

**DANIEL - PART 9**  
**Almost Home**  
**Dr. Derek Morris**

Preaching passage: Daniel 9  
Subject: Why Daniel earnestly sought the Lord in prayer when he sensed that Jeremiah's prophecy was almost fulfilled  
Complement: because he longed for the day when he and his people would return home.  
Exegetical idea: Daniel earnestly sought the Lord in prayer when he sensed that the seventy years of exile prophesied by Jeremiah was almost over because he longed for the day when he and his people would return home.  
Homiletical idea: **We're almost home!**  
Purpose: To show that prophecy has been fulfilled and that we are almost home!

Introduction

Some years ago when our two sons will still young enough to want to go with us on vacations, our family took a 9000 mile road trip around the United States. We visited many historic sites and national parks. On our trip, we drove through torrential rains, got caught in a snowstorm, took cover from golf-ball sized hail, and saw the biggest tornado of our lives! It is was eventful journey! By the time we had traveled 8900 miles or so, we were ready to go home! Typically children are the first to ask, "Are we there yet?" "When are we going to be home?" But after 6 weeks on the road, even the parents were asking the same question! "When are we going to be home?"

Daniel and his exiled people had been gone from home from much more than 6 weeks. It was more than 3,500 weeks. Daniel had been a teenager when he was taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar's army. Now Nebuchadnezzar was dead, and Daniel was an old man. Thirteen years have passed since the vision of Daniel 8. And this has already been an eventful year for the aged prophet Daniel. He has seen the fulfillment of the first part of the prophecies of Daniel 2 and Daniel 7. Babylon has been replaced by Medo-Persia. He has also been thrown into a

lion's den and miraculously delivered. And he has received a copy of the testimony of the prophet Jeremiah, where Jeremiah clearly prophesies that the exile will only last for 70 years. (Jer 26:11, 29:10). And that 70 years is almost over! Undoubtedly, Daniel is also asking himself the question, "When will we be going home?"

And so the aged prophet Daniel began to cry out to the Lord God in prayer. We can read his prayer at the beginning of Daniel chapter 9. Daniel 9:3-6. "....." What a great man of God! What a humble leader! Daniel identifies with the waywardness of his people and makes a heartfelt confession. And the LORD God responds to Daniel's prayer. In a startling way. It ought not to surprise us that God does respond. After all, the Lord had declared through a contemporary of Daniel, the prophet Jeremiah, "Call upon Me and I will answer you. And show you great and marvelous things which you have not known." So it ought not to surprise us that the Lord God responds to Daniel's prayer. But the details of God's response are quite startling. Look with me in Daniel chapter 9:20-23a. "....."

Now I don't know where heaven is located, the place where God sits enthroned. The closer stellar nursery to earth is the nebula of Orion. That's a place in our universe when stars are born. Here's a picture of the nebula of Orion that was taken by John P. Gleason just a few months ago.

The Great Nebula in Orion, an immense, nearby starbirth region, is probably the most famous of all astronomical nebulas. Here, glowing gas surrounds hot young stars at the edge of an immense interstellar molecular cloud only 1500 light-years away. In the above deep image, faint wisps and sheets of dust and gas are particularly evident. The Great Nebula in Orion can be found with the unaided eye just below and to the left of the easily identifiable belt of three stars in the popular constellation Orion. In addition to housing a bright open cluster of stars known as the Trapezium, the Orion Nebula contains many stellar nurseries. These nurseries contain hydrogen gas, hot young stars, protoplanets, and stellar jets spewing material at high speeds. Also known as M42, the Orion Nebula spans about 40 light years and is located in the same spiral arm of our Galaxy as the Sun.

<http://antwarp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/ap050918.html>

That nebula is 1500 light years away. That means that it would take you 1500 years traveling at the speed of light to get to that nebula of Orion from earth. Now, I don't know exactly where the angel Gabriel was located when the command went out for him to respond to the prophet Daniel's prayer, but wherever he was, that was high-speed travel to get to Daniel's side while he's still praying! The expression in Daniel 9:21, "being caused to fly swiftly" is no exaggeration! Gabriel was flying at warp speed! What a picture of God's loving care and concern! The Lord dispatches the mighty angel Gabriel to tell Daniel that is he greatly beloved!

Now we have to stop here and note the significance of Gabriel's presence. Gabriel was sent to Daniel when he received the vision of the 2300 days, recorded in Daniel chapter 8. Gabriel is sent at times of key importance in the history of the plan of salvation. It is Gabriel who is sent to Zecharias to announce the birth of his son, John the Baptist (Luke 1:19). The prophet John the Baptist would prepare the way for Messiah. It is Gabriel who is sent to Mary, to announce the miraculous conception and the birth of Jesus, the Christ (Luke 1:26). So the fact that Gabriel is sent again to Daniel, as recorded in Daniel chapter 9, tells us that this is an important event in the plan of salvation.

And what is Gabriel's assignment? Look with me at Daniel 9:23. "....."

What vision is Gabriel referring to here? Daniel 9 records no vision. Only a prayer. So which vision is Gabriel referring to here? The vision of the 2300 day prophecy, recorded in Daniel 8. The specific Hebrew word for vision used here in Daniel 9:23, mareh, is the same word used for vision in Daniel chapter 8, when the holy one asked, "How long will the vision be?" And the answer was given, "Unto 2300 days, and then the sanctuary shall be cleansed."

