

# DANIEL 9



T. M. Moore

*A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

*Daniel 9*

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## Daniel 9: Introduction

Prompted by his reading of Jeremiah, Daniel seeks the Lord for forgiveness and restoration for the people of Israel.

His prayer is urgent, passionate, and to the point. And God answered his prayer by giving him further revelation into his great and glorious plan.

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# 1 Responding to God's Word

## *Introduction*

While reading a scroll of Jeremiah's prophecy, Daniel realized that the time of Israel's captivity was drawing to an end. But he would not simply sit by and wait for the Lord to work. He sought the promise of God earnestly in prayer. Here is an important lesson for how we must respond to what we read in God's Word.

*Review Habakkuk 2.1-3.*

*Read Daniel 9.1-3.*

## *Think it Through*

1. God put His Word into writing, and He expects all who read it to "run". What does that mean? Should our reading of Scripture lead to anything specific? Daniel was reading the book of Jeremiah, and perhaps other "books", when a passage he had no doubt read many times suddenly came alive to him (cf. Jer. 29.10; Is. 44.24-28). What had God promised His people? Cyrus was now ruler of the Medes and the Persians (Darius was governor or "king" "over the realm of the Chaldeans", that is, Babylon, cf. 5.31 and 6.28), and Daniel understood that Israel's restoration was near. God was getting ready to do something very significant, which He had many years earlier promised in His Word. The coming together of various passages Daniel was reading had an immediate effect on him. How do you suppose Daniel felt upon reading this promise? Do you ever experience this as you are reading Scripture?

2. As he understood these passages, Daniel "ran" to respond. What did he do (v. 3)? Does this seem like something he did only once, or for an extended period? Explain. Daniel would live to hear Cyrus' proclamation that the Jews should return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple (cf. 2 Chron. 36.20-23; Dan. 10.1). But he did not merely wait around for God to do what He had promised. Rather, he eagerly and diligently *sought* the promise of God by setting his "face toward the Lord God" in an extended season of prayer. What does this suggest to us about seeking the precious and very great promises of God?

## *Meditate*

"Jeremiah had predicted seventy years for the desolation of the temple, at the end of which the people would again return to Judea and build the temple and the city of Jerusalem. However, this fact did not render Daniel careless but rather encouraged him to pray that God might through his supplications fulfill that which he had graciously promised." *Jerome (347-420 AD)*

*Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 2 Peter 1.2-4*

*Lord, Your promises are so many and so wonderful! And they all come together in Jesus, so help me to claim Your promises today by...*

*Pray Psalm 126.*

Is God's Church today in need of restoration? Do we have a vision for it? Do you have a vision for the full and flourishing restoration of your soul? Do you sow faith and hope in the Lord, as you wait and work for greater fruitfulness in your walk with and work for the Lord?

**Psalm 126.1-6** (*Truro: Shout for the Blessed Jesus Reigns!*)

When God restored our fortunes all,  
We were like those who sweetly dream.  
Our mouths with joy and laughter filled,  
Made Him our constant song and theme.

Then the astonished nations said,  
“The Lord has done great things for them!”  
Indeed, great things our God has done,  
Whose Name we praise, Amen, Amen!

Restore our fortunes, Lord our King!  
Let grace like flowing streams prevail.  
All they with tears of joy shall sing  
Who sow while yet they weep and wail.

They who in tears of sorrow sow  
And cast their seed on every hand,  
With joy shall reach their heav’nly home,  
And bring the harvest of their land.

## 2 Sin-Bearer

### *Introduction*

In his prayer to the Lord, Daniel took upon himself the sins of the people of Israel. We know Daniel, and we have seen how upright and forthright he is. Yet here we find him including himself in the “we” who have provoked God to wrath and judgment. We too, should ask, “Is it I, Lord?”

*Meditate on Psalm 139.23, 24.*

*Read Daniel 9.4-8.*

### *Think it Through*

1. In Psalm 139, unlike Psalm 51, David does not seem to have been aware of any particular sin in his life. However, he called upon the Lord, Who knew him thoroughly, to search him and show him if he was harboring any sins. Daniel, like David and all the rest of us, was a sinner – even though he was farther along in his sanctification than most of us ever will be. He readily confessed himself to be among those against whom the wrath and judgment of God had been revealed by the captivity in Babylon (notice the multiplied uses of “we” and “us” in the passage). Why? Daniel took upon himself the sins of Israel, and in this he points us forward to the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Explain.

