

PRAYER RELATING TO PROPHECY IN DANIEL 9

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Daniel's prayer for Israel in Daniel 9 precedes the famous prophecy of the "seventy sevens" in the same chapter. The prayer models submission to God's will both in heartfelt confession of Israelite sin and passionate intercession for deliverance from exile and the blessing of restoration. Daniel adeptly uses OT books such as Deuteronomy, Psalms, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Chapter 9 is one of many OT examples of how God uses human prayer to accomplish His predetermined sovereign plan.

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The prayer of Daniel 9 ranks high among OT texts that demonstrate a unity between prayer for God to work out His will and prophecy that He will fulfill His sovereign purposes. Coming from the man most noted for prayer among OT prophets, the passage is all the more significant. As he does in Daniel 2, 6, and 10, Daniel exemplifies a servant sensitive to God's concerns and expends himself in prayer for the fulfilling of the divine program.

THE AUTHENTICITY OF DANIEL'S PRAYER

Before an examination of the text, attention must be directed to efforts that impugn the prayer as an artificial patchwork interpolated by a second century writer borrowing from others of post-exilic days.¹ There is no valid cause to fault the prayer, as though it mixes together

¹E.g., Werner Kessler, *Zwischen Gott und Weltmacht: Der Prophet Daniel* (3rd ed.; Stuttgart: Botschaft Altentestament, 1961) 130-31. James Montgomery suggested a second century author, but felt that he could have used such a prayer as fits this context, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (ICC, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1927) 362.

phrases from prayers in Ezra 6:6-15; Neh 9:5-38; 2 Baruch 1-3. Charles urged seven reasons against the prayer's authenticity,² but Leupold answered these in some detail.³

Jones, though erring in holding a second century date, rebuts several arguments to show how the prayer blends appropriately with its context.⁴ First he notes that it is mere arbitrary opinion to conjecture that the prayer was composed in Palestine, not Babylon. Second, he sees it as unconvincing to deny the validity of the prayer because of "unnecessary" repetitions. It is natural to repeat in prayers, sermons, or personal conversations.⁵ Third, he calls it a mistake to hold that 9:20-27 pays no attention to Daniel's substance in the prayer for pardon and restoration. Jones points out that the angel *does* answer his prayer for forgiveness and deliverance (v. 24). Fourth, he sees as arbitrary the requirement that 9:1-4a call for a prayer for illumination, not pardon and restoration. No adequate proof exists to restrict the type of prayer needed to elicit a revelatory response. Besides, Daniel combines concern for illumination (v. 22, reflecting back on the prayer) and restoration (v. 24, relating back to vv. 15-19).⁶

²R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Oxford: The Clarendon House, 1929) 226-27.

³H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel* (Columbus: Wartburg, 1949) 395-99.

⁴Bruce W. Jones, "The Prayer in Daniel IX," *VT* 18 (1968) 488-93.

⁵Repetition is a characteristic of Hebrew and other Semitic poetry and narrative. In prayer heartfelt reiteration similar to these can be expected. Repetition can be a mark of humanness and spontaneity before God. This is one way people voice all-important concerns. In an onrushing burden of prayer, concentration is on perils and fears, not polish and finesse, though these are not necessarily excluded.

⁶Even Jones reasons that linguistic ties connect the prayer with God's response. Daniel prays for Israel to have "insight" (v. 13) (cf. שָׂכַל [šākal], BDB, 968; John E. Goldingay, *Daniel* [vol. 30 of *Word Biblical Commentary*, eds. David A. Hubbard et al.; Waco, TX: Word, 1989] 249; the word means "to consider, have insight, pay attention" in an understanding way based on wise reflection [cf. Deut 32:29; Ps 41:2; 64:10; 106:7; 119:99; Dan 1:4, 17; 9:25]), which Gabriel in turn supplies. In v. 13, "turning" and "have insight into" are used together. Then in v. 25 new verbs represent these two concepts (Jones, "The Prayer" 489-91), though not with the same precise connotation. This is a step toward Israel's eventual deliverance.

Jones misconstrues Daniel 9 in other regards, however. First, he states that the prayer's use of the reward/retribution motif—blessings and cursings (Deuteronomy 28—29)—stems from Daniel's mistaken notion and is irrelevant to Dan 9:24-27. Arbitrarily assuming a second century dating, he contends that a retribution view in 9:4b-19 would be inappropriate as a comfort to Israel because they were still suffering after already being restored to their land. Jones sees the author being swayed to accept Gabriel's determinism (9:20 ff.) as a better answer to Israel's need than his own theory of retribution.

