

# Daniel: *Dual Book of History & Prophecy*

## Chapter 9a – Daniel’s Prayer for Israel

### The Seventy Years of the Desolation of Jerusalem (Verses 1-2)

- 1 Daniel’s prophecy was given in the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede (c.539 B.C.), who became the first Medo-Persian king when he conquered the Babylonian kingdom <sup>Daniel 5:30-31</sup>.

The reference to “Darius son of Xerxes” is confusing. As mentioned earlier <sup>note after Daniel 5:30-31</sup>, it is assumed that Cyrus the Great and Darius the Mede refer to the same person. Most scholars assume this use of Darius was as a title and not a proper name. The reference to “Darius the son of Xerxes” also adds to the confusion for two main reasons: (1) according to secular history, Cyrus the Great was the first king of the enlarged (Medo-) Persian Empire (539-530 B.C.) and the son of Cambyses I, king of Anshan (a city in the Elamite Empire) and (2) the first mention of a Darius and Xerxes in secular history were later Persian kings Darius I (522-486 B.C.) and his son Xerxes I (485-465 B.C.).

- 2 Daniel had read in the book of Jeremiah that the desolation of Jerusalem would last 70 years.

Why 70 years? God defined a Sabbath rest for the land <sup>Leviticus 25:1-7</sup>; He told Israel they must be obedient <sup>Leviticus 26:1-13</sup>; He warned them about judgement for disobedience <sup>Leviticus 26:14-39</sup>; He promised that repentance would bring forgiveness <sup>Leviticus 26:40-45</sup>; He sent His prophets to warn them about their disobedience, but they did not heed the warnings <sup>2 Chronicles 36:15-16, Jeremiah 25:1-7</sup>; so God sent Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar as His judgement on Judah <sup>2 Chronicles 36:17-19, Jeremiah 25:8-10</sup>. Therefore, Scripture seems to indicate the 70 year captivity <sup>Jeremiah 25:11, 29:10</sup> was the punishment for not observing the law of the Sabbath rest for the land for 490 consecutive years <sup>2 Chronicles 36:20-21</sup>.

### Daniel’s Prayer Begins with Confession (Verses 3-14)

When reading Daniel’s prayer <sup>v.3-19</sup>, note that even the written word seems to convey Daniel’s anguish. In addition, the text gives the impression of an increase in his passion, culminating in the last verse.

- 3 In his reading of Jeremiah, Daniel recognized the desolation of Jerusalem was the result of God’s judgement upon the people of Judah, resulting from their disobedience in the face of repeated warnings. So Daniel, in total submission to the will and plan of God, decided to pray <sup>Jeremiah 29:11-12</sup>, fast <sup>Ezra 8:21, Nehemiah 1:1-4</sup> and put himself in sackcloth <sup>Genesis 37:34</sup> and ashes <sup>Esther 4:1-3, Jeremiah 6:24-26</sup>, exhibiting his deep faith, devotion and worship of God.

- 4-5 Daniel knew that the initial key to forgiveness and reconciliation is confession <sup>1 Samuel 7:5-6</sup>, and he began his prayer with praise for the greatness and goodness of God <sup>Deuteronomy 7:21</sup>,

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who “keeps his covenant of love” Deuteronomy 7:9, 1 Kings 8:22-23 for those who are obedient.

Notice how Daniel accepted and confessed his part in the general sin of the nation of Israel, in fact he stated it unequivocally: “we have...” “sinned” Jeremiah 8:14, “done wrong” Psalm 106:6, “been wicked” Ezekiel 6:11, “rebelled”, and “turned away from your commands” Joshua 1:7.

