

70 Weeks  
Daniel 9: 20 – 27  
The Laurel Center  
April 16, 2015

**Main Idea:** When we need an answer we can go to God in prayer and he immediately answers us.

Introduction

**Text – Daniel 9:20–27**

**20** While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea before the LORD my God for the holy hill of my God, **21** while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice. **22** He made me understand, speaking with me and saying, “O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding. **23** At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly loved. Therefore consider the word and understand the vision. **24** “Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place. **25** Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. **26** And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. **27** And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.”

**I.** God sends us understanding of his plans (vv. 20 – 23).

**A** We can give our requests to God.

- 1 Daniel is in the middle of his prayer, interceding for himself and his people, their sins against the Lord while they were still in the land. This came after deep study in Scripture in the book of Jeremiah.
- 2 He is in serious prayer after learning from the book of Jeremiah how long they will be in captivity, 70 years. It has given them a partial answer to his heartfelt desire to know how long the exile would last.

- 3 But what would be next for his people Israel? Would they be allowed to rule themselves as a nation once again? Will something else happen? These are the desires of his heart to know the future of his people.
- 4 It is in the midst of these questions and seeking the Lord for their answers that Daniel is given more than he asked for the Lord. The Lord tells him the future of his people.

**B** God immediately answers our prayers.

- 1 No matter what the issue may be Daniel learned that God answers prayer and he answers it quickly. The angel Gabriel stated to Daniel at the moment that his request was made known to God God send an answer.
- 2 Although God's answer was immediate it took the travel of the angel Gabriel to get to Daniel and relay the answer. We will find that later on in the book there is also another time when the answer is given immediately but delayed by the devil.
- 3 God always answers prayer and his answers are always immediate. However, the answer could be yes as many of us usually hope. It could also be no as we usually do not want to hear. It could also be an issue of time so he would answer not yet.
- 4 No matter what the answer may be God does answer every prayer and it is always immediate for his people. There may be delays in our reception or understanding of his answers but the answers are always given quickly.

**II.** We attempt to understand his plans (vv. 24 – 27).

**A** God helps us to see his plan.

- 1 In the last paragraph of Daniel chapter 9 we are given quite the interesting answer from the Lord. He answers Daniel's question as to what will become of Israel.
- 2 But within the answer a bit of mystery is left to us. God lays out the destiny of his people Israel for quite a long time. But it must be interpreted for us to get the full benefit of his answer.
- 3 The way the people interpret the answer is the question at hand. Even Daniel may not fully grasp the full understanding of this answer from God.
- 4 We must remember that God thinks and acts within time differently than we do. His plan could last hundreds of years while the average human only lives for 80 years.
- 5 Other responses and answers from God and parts of his plan are within human lifetimes and sometimes his plans do not take long at all. It all depends on what the plan is and how long God wishes to put it in practice.

**B** Sometimes we cannot understand it fully.

- 1 Specifically, God outlines 70 seven's of time. This can be taken two different ways. The sevens could stand for weeks, seven-day periods. This would mean that 490 days would pass within God's plan. This is about a year and a quarter.
- 2 The other understanding of these sevens is to understand the within the context of the Sabbath year. While God laid aside time once a week on the seventh day and called it the Sabbath for the people of Israel to worship God and rest from work.
- 3 God's law also outlines the Sabbath year every seven years. After seven 'sevens' the next year, the 50<sup>th</sup> year, is known as the year of Jubilee. Amongst other stipulations, slaves would be set free from their obligations and land would return to its original owners.
- 4 To interpret the 70 seven's, one must take into effect either the idea of weeks or years. If it is weeks, a relatively short time is left for Israel before it returns.
- 5 But if it is years, this leaves 490 years of God's future plans for Israel on the table. Based on the idea of the sevens being Sabbath years instead of weeks, 490 years would exceed Daniel's lifespan.
- 6 The prayer is answered immediately and the answer begins from that moment in time onward. King Darius began his rule of Persia in 522 BC. That is when Daniel prayed this prayer.
- 7 But there are several indicators of how this 490 years is split up. First of all, the prophecy itself gives the beginning of the 70 weeks as the day the decrees issued that the people are able to return and rebuild the temple.
- 8 This happens in 457 BC. Then if we count 69 years (the seven weeks plus the 62 weeks), which is 483 years, we get 27 A.D. Then this last week or year is split up. The second temple is built by 349 BC.
- 9 Generally, two types of interpretations persist today. The first is that Jesus is the anointed one that comes in the early first century A.D. Then this ends the prophecy because the messiah has come.
- 10 The other interpretation takes the stand that the very last year seems to refer to the Antichrist rather than Christ. This would mean there is a break between Jesus' coming in the first century A.D. and the time of the great tribulation when the antichrist seems come.

### **Timeline of Events**

The prophecy concerns:

- The people of Israel
- The city of Jerusalem

The prophecy's purpose:

- Finish transgression and end sin
- Atonement for iniquity
- Bring everlasting righteousness and seal prophets and visions
- Anointed a most holy place/person

First seven years: decree to rebuild – coming of anointed one

- Next 62 years: Jerusalem and temple rebuilt in time of distress
- After 62 years: anointed one and have nothing, destruction of Temple. War and desolation's
- Final year: an anointed one makes strong covenant
  - Half of year: end to sacrifice and offerings, desolation's and abominations
  - The decreed end of the desolator

Conclusion

Although the interpretation of this prophetic answer to Daniel's prayer has been debated, what is very clear for us to understand is that God answers prayer completely and quickly. He does not make us wait for his answer but provides it immediately. We know that when we call on God in prayer he answers his people. We may not like his answer but it is still an answer. We can learn from Daniel to take our requests before the Lord. If something is bothering us or worrying us, both studying the Bible and praying lead us to answers that we seek.