2. How many different ways did Daniel describe or refer to the Lord in these verses? What does each of these terms or ideas mean? Of what did he say he and Israel were guilty before the Lord? Are God’s people today ever guilty of any of these offenses? Has God ceased judging such transgressions? Explain.

### *Meditate*

“Godly people, after all, are accustomed to apply divine names on the basis of benefits conferred. He spoke of his “keeping covenant and mercy with those who love him” in recalling the promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Being very precise in his prayer, he mentions that he does not keep it with anyone but with “those who love him and keep his commandments;” if someone transgresses your commands, he renders himself unworthy of the promises.” *Theodoret of Cyr (393-466 AD)*

*For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? 1 Peter 4.17*

*Search me, O Lord, now and every day, to make sure that...*

*Pray Psalm 126.4-6.*

The presence of sin in our lives should lead us to tears of repentance. Wait on the Lord in prayer, asking Him to search your soul.

**Psalm 126.4-6** (*Truro: Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns!*)

Restore our fortunes, Lord our King!  
Let grace like flowing streams prevail.  
All they with tears of joy shall sing  
Who sow while yet they weep and wail.

They who in tears of sorrow sow  
And cast their seed on every hand,  
With joy shall reach their heav’nly home,

And bring the harvest of their land.

### 3 Faithful to His Word

#### *Introduction*

Daniel knew that, in judging His people, God was only being faithful to His Word. He was doing what He had said He would do if His people scorned His grace, despised His Law, and walked in their own paths. Only within the grace and truth of God can we know righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit. Israel had scorned that path, and now they were enduring the consequences of their foolish choices.

*Read Leviticus 26.16-20; Deuteronomy 28.15-68.*

*Read Daniel 9.9-13.*

#### *Think it Through*

1. Let's look at the verbs Daniel used to describe how Israel had come to this state of exile and judgment. How would you define each of these: "rebelled" (v. 9); "obeyed", "walk in His laws" (v. 10); "transgressed", "departed", "sinned" (v. 11)? Why did Daniel express this in so many different ways? What does this suggest about the urgency and passion of his prayer? Is this how we pray in our churches? As the judgment of God began to fall on Israel, the people sought political alliances with pagan nations in the hope of securing their freedoms. But according to verse 13, what should they have done instead (cf. 2 Chron. 7.14)? Is there a lesson here for Christians today? Has your church learned this lesson?

2. Notice also the emphasis on God's Word and His Law (vv. 10-13). Israel turned away from God's Word and His Law, but God never will. He is faithful to what He has proclaimed. He is not like us. We think we can ignore the Law of God and dabble in His Word, rather than read and meditate and search and obey the Scriptures day by day. We think that if we are merely casual about the Word and Law of God, God will be casual as well, because we think He is just like us. Meditate on Psalm 50.16-23. Must God bring "disaster" on His people today, before we will turn to Him with the passion, humility, and urgency Daniel expresses here? What can you do to begin praying like this, and to urge your fellow Christians likewise to pray?

#### *Meditate*

"Their stubbornness was so great that even in the midst of their toils they would not entreat God, and even if they had entreated him, it would not have been a genuine entreaty, because they had not turned back from their iniquities. Yet to consider the truth of God is equivalent to turning back from iniquity." *Jerome (347-420 AD)*

*Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. James 4.2, 3*

*Lord Jesus, You have taught us to pray for Your Kingdom and for the forgiveness of our sins. But we waste our prayers by asking only for what we want, rather than what You command. In my prayers, O Lord, help me to...*

#### *Pray Psalm 126.1-3*

Do you have a vision for what a revived world would look like? Do you have a dream for revival, renewal, and awakening which, should it come true, would fill your mouth with laughter and singing? As you pray these verses, ask God to give you such a vision.

#### **Psalm 126.1-3** (*Truro: Shout for the Blessed Jesus Reigns!*)

When God restored our fortunes all,  
We were like those who sweetly dream.  
Our mouths with joy and laughter filled,

Made Him our constant song and theme.

Then the astonished nations said,  
“The Lord has done great things for them!”  
Indeed, great things our God has done,  
Whose Name we praise, Amen, Amen!

## 4 Prayer for Revival

### *Introduction*

Daniel acknowledges the sovereignty and justice of God in Israel's being taken captive to Babylon. But he was not content to leave things this way. Instead, he pleaded with God to do what only He can do, and bring revival to the people of Israel.

