

## Daniel 9. Treforest. 27.4.99

*Reading : Lev 26.14-16a, 33-35, 39-45 ; Deut 28.15-17; 29.14-15; 30.1-5; 2 Chron 36.16-23; Jer 25.11-12; 29.10-14, 19; Daniel 9.*

Consider, first the prayer, then the coming and message of Gabriel. As to the prayer, consider where and when prayed, why prayed, how prayed and what prayed.<sup>1</sup>

**Prayer : where and when.** Place was Babylon; time was 538 BC. First year Darius. Ch 6 = events happen in reign; chs 7-8 revert to Bab dynasty for 2 visions, now back to Darius. Darius was "made king"; clear not king in own right or by conquest but receive authority from another; Cyrus. In all probability Gubaru, whom Cyrus initially appoint governor/ruler of Babylon.

**Prayer : why.** Daniel was a prophetic student. Been meditating Jeremiah (several expressions reminiscent of his book). In chapter, furnish fine example - characterised by study of scripture and prayer. Find two references to 70 years, each with own emphasis : (i) 25.11-12 = words came about time when Daniel taken captive in 605 following siege in days of Jehoiakim - *addressed to men of Judah and Jerusalem, speak of desolation of land and bondage of people, followed by judgement on Babylon after 70 years (of perpetual desolations)*; (ii) 29.10-14 = at time just after king Jehoiachin captive (597; 8 years later) - *addressed to exiles in Babylon, tell how after 70 years people would seek God with all heart and He found of them and restore to land.* Daniel discover period of 70 years soon to expire; probably 67-68 years gone since he taken captive.

But if God spoken so clearly and time now near, why need pray? Possibly **(a)** Daniel *not altogether sure when 70 years commence* - was it time of own exile or that of Jehoiachin - or even when city and temple destroyed 10 years later again in 587? **(b)** Because see *no evidence of change in people* (no sign of repentance), yet prerequisite for restoration - stipulated by to both Moses, Lev 26.40-45 and Deut.30.1-5, and Jeremiah, 29.12-14. Note confession in Dan.9.13, "yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God"; lit "not made His face sweet", ie not sought favour and appeased. **(c)** Because *expect kingdom to be restored directly and dramatically by God* after 70 years - and see only recent transfer of power and rule from Babylon to Persia. May have expected immediate establishment of glorious kingdom predicted by earlier prophets.

Or **(d)** simply because *know this how God would achieve His purpose.* I.e. that prayer itself forms integral part of His purpose and will. Clearly recorded by slightly earlier prophet, "I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it. Thus saith the Lord, I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them", Ezek 36.36-37. Purpose of prayer is not alter or amend God's programme but achieve and fulfil it. Tension lay back in Lev 26, Deut 30 and Jer 29. Not for Daniel or me to reconcile. I not look for fulfilled prophecy but know that God's promises meant to encourage prayer not make it unnecessary. James 4.2 is simple equation. True boldness in prayer springs from conviction that pray according to will. "This is the confidence we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, he hears us; and if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petition which we asked of Him",<sup>1</sup> John 5.14-15.. Prayer is the means not of getting man's will done in heaven but God's done on earth.

**Prayer : how, vv.3,4a.** Daniel's prayer was (i) Resolute, determined. "Set face towards the Lord"; cf face towards ground, 10.15; towards Jerusalem, 6.10; (ii) Earnest. No mistaking the outward signs and evidence of penitence, contrition, confession. Now old man; probably 85. Prime Minister in greatest empire on earth. Difficult imagine the wealth, luxury, dignity, splendour and authority go with his position. He normally clothed in almost royal attire, his table spread with finest of foods. Now see him how he debased himself in God's presence; lies in coarse sackcloth, head smeared with ashes, appetite denied - as put self in right frame of mind by fasting. Felt seriousness of sin; offence to God. We need learn sin grieves Him if not us (cf Jabez, "Oh that keep me from evil that it may not grieve me!", 1 Chron.4.10). (iii) Personal; "prayed to the Lord *my* God", 4a cf end of prayer, "defer not, for thine own sake, O *my* God", v19. Yet at same time conscious of His greatness: set face to "sovereign Lord" God, 3, and address self to "great and awesome (fearful) God", 4. Know not only as God of mercy (lovingkindness), 4, but as God of "righteousness" (belong) and judgement (eg 7,14); I.e. Behold, goodness and severity of God, Rom 11.22. We need to remember who we approach; to tread His courts with unshod feet and humble heart and know thrill down spine when He says, "Call me Father"! (iv) Simple and specific. All clear and

intelligible. No difficult words. Sharp and to point, "cause fury turn away from city", 16, and "cause face shine on sanctuary", 17.

