okay, okay, okay! I give! You can have the new Maserati or Porsche or whatever you want. You want \$1 million, I'll give it to you just let Me go." That's not what prayer is all about.

Prayer is aligning my will with God's. It's like time exposure to God. I believe a lot of times when we start to pray, God knows that we're not ready for the answer to our prayers, so He lets us just keep praying until we are broken, humble, and just call out to Him. Then, when He knows our hearts are right, the time is right, and we're ready, then He answers our prayers. He'll never answer our prayers unless it's aligned with His will. If you're smart, if you're really smart, you'll want God's will when you pray. I know that's hard. "O God, but I really want to marry him. He's so cute!" "The dude's a heathen. What do you mean you want to marry him?" You say, "Yeah, but look at his physique. Look at the cool car he drives." "Lord, I really want that house. Oh, that's my dream house. I really want that house!" Prayer is just saying, "God, this is what I pray but, Lord, thy will not mine be done. I just want to align my will with Yours. I just want You to be glorified."

Daniel, in this prayer, is all about God's glory. "We've sinned. We're undeserving. You're a God of mercy. We don't deserve anything. God, just look, hear, and answer our prayer. We belong to You. We are Your people and, God, You've made promises. We're just reminding You of Your promises." He is humbly pleading those promises and praying for God's glory to be done. The Bible says in James, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

I can't resist it. I want you to turn to Jeremiah 29. I want you to see the other passage in Jeremiah where the 70 years are mentioned that Daniel perhaps could have been reading. This is my favorite—Jeremiah 29:8. If you haven't seen these verses, you're going to love them. Imagine Daniel reading this in Babylon. "For thus saith the LORD of hosts," this is Jehovah Sabaoth, the LORD of hosts, "the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed." So, don't be deceived by these false prophets. Jeremiah was prophesying the truth, but other false prophets were trying to lead Israel astray just before their captivity. Verse 9 says, "For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the LORD." Beware of false prophets. They are not telling you the truth. Don't have a false hope. In verse 10 he says, "For thus saith the LORD, That after..." here it is, "seventy years be accomplished at Babylon," here's His promise, "I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place." He's the God of hope. He's the God of promise. You're going to come back to this place. "For I know the thoughts that I think toward

you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” In some translations it is to give you a future and a hope. There’s the context. It’s referring to Israel coming back from their captivity.

“Then shall ye call upon me,” this is exactly what Daniel did in Daniel 9, “and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.” Is there any wonder that Daniel got on his knees and face and began to pray? God is promising that He will listen to him. In verse 13, “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. 14 And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.” Don’t be deceived. Don’t have false hope. Be patient (verse 10). God has His perfect time. Then we see God’s plan (verse 11) for Israel. I will bring this evil upon you, but I will bring you back to an expected end. My plan is to give you peace and prosperity. Then He encourages them to pray, and God gives them the promise.

Some actually see a second fulfillment in verse 14 not only of their first coming back from Babylonian captivity into the land of Jerusalem, but some feel this is fulfilled in the modern restored nation of Israel. In 1948, Israel became a nation. This nation was born out of the past, so they maintained their national identity without a homeland for two thousand years. Then, in 1948, Israel came back into their land and were reborn as a nation. It’s not insignificant that there is the nation of Israel today and there exists the Jewish people. It’s God’s time clock. They’re God’s people. God made a promise to Abraham. He made a promise to Isaac, Jacob, and David. God always keeps his...what? God always keeps His promises, and what God has spoken cannot be broken. God has a future, and God has a plan. We’re going to get that next Wednesday night. If you haven’t picked up your little chart, pick it up or pick it up next week.

Read the rest of Daniel 9, when God comes to Daniel and the angel Gabriel brings him this answer to his prayer. These “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people...,” to finish up God’s work and God’s plan for the nation of Israel. An amazing prophecy that includes the tribulation period, the coming of antichrist, the Second Coming, the Kingdom Age, Messiah—It’s amazing!

When we read the book of Daniel, what we learn is that God sits on the throne, God rules in heaven, and God is in control. It’s not about who’s in The White House, it’s about God whose on the throne in heaven. Amen?