- 6** To make matters worse, not only did they sin, but Daniel said no one listened <sup>2 Kings 18:12</sup> to the prophets of God <sup>2 Chronicles 36:15-16, Luke 13:34</sup>: not kings, princes, fathers, nor the people.
- 7** Daniel then contrasted the “righteousness” of God <sup>Ezra 9:15, Romans 1:17</sup> and the “shame” of the men of Judah <sup>Ezra 9:6-7, 1 Corinthians 15:34</sup>, the people of Jerusalem and all of the people who were “scattered” throughout the world (*diaspora*) <sup>Deuteronomy 4:27, Jeremiah 50:17</sup>, because of their “unfaithfulness” <sup>Ezra 9:1-2</sup> to God <sup>Ezekiel 39:23-24</sup>.
- 8** In this verse, Daniel made a statement summarizing the three previous verses <sup>v.5-7</sup>:  
The people (including Daniel), the “kings”, the “princes” and the “fathers” had all sinned against God <sup>2 Samuel 12:13a, Jeremiah 14:20</sup> and were ashamed <sup>Psalm 44:15</sup>.
- 9-10** Daniel continued by contrasting the mercy and forgiveness of God <sup>Exodus 34:5-7</sup> with the rebellion of Israel <sup>Nehemiah 9:16-17</sup>. They sinned by not being obedient to God and by not obeying His law that was given through His prophets <sup>2 Kings 17:13-15</sup>.
- 11** Daniel admitted “all Israel” had “transgressed” God’s law <sup>Jeremiah 2:29</sup> and refused to obey Him. He added that their sin against the LORD <sup>Isaiah 1:4</sup> deserved the “curses and sworn judgements” <sup>Leviticus 26:14-39, Deuteronomy 28:15-68</sup> from God.
- 12** Whenever there is a concern with understanding what the prophets said or how to interpret God’s Word, the LORD fulfills <sup>Isaiah 44:24-26, Matthew 5:17</sup> (makes clear) the meaning. The LORD used the Babylonians <sup>see notes on Daniel 1:2</sup> to bring a “disaster” <sup>Jeremiah 44:23</sup> on the Jews, to make them realize they should have taken the prophetic warnings of the prophets seriously. God showed He was serious by allowing the devastation of His city, Jerusalem <sup>Jeremiah 44:1-6</sup>.
- 13** Daniel admitted that, not only had the prophets warned the Israelites, but they were also given clear guidance in the Law about the curses <sup>see v.11</sup> that would result from disobedience. In spite of all the chances to hear the ominous warnings, the Jews did not turn “from...sins”, nor did they seek “the favor of the LORD our God” <sup>Deuteronomy 4:29, Isaiah 31:1</sup> and they ignored the truth of God <sup>Isaiah 59:12-15, Jeremiah 7:27-28</sup>, including the need for repentance <sup>Jeremiah 18:7-8</sup>.
- 14** God’s righteousness <sup>Jeremiah 12:1</sup> and His people’s disobedience <sup>Jeremiah 40:3</sup> meant He had no choice but to do what He did <sup>Nehemiah 9:32-35</sup>, because “everything He does is right” <sup>Daniel 4:37</sup>.

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### Daniel's Prayer Continues with Requests for Forgiveness & Restoration (Verses 15-19)

- 15** Having covered the sin of the nation/people of Israel, Daniel turned to God's forgiveness. He started by remembering the past faithfulness of God, who brought them "out of Egypt with a mighty hand" Exodus 6:1, Psalm 118:15-16, making "a name that endures" Nehemiah 9:9-10.
- 16** Daniel appealed to the "righteous acts" 1 Samuel 12:6-7 of God, that He might "turn away" His anger 2 Chronicles 29:8-10, 30:6-9 "and wrath" Psalm 85:1-3, 106:21-23 from His "city" Jeremiah 32:32, His "holy hill" Psalm 48:1, Joel 3:17, because Daniel knew that Israel's sins made the people and Jerusalem "an object of scorn" Psalm 44:13-16, Jerusalem 19:7-8.
- 17** Daniel pleaded with God to hear his prayer 1 Kings 8:28, Psalm 143:1, and he asked for God's favor Numbers 6:22-27 (not for Daniel's or Israel's sake, but for the LORD's name sake) on His "desolate sanctuary" (the temple) 2 Chronicles 36:15-19, Ezra 5:11-12.
- 18** Daniel continued his plea for God to "give ear" Psalm 5:1-2, "hear" Psalm 17:1 & "see" Psalm 80:14. He turned the focus from the desolation of His temple v.17 to the ruin of Jerusalem, the city that "bears [His] name" Deuteronomy 28:10, Jeremiah 25:29. Daniel readily admitted His plea was not based on the righteousness of Israel, but upon the LORD's "great mercy" Psalm 40:11, 79:8.
- 19** Daniel's prayer climaxes with a staccato set of pleas to the LORD God to "listen" Psalm 86:6, "forgive" Psalm 25:11, Amos 7:1-2 and "hear and act" 1 Kings 8:39. He pleaded for God to "not delay" "for [His] sake" 1 Samuel 12:22, and "because your city and your people bear your name".

### The Angel Gabriel Interrupts Daniel's Prayer (Verses 20-23)

- 20-21** In the midst of Daniel's praying and confessing Ezra 10:1, God answered his prayer by sending the angel Gabriel for a second time Daniel 8:16 at the time of the evening sacrifices. In the Bible Daniel 8:16, 9:21, Luke 1:19,26, Gabriel is an archangel who is always on a Messianic mission. The evening sacrifice was the second of two daily sacrifices Exodus 29:38-39 offered at the temple. However, there was no temple in Jerusalem at this time (destroyed ~70 years earlier), but Daniel showed his respect for the Laws of Moses by continuing to honor those required times of sacrifice.
- 22-23** Gabriel told Daniel he came to give "insight and understanding" Daniel 7:16, 10:14, Amos 3:7. Then Gabriel stated that because Daniel was "highly esteemed" Daniel 10:19, Luke 1:28, the LORD was answering his prayer the moment he began to pray Isaiah 65:24. Gabriel's appearance and his information were the response to Daniel's prayer Daniel 10:11-12. Daniel was told to: "Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision:"

*Chapter 9, to be concluded...*