### **Prayer : what.**

Mostly confession, his acknowledgement of sin and guilt, 4-14; followed by supplication, his plea for mercy, 15-19. Worth noting that not ask single thing for self. Sought only God's honour. Certainly not wrong acquaint out Father with our needs but can be selfish in requests - aim to gratify own desires. James = another simple equation, "You ask and receive not, because ask amiss, that may consume on your lusts", 4.3. Daniel's main burden was God's honour : (i) careful to *vindicate His righteousness in respect of the past*, 14, and (ii) concerned with *His name and everything be done for His "sake" for the future*, 17-19. Cannot fail note that identify self with people and their guilt; "I prayed and said, *We have sinned*", vv 4-5. Yet he certainly not personally guilty of what confesses. Quite contrary. One of few lives recorded at length in Bible against which no failure recorded. Yet he know people had no hope escape well-deserved punishment without genuine humiliation, so he make confession *on behalf* people; note "we" present supplications for Thy great mercies, 18. In all, acknowledge "we have sinned" four times; 5,8,11,15.

### Outline of confession, 4-14 :

4-5 *God's mercy and people's rebellion*

6 *aggravation of their sin - because had refused listen to His servants the prophets*

7-8 *consequence of their sin - confusion of face (shame betrayed in countenance) wherever*

(7 - near in Jerusalem or far in counties driven) and whoever be (8 - kings, princes or fathers)

*Repeat in vv 9-14. Return to :*

9 *God's mercy and people's rebellion*

10 *aggravation of their sin - because had refused listen to His servants the prophets*

11-14 *consequence of their sin - the curse, oath and evil from God (sense of disaster)*

If God righteous and faithful, Israel very opposite, **5**. Daniel use variety of words for "sin": to err from the right; to be perverse; to do wrong in rebellion; to fall away from commands. His way of emphasising that had sinned in every way possible. **6** = was not case of ignorance but of wilful disobedience. **11-14** = the calamities ("our desolations", 18) which were poured out were not accidental, "therefore", **11**, or unjust, "for the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth", **14**.

Supplication, 15-19. "And now", 15,17 lit. Supplication marked by great *passion and fervour*, "beseech", 16, determine to engage attention of God's ear and eyes, 18, and short sharp appeals, "O Lord, hear, forgive, hearken and do", 19. He pleaded (i) God's honour; repeated stress laid on "Thy" city, holy mountain, people, sanctuary, name; (ii) His past interventions, 15-16. Go back to Exodus at beginning of national history, provide striking parallel of bondage in foreign land. Base petition on great act of mercy which God accomplished then. Implication clear, "As you brought us out of bondage in Egypt with mighty hand, so also now bring out us of bondage in Babylon". "According to all thy righteousness", 16; i.e. to all the proofs and demonstrations of Thy righteousness; i.e. to all done previously by virtue of Thy faithfulness for people. (iii) His mercies, 18. Said that mercies and forgivenesses belong to God, 9 (note plural; denote emphasis and intensity). Now, based on mercies, 18, plead for forgiveness, 19.

Wonderful reflect that Daniel on knees exert more real power than Darius or Cyrus on throne.

**Coming of Gabriel, 20-23.** Pleaded that God would not delay ("defer not"), 19; "while was yet speaking", 20-21; "at beginning of supplications, commandment (word) came forth and I am come", 23. Case of unfinished prayer; cf sermon, Acts 10. Compare "came to pass, before done speaking, behold, Rebecca came out", Gen 24.15. So not know how would have ended, v19. Daniel noted time evening oblation, 21, 3pm; cf Ezra 9.4 (sat astonished until evening sacrifice, but had altar - had built it!). When Daniel prayed the levitical system in abeyance but in faith reckoned as if still functioning. 23 = *Gabriel* sent to tell that prayer heard; cf "Fear not, Zacharias, for thy *prayer is heard*", Luke 1.13 (I am old man/Gabriel, 18-19). Come to bring "*understanding*", 22-23; cf Daniel understood number of years, v 2. 23 assure that "*greatly beloved*" cf "man", 10.11,19. Signify "desired, precious"; viz object of God's delight. Cf apocalyptic prophet of NT (John) - the disciple whom Jesus loved.