Jones has missed the thrust of Daniel 9. Though Israel suffers because of its sin, in both his prayer and his prophecy Daniel bases deliverance on God's covenant grace. He confesses Israel's sin, but does not imagine that Israel merits favor. Merited favor contradicts a hope in God's gracious covenant.⁷ Further, Daniel 9 nowhere suggests inconsistency between a plan God is certain to fulfill finally and His interim blessing or judgment in moral harmony with obedience or disobedience.⁸ Inconsistency originates only in the mind of an interpreter and is not found in the biblical accounts seen in their integrity.

Second, Jones wrongly reasons that since God's word went forth "at the beginning of" Daniel's "supplications" (9:23), his prayer "made little difference to God."⁹ He sees the prophecy (vv. 24-27) as taking no account of the subject of the prayer, but ignoring it to make the point that God had previously determined His plan. It is better, however, to recognize that God's response does not ignore the prayer, but implements it in fulfilling His will. Jones has himself noted ties

⁷Rogers shows that God's covenant with Abram was gracious and unconditional (Cleon L. Rogers, Jr., "The Covenant with Abraham and its Historical Setting," *BSac* 127 [1970] 241-56). He explains how apparently conditional texts (e.g., Gen 12:1; 17:1; 17:9-14) harmonize with this (252-54).

⁸*Ibid.* Psalm 89:30-37 sees the impossibility of the abrogation of the Davidic covenant even through human disobedience and its consequent divine chastening. The covenant will finally be fulfilled through divine action. God even inclines men, that they might be restored (Jer 31:18; cf. Ps 80:3, 7, 19 [Heb. text: 80:4, 8, 20]). Men must obey in the right spirit, but must do so as enabled by God (Ps 119:32, 33-40; Phil 2:12, 13). God's blessing does not produce human merit because humans merit no reward. Their rewards are simply a result of what God has graciously given.

⁹Jones, "The Prayer" 493.

between the prayer and the prophecy, but does not follow through with this. Daniel's earnest cries for city, sanctuary, and people are needs about which the prophecy offers reassurance (v. 24).¹⁰

To say that prayer makes little difference to God mishandles Scripture not only here, but in scores of passages. God has a sure decree of what He will do (cf. Dan 4:35), but has already correlated with this an opportunity for surrendered people to be involved in its implementation through prayer. Prayer should be submission to and involvement in God's carrying out His will. God's plan is certain from beginning to end (Isa 46:9-10) and need not be decided piece-meal along the way or at the dictates of men. Yet He Himself challenges man to pray (Jer 33:3) for His own concerns, including the restoration of Israel (Jer 33:6 ff.). As events advance toward His appointed fulfillment, He appeals to mankind to be prayerfully involved in His work, and these prayers do make a difference to God. He does not choose to work, as Jones reasons, "quite apart from prayers and quite apart from previous ideas of retribution."¹¹ Harris differs with him: "How such a prayer of confession and petition to God could 'make little difference to God' is beyond imagination."¹² The prayer's answer in Dan 9:24-27 is not an interpretive *change* from the truth Daniel expresses in 9:4b-19, but correlates well with it.

The notion that Daniel borrowed from Ezra, Nehemiah, and others is unnecessary, because Daniel was a man rich in the Word of God. In fact, it is impossible with a sixth century dating of the book. Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah were all beneficiaries of the same scriptural treasure. A person saturated with such books as Exodus, Deuteronomy, Psalms, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel could spontaneously incorporate words or phrases from these sources into his prayers. God's word is spiritual food for His people (Job 23:12; Jer 15:16). Strong reliance on earlier biblical books is natural in a prayer featuring a guilt and history of the same people. Then too, while prayers in Ezra and Nehemiah, or even Baruch, are similar to Daniel's, they also show

¹⁰Cf. discussion of 9:20-27 later in this essay.

¹¹Jones, "The Prayer" 493.