*Read Deuteronomy 4.5-9.*

*Read Daniel 9.14-19.*

### *Think it through.*

1. One of the signs that God's judgment has begun to fall upon His people is what Daniel indicated at the end of verse 16: "Your people *are* a reproach to all *those* around us." What does this mean? What would this look like in our day? How does this compare with what we read in Deuteronomy 4.5-9? What makes God's people become a reproach to all those around them? Should we find this to be true, what can we do about it?
2. The focus on Daniel's prayer in verse 17 turned from confession and repentance to seeking the Lord for revival. Meditate on the following passages: Numbers 6.22-27; Psalm 67.1, 2; Psalm 119.135; and Ezekiel 39.29. What does it mean for God's face to "shine upon" His people (Dan. 9.17)? What does Daniel want God to do? Do you suppose Daniel's prayer may have had anything to do with the decision Cyrus made in Ezra 1.1-4? Do you suppose your prayers for God's people today might result in His beginning to shine His face on us again? Explain.

### *Meditate.*

"This appeal is couched in anthropomorphic language, with the implication that whenever our prayers are heard, God seems to incline his ear; and whenever God deigns to have regard to us, he appears to open his eyes; but whenever he turns his face away, we appear to be unworthy of attention either from his eyes or his ears." *Jerome (347-420 AD)*

*Yet you do not have because you do not ask.* James 4.2

*Father, we have become a reproach and a byword to our neighbors, because we have failed to keep Your Word in all things. Let Your face shine on us again, Lord, and today use me to...*

*Pray Psalm 126.5, 6.*

One way we "sow" to the Spirit is by our prayers. Weep for the sad state of Christ's Church in our day, and plead with God for revival.

**Psalm 126.4-6** (*Truro: Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns!*)

Restore our fortunes, Lord our King!  
Let grace like flowing streams prevail.  
All they with tears of joy shall sing  
Who sow while yet they weep and wail.

They who in tears of sorrow sow  
And cast their seed on every hand,  
With joy shall reach their heav'nly home,

And bring the harvest of their land.

## 5 Finishing the Transgression

### *Introduction*

Daniel received a surprising and glorious confirmation of his prayer. God sent His angel, Gabriel, to let Daniel know that his prayer had been heard and granted, and that the work of restoring Israel and the temple had already begun. At the same time, the angel may have been hinting at much more to come.

*Read Psalm 25.12-22.*

*Read Daniel 9.20-24.*

### *Think it through.*

1. Daniel realized the promise of Psalm 25.12-22 as he sought the Lord in tears. God sent Gabriel to teach Daniel the way He had chosen for Israel, to renew His covenant with His people, and to have mercy on Daniel and bring him out of his distresses. David “waited” on the Lord in prayer “all the day” (Ps. 25.5, 21), and Daniel probably did, too. What does it mean to “wait” on the Lord in prayer? As we are waiting, do we always need to be talking? What else can we do as we wait on the Lord, and how is that a form of prayer? Is it your practice to wait like this on the Lord?

2. Daniel shows us an important lesson about prayer: It’s not a one-way conversation. Even as he was still speaking, God began to respond. He sent Gabriel to give Daniel additional understanding of what he already knew from reading Jeremiah and Isaiah. Angels are sent to minister to God’s people (cf. Heb. 1.13, 14). Is part of their mandate to aid us in understanding Scripture? If so, should we seek their help from the Lord in our times of reading and study? Even more than the angels, we have the Spirit of Christ (1 Cor. 2.12, 13). What role should He play in our study of Scripture and our prayers (Jn. 16.8-11; Rom. 8.26)? Should your prayers involve as much time listening as talking? Explain. Gabriel informed Daniel that, the moment he began to pray, God started the process of bringing an end to Israel’s transgression and judgment (v. 23). Imagine! Verse 24 refers specifically to Daniel 9.1, 2. The word *weeks* is literally *sevens* and is, I think, deliberately vague and mysterious. It probably refers to Israel’s 70 years of captivity, which were about to end, but it may also have implications for the future. The “Most Holy” here refers to the temple, which would be rebuilt, but it may also point forward – nearly 500 years in the future (70 times 7 years) to the coming of the Messiah, when all “vision and prophecy” would be sealed and fulfilled. We can’t always know everything God reveals in His Word, even when angels are tutoring us. But we can give thanks and praise for God Who does know all things, and Who sovereignly orchestrates them to His perfect conclusions. What can you thank and praise the Lord for today?