Learn from vv 20-21; 23a, our prayers are *heard* in heaven as soon as offered. God *can answer* immediately; "It shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear", Isa 65.24; context = Messianic kingdom, "the wolf and the lamb shall feed together", v25; sandwich between, "when I called you did not answer; when I spoke, you did not hear", 65.12; 66.4. Someone may ask, How able answer before call? Frankly, silly question - He is God. What grace! God sometimes starts to answer at the beginning of our prayers too.

### Message of Gabriel, 24-27.

Section not chronological. V 24 = main substance and summary - aimed to encourage. Vv 25-27 = explanatory. Daniel had sought assurance about sanctuary, 17, and city, 16, 18, because reached end of 70 years. Give Daniel consolation that command/word would go forth for restoration of Jerusalem, 25, but much more. "Going forth of command rebuild" = *only the starting point*. Message of Gabriel extend to ultimate design for people and holy city, embracing, not only coming of Messiah, but restraint of sin and the introduction of everlasting righteousness. Daniel told of programme right down to commencement of Messianic kingdom. God's answer to his prayer went far beyond his request; we too pray to "him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think", Eph 3.20.

In brief, Daniel told of seventy units, each of seven parts; weeks of years.

Told that 70 weeks were decreed which would bring 6 blessings : 3 negative and 3 positive.

- (a) "*finish transgression*"; "restrain", hold sin back, arrest. Hinder, fetter.
- (b) "*make an end*" = seal sins; i.e. enclose securely; eg closing of letter or official document. Or shut up in prison. Coincide Satan bound, shut up in abyss which sealed, Rev.20.3.
- (c) "*make reconciliation/atonement for iniquity*". Either 2000 years before others, or sense of Zechariah: Look on One pierced, 12.10, and "in that day a fountain be opened for house of David and inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness", 13.1. Sometimes OT = not refer victim's death but application of blood; for example cleansed leper. Point may well be that Lord, who actually bruised/crushed for iniquities when He was "cut off", would apply it to nation when they repent and mourn at His second advent.
- (d) "*bring in (cause to come) everlasting righteousness*". Messiah's kingdom be characterised by rule of righteousness and equity; "a sceptre of righteousness ... ", Heb 1.8; "king reign in righteousness", Isa.32.1. [Millenium = only initial stage of everlasting kingdom? "Kingdom ... shall stand for ever", Dan 2.44; "An everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away", 7.14, "kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever", 7.18, "kingdom is an everlasting kingdom", 7.27; Cf Gabriel in Luke 1.33, "of His kingdom there shall be no end".] No more captivities of 70 years or any other duration!
- (e) "*seal up vision and prophet*". No need for either. Have nothing more to add so both cease.
- (f) "*anoint the Holy of Holies*". Consecration of kingdom Temple of Ezek 40-46; not that defiled and polluted by prince to come. As tabernacle and furniture was anointed, Exod 29.36; 30.26-29. Possibly by very presence of God - the return of glory cloud.

70 weeks were to be divided into 3 unequal parts, 7,62,1 - and the one into two equal sections of half week each. Conclusion of **7** = city finished; conclusion of **62** = Messiah the prince appears; conclusion of **1** = destruction of destroyer (the Desolator) and the blessings of v24.

"Commandment (word)", 25 = Neh 2.5-9 concerning building of city. Artaxerxes' 20<sup>th</sup> year = 444 BC. Previously folk had dwelt in ciled houses but had no protecting wall, all-important in structure of ancient city. Persians understandably reluctant; fortifications of Jerusalem had cost even Nebuchadnezzar great problems. Very risky policy to allow rebuild walls etc; so Cyrus not permit, nor Artaxerxes earlier for Ezra, 7.11-26.