So let's listen to Gabriel's message, starting in Daniel 9:24. "....." Seventy weeks, or literally "seventy sevens" are determined for your people. That's 490. And it's obviously not 490 days, a year and a few months, but a time prophecy of 490 years. The prophet Ezekiel, a contemporary of Daniel, records this year-day principle in Ezekiel 4:6. And when does this time prophecy begin? Look at Daniel 9:25. "....."

History records that there were 3 decrees that went forth in connection with the return of the children of Israel from Babylonian exile: The decree of Cyrus in 538 BC. The decree of Darius I in 519 BC, which simply confirmed the decree of Cyrus, and the decree of Artaxerxes in 457 BC. And as one scholar has observed, the fact that three decrees were needed suggests that the final decree is the one that really counted. Ezra considered them all part of one decree: in Ezra 6:14, we read, "they built and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the decree of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia."

Now here's something truly amazing! The angel Gabriel tells Daniel that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince shall be 7 weeks and 62 weeks. That's a total of 483 days of time prophecy, or 483 years. Add 483 years from the decree of Artaxerxes in 457 BC and it takes you to AD 27, the exact year that Jesus was anointed by the Spirit at His baptism and began His ministry as Messiah. The word Messiah means "anointed", and Christ's ministry began right on time, in AD 27.

But Gabriel goes on to say that sometime after AD 27, Messiah would be cut off. That's a very strong expression in Hebrew. It implies a violent end. Let's listen to Gabriel's words in Daniel 9:26-27. "....." In the middle of that final week, or final 7 years of the 490 year prophecy, the Messiah would bring an end to sacrifice and offering. He would do that

by laying down His life as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

And it happened just as predicted. Three and a half years after his baptism in AD 27, Jesus died on the cross in the Spring of AD 31. He caused an end to sacrifice and offering. He died once and for all. No more need for lambs or goats or bulls. Jesus was the perfect Lamb of God. He paid the price for our sin. He was wounded for our transgressions, and by His wounds, we are healed. That 490 years determined for Daniel's people, the Jews, ended in AD 34. That was the time that the gospel was taken to the Gentiles. Following the martyrdom of Stephen the deacon, and the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, who became the apostle Paul, the gospel was taken to the Gentiles.

Every detail of the prophecy of the 490 years was fulfilled in detail, just as the angel Gabriel foretold. But we need to go back to Daniel 9:23-24. Because Gabriel's assignment is to help Daniel to understand the vision, the march of the 2300 day prophecy of Daniel chapter 8. So how does the testimony of Gabriel in Daniel chapter 9 unlock the prophecy of Daniel chapter 8? The answer is found in a key word in Daniel 9:24. Let's look at Daniel 9:24 together. There the angel Gabriel tells Daniel, "Seventy sevens, that is 490, are DETERMINED for your people. Now the Hebrew word translated "determined", chathak, is only used this one time in the Hebrew Scriptures. So how do we know what it means? Several meanings are given by translators. But this Hebrew word is used frequently outside of the Bible. Ancient Rabbis used this word as meaning "to amputate" or "to cut off."

(Take a loaf of bread and cut off a section from the loaf. Hold up the small portion of the loaf). So what is the 490 cut off from? The 2300 days of the vision of Daniel 8 that Gabriel has come to help Daniel understand! Now it would make sense that the 490 years is cut off from the

middle, or cut off from the end. The 490 year prophecy that applies to Daniel and his people is cut off from the beginning of the 2300 year prophecy. That is vitally important information given by the angel Gabriel, because it gives us a starting date for the 2300 years.

If you add 2300 years to 457 BC, you come to AD 1844. That's when the work of cleansing the sanctuary would begin. Now in the great spiritual awakening of the 1800s in America, there were some Christians who came to understand some of the details of this prophecy. And they came to the conclusion that this great time prophecy of the 2300 days would be fulfilled in 1844. To be more specific, on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement in 1844, which was October 22, 1844. And I am convinced that they would correct in their understanding of the time for the conclusion of this great time prophecy of Daniel 8. One of those Christians in that great spiritual awakening was a man by the name of William Miller.

Where William Miller made a mistake was in his understanding of what would happen in 1844. Miller presumed that the cleansing of the sanctuary was a cleansing of the earth by fire. That must mean, Miller concluded, that Jesus would return in glory in 1844. Well, obviously, Miller, and other devoted followers of Jesus who held to that interpretation were greatly disappointed. Jesus did not return in glory in 1844. It was indeed a Great Disappointment.

What then was to occur starting in 1844, at the end of the great time prophecy of Daniel 8? The sanctuary was to be cleansed. The work of judgment was to begin. The final dealing with sin was to commence. How long will that time of judgment continue? We don't know. But this we do know. We're almost home! Because soon the declaration will be heard, "It is finished! Revelation 22:11-12 "....."

Some people are tempted to live in anxiety and fear, knowing that we are living in the

time of the judgment. But there is no need for fear. If you have accepted Jesus as your Savior and Lord, if you have asked Him to cleanse you from all sin, you can have blessed assurance and hope!

Once we have that blessed assurance, we don't have to fear the judgment. In fact, quite the opposite. We can rejoice that the heavenly judgment is even now in session. The final dealing with sin is even now in process. Are we home yet? No. Not quite. But we're almost home! Hallelujah! We're almost home.