### *Meditate.*

“I realize that this question has been argued over in various ways by people of greatest learning, and each of them has expressed his views according to the capacity of his own genius. And so ... I shall ... leave it to the reader’s judgment as to whose explanation ought to be followed.” *Jerome (347-420 AD)*

*Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.* 1 Corinthians 2.12, 13

*Teach me to pray, Lord Jesus, as You taught Your disciples of old, and help me to wait on You in prayer by...*

### *Pray Psalm 126.*

Is God giving you a clearer vision of what He can do when He restores His people? He told Daniel that the “Most Holy” was coming, when all the “vision and prophecy” would be fulfilled. Pray for a vision of what

revival, renewal, and awakening will look like as God brings these in our day.

**Psalm 126.1-6** (*Truro: Shout for the Blessed Jesus Reigns!*)

When God restored our fortunes all,  
We were like those who sweetly dream.  
Our mouths with joy and laughter filled,  
Made Him our constant song and theme.

Then the astonished nations said,  
“The Lord has done great things for them!”  
Indeed, great things our God has done,  
Whose Name we praise, Amen, Amen!

Restore our fortunes, Lord our King!  
Let grace like flowing streams prevail.  
All they with tears of joy shall sing  
Who sow while yet they weep and wail.

They who in tears of sorrow sow  
And cast their seed on every hand,  
With joy shall reach their heav’nly home,  
And bring the harvest of their land.

## 6 Kingdoms' Fall and Kingdom Rise

### *Introduction*

This part of Daniel's vision fits within the vision of the coming of God's Kingdom which he received in chapter 7. Commentators over the years have differed in some of the details of this passage, but the main message seems abundantly clear: Messiah is coming, and with His coming, the kingdom (as the people of Israel have known it since the time of King David) will come to an inglorious end. But a new covenant will be confirmed, bringing with it a new Kingdom that nothing can hinder as it increases on earth.

*Meditate on Isaiah 9.6, 7.*

*Read Daniel 9.25-27.*

### *Think it Through*

1. I will not attempt to unpack the "weeks" mentioned in this text. Christian commentators have differed on their understanding of these from the earliest days of the Church. However, all agree that a significant time span is indicated from Daniel's day, and the promise of a restoration of Israel's kingdom, to Messiah's day, and the announcement of that kingdom's final demise. The "bookends" of this passage are what happens to Jerusalem (vv. 25, 26). What does Gabriel explain about that? The "prince who is to come" (v. 26) probably refers to the Roman general Titus, who destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD and became emperor shortly after that. Why was it important for the people who were returning to rebuild Jerusalem to know that their labors were not meant to be permanent? Do you think Christians can become so committed to their local church that they lose sight of the larger vision of the Kingdom of God? Explain.

2. That "he" of verse 27 is enigmatic. Who is "he"? He confirms "a covenant with many" for a brief period, in the middle of which time "an end to sacrifice and offering" is achieved. The "week" here does not, it seems to me, refer to the covenant, but the time during which the covenant is confirmed. Meditate on Luke 22.20 and Hebrews 9.11-15 (and Heb. 13.20). Do these help us identify this "he"? Explain. The events suggested by the first part of verse 27 are followed shortly thereafter by the abominations and desolations mentioned in the second part of the verse. To what does this refer (cf. v. 26)? During this "week" the events of Daniel 7.13-18 take place. The second part of verse 27 could also be extended to refer to the events described in Daniel 7.18-27. Explain. Given this, why would it be important that the end of the kingdom of Israel should be accomplished, as well as the end of the Roman kingdom? How does this counsel us, who are commanded to seek the Kingdom of God (Matt. 6.33)?

### *Meditate*

"Now, it gave Christ a second name as leader... He is our leader in his humanity as 'the firstborn of all creation,' that is, a new creation: 'If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation'—and as firstborn from the dead, so as to have, as Paul says, 'first place in everything.' Hence holy Gabriel called him 'Christ the leader.'" *Theodoret of Cyr (393-466 AD)*

*Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law), 9 then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first that He may establish the second. 10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Hebrews 10.8-10*

*Jesus Christ, Leader and Lord, lead me more deeply and fully into Your Kingdom, so that I might know Your presence, promise, and power more fully as I...*

*Pray Psalm 126.*

What kind of vision should we be nurturing and seeking? Of a big and bustling local church? Or of a Kingdom not of this world? What will be your dream come true, that will fill your mouth with laughter and joy? How will you “sow” to that vision today?