"*To Messiah the prince*" - lit "an anointed one, a prince(leader, ruler)", 25. It was Gabriel who announced His forthcoming birth to Mary; "Lord God shall give to him the throne of his father David", Luke 1.32. One calculation show expire very day of triumphant entry to Jerusalem, the only time when Lord openly present Himself to the people as their Messiah and King, Zech.9.9; Matt.21.1-5. Key assumption = year consist of 360 days. Quite possible. In Babylonian and Hebrew reckoning year was luni-solar; viz 360 days. Hence celestial sphere represent apparent annual path of sun divided into 360 degrees. True of historical Books of Moses; Gen 7.11; 8.3-4, and prophetic Book of Revelation; 11.2-3; 12.6. [Anderson takes starting point as Nisan BC 445,

arithmetic as  $483 \times 360 = 173,880$ , and terminus as 10<sup>th</sup> Nisan AD 32. Seems that decree = BC 444; terminus therefore move to AD 33.] Bring to AD 33. This particular prophecy may partly explain sense expectation at time of Lord's birth; eg Anna and Simeon, and just possibly that of gentiles that ruler expected come out of Judea as indicated by Tacitus and Suetonius.

End of v 25 probably refer to building of the city; ie by end of 7 weeks. "The "street" = lit "that which is wide"; possibly a square or large open space. The "wall" = "a moat or trench" - part of fortifications. Point is restored internal and external constructions. Not unlikely take 49 years, given "trouble" (affliction, distress, anguish) of times - the opposition put up by Sanballat and his associates during the days of Nehemiah.

But if kingdom not to come after 70 years, surely would with appearance of Messiah the prince? No. He to be rejected and Jerusalem destroyed, 26. "Cut off" (or, cut down) often used to describe violent death. "Have nothing" = lit "there is not to Him". Ie He not possess what due and should belong to Him as Messiah, in terms of the kingdom and glory and a place among the people. We know He had no sceptre - only a reed; no crown - only thorns; no royal salute - only soldier's spittle; no throne - only a cross; no glory - only shame. When Messiah was cut off, He had nothing - nothing, that is, but the load of sin which was properly ours.

Reference is made to another "prince". "*A prince, the coming one*". "Coming" may imply hostile intent (as in 1.1; 11.10 and 2 Chron 36.29 of Nebuchadnezzar). "The" possibly indicate one whose coming is known, one with whom already familiar; if so probably "little horn" of 7.8,24-26. He to "change laws", 7.25; cf stopping of sacrifices, 9.27. Work of destruction (probably AD 70) attributed people not prince. This prophecy skip over church period to that of the Beast. [Cf similar leap/hiatus in Isa 61.2; Zech 9.9-10 (Matt 21.5-9).]

"*The end thereof*" most probably refers to the prince; viz "and his end shall be with a flood" - of God's wrath.

Gabriel takes us back to what happen before the Beast comes to his end. "*And unto the end shall be war, desolations are determined*", 26. This is explained in v27. Having unified the western world, the Beast will "cause to prevail a covenant (treaty, Gen 14.13; Josh 9.15-16)", no doubt guaranteeing his protection. After 3½ years Satan will be cast from heaven to earth and will energise and empower the Beast, Rev 12-13. The Beast will rule as undisputed ruler of the world, will demand universal worship, and will break the treaty and put stop to all offerings, both bloody and not (oblations). He will wage "war" against the saints, 7.21, and be the Destroyer (Desolator) par excellence. Chapter 9 begins and ends with "desolations", vv 2,26-27 (word occur x6 in all; vv 2, 17,18 26,27(2)), but have never been desolations like this; "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be", Matt.24.21.

Possibly translate "*a Destroyer (Desolator) comes on (or over) the wing of (idolatrous) abominations*". Possibly a reference to an idol being set up on the pinnacle (wing, Matt.4.5) of the temple; LXX = "on the temple shall be the abomination of desolations" - possibly the image of the Beast, which all to worship, Rev 13.15; cf "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place", Matt 24.15.

"*Until the end that is determined/decreed shall be poured out on the Desolator*". The idolatrous abominations and the desolation will continue until the Desolator finally meets his fate in the pouring out of the flood of divine wrath; cf v 26. He "shall come to his end", 11.45, destroyed by the breath of the Lord's mouth, 2 Thess.2.8, and cast alive into the lake of fire, Rev.19.20.

Then, and only then, will God introduce "everlasting righteousness", v 24. And the rejected King will be rejected no longer - for "He must reign".

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<sup>i</sup> In chapter 6, Daniel would rather spend a night with ravenous (Dan. 6. 24) predators than miss a day with regular prayers.