**Psalm 126.1-6** (*Truro: Shout for the Blessed Jesus Reigns!*)

When God restored our fortunes all,  
We were like those who sweetly dream.  
Our mouths with joy and laughter filled,  
Made Him our constant song and theme.

Then the astonished nations said,  
“The Lord has done great things for them!”  
Indeed, great things our God has done,  
Whose Name we praise, Amen, Amen!

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Let grace like flowing streams prevail.  
All they with tears of joy shall sing  
Who sow while yet they weep and wail.

They who in tears of sorrow sow  
And cast their seed on every hand,  
With joy shall reach their heav'nly home,  
And bring the harvest of their land.

## 7 Failed Kingdoms, Unfailing Faithfulness

### *Introduction*

Daniel 9 rehearses the failure of Israel to be the people and Kingdom God intended. It also shows us that human kingdoms, be they ever so outwardly powerful and threatening, must ultimately fail as well. That only will remain which God the King has ordained, and which His Messiah accomplishes within the framework of the New Covenant and the Kingdom which is not of this world. Worldly kingdoms must all fail; our faithful God will never fail.

*Review Daniel 2, 7, and 8.*

*Read and Meditate on Daniel 9.*

*Think it through.*

1. Daniel shows us how to pray in times when the blessing and favor of God are being withheld. How was this the case with Israel in Daniel's day? Why was this the case? Summarize Daniel's approach to praying about this situation. What did his prayer include? Do you think this is what praying for the Kingdom to come entails? Explain. Is this a time in the life of God's Church when we should be praying like Daniel? Explain.

2. God's answer to Daniel's prayer was to give him more revelation to enlarge on and expand that which he had already received. There is instruction for us here in what to expect as God answers our prayers. Explain. Daniel confessed the failure of Israel's kingdom; and he foresaw that kingdom's final destruction, and the ruin of the kingdom that would destroy it. He could not have understood this vision completely, only in outline. But the message of a coming Kingdom that would triumph over all others was clear enough from chapter 7. How is that Kingdom related to the vision of the Son of Man from chapter 7, the Messiah Who is to be "cut off" in Daniel 9.26, and the covenant He "confirms" with the "many" (v. 27)? Why would Messiah be cut off? Who is in view here, and how does He relate to the promised Kingdom?

*Meditate*

"When the times were fulfilled in the days of Augustus, the foretold Christ came to his people, was crucified and fulfilled all the things written about him through the holy angels and prophets... Since the prophet Daniel was one of those longing to see the coming of the Messiah, our Lord himself says about him and the others, 'Many prophets and just people longed to see those things that you see, but they did not see them, and to hear those things that you hear but did not hear them.'" *Basil of Seleucia (fl. 444-468AD)*

*But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.* Hebrews 10.12-14

*Thank You, Jesus, that You allowed Yourself to be cut off for my sins, and that You have been raised and seated at the Father's right hand so that I...*

*Pray Psalm 126.*

Ask God to give you a vision for revival, then go forth to "sow" that vision to your fellow believers.

**Psalm 126.1-6** (*Truro: Shout for the Blessed Jesus Reigns!*)

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We were like those who sweetly dream.  
Our mouths with joy and laughter filled,  
Made Him our constant song and theme.

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“The Lord has done great things for them!”  
Indeed, great things our God has done,  
Whose Name we praise, Amen, Amen!

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All they with tears of joy shall sing  
Who sow while yet they weep and wail.

They who in tears of sorrow sow  
And cast their seed on every hand,  
With joy shall reach their heav'nly home,  
And bring the harvest of their land.

*Questions for Reflection or Discussion*

1. Summarize the main features of Daniel's prayer in this chapter. Why would a man like Daniel pray a prayer like this?
2. When is it time to pray a prayer like this? Who should pray this way?
3. What are we learning from Daniel about the Messiah, the New Covenant, and the Kingdom not of this world?
4. God's Kingdom is unseen, but real; earthly kingdoms – even our churches – are seen, but not nearly as real as the Kingdom of God. Explain. What are the implications of this for our daily lives?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from this study? How are you putting that lesson to work in your life?

*For prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.