¹²Patrick Harris, "A Biblical Model for Penitential Prayer, Daniel 9:3-19" (M.Div. thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, Ind., 1986) 51.

marked differences.¹³ Nehemiah, for example, praised God for His mercies, saw Him as righteous, confessed, and repented. Yet he voiced none of the intercession for Israel's restoration as is found in Daniel 9 because in Nehemiah's day, many had already returned. Each of the prayers relates to its own context: Daniel's in 539 B.C., Ezra's in 457 B.C. and after, and Nehemiah's around 445/444 B.C.

Because of no convincing evidence to the contrary, this study assumes a sixth century B.C. setting and a perspective of unparalleled blessing for Israel after their Messiah's second coming.¹⁴ The Messiah will do His work as a catastrophic "stone" (2:44) and as "one like a son of man coming on the clouds of heaven" (7:13-14).¹⁵ He will dramatically defeat all enemies of His covenant people and restore His people to blessing.

Daniel's prayer is one of praise, confession, petition, and intercession in circumstances that are for his people the very reverse of unprecedented blessings. That God's people deserve exile from their land (9:4b-14) is clear. The prayer pleads for God to restore the people (9:15-19). The following discussion develops the aspects of the prayer and the way it fits its historical and literary context.

DANIEL'S READINESS TO PRAY (9:1-4a)

Daniel's prayer is appropriate in this context, e.g., Daniel's situation of 9:1-2, the visit by Gabriel (vv. 20-23), and the answer of Gabriel (vv. 24-27). Daniel is sensitive to his people's need, saturated with Scripture, sympathetic with his people in their need, and surrendered to God.

¹³Cf. Leupold, *Exposition* 395-99.

¹⁴In support of a sixth century dating, see R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969) 1110-27; also his "Book of Daniel," *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (ed. M. C. Tenney; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975) 2:12-21; Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (rev. ed.; Chicago: Moody, 1974) 379-403. For a premillennial case, cf. Robert C. Culver, *Daniel and the Latter Days* (New York: Revell, 1954); introduction and Daniel 2, 7, 9, and 12 in Leon Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973).

¹⁵E. J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949) 154-56.

Sensitive to the Need

The timing of this prayer is strategic in God's plan. It is relevant both to Israel and to Babylon, her captor in exile. The first year of Darius is significant to Daniel. His peril with the lions in chapter 6 and this prayer probably came in the same year, 539/538 B.C. By faith he "shut the mouths of lions" (Heb 11:33) because God shut those mouths in answer to his prayer (Dan 6:22). Daniel's God sent an angel to protect him in peril as He miraculously answered him in chapter 9.

The situation is relevant also as to timing in God's prophetic plan. Darius's first year was his first year of reign over Babylon after Persia's conquest of that nation. God sovereignly accomplished this, for He "removes kings and establishes kings" (Dan 2:21). This is a new era. Daniel, sensitive to the momentous change and its effect on his people, mentions the "first year" twice for emphasis (9:1-2). After years of neo-Babylonian lordship, Daniel's people are at a point that provoked inquiry regarding God's next move on their behalf.

Saturated with Scripture

The man who prays meditates first on prophecy that affirms God's plan. In the initial year of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, Jeremiah had predicted Israel's subjection to Babylon for seventy years (Jer 25:9-11). He foresaw that God would punish the king of Babylon and his nation at the end of that time (vv. 12-13). It is relevant in Daniel 9 that the demise of Babylon's king and Cyrus's designation of Darius¹⁶ as his sub-ruler over Babylon was of extreme interest as a sign that the seventy years were near their end. It was high time to seek God's plan for His people, whose exile was expiring.

Jeremiah's later words in Jeremiah 29 were of further help to Daniel. After 597 B.C., when Babylon deported Judah's King Jehoiachin with 50,000 subjects, Jeremiah wrote to the exiles. He advised them to build houses, plant crops, marry, and pray for the welfare of Babylon to which their own welfare was related (vv. 5-7). Settling into exilic life was sensible, because God would not bring them back to their land until "seventy years have been completed in Babylon" (v. 10). God's aims for Israel are reassuring in Jer 29:11: "For I know

¹⁶That Darius was "made king" (cf. the hopal form of the verb in Dan 9:1) could be by God permitting it (cf. Ps 75:6-7; Dan 4:35; 5:25-28), or by a human superior. Cf. evidence to distinguish Cyrus from Darius, who was his appointee over the Babylonian part of the Persian Empire in John Whitcomb, Jr., *Darius the Mede* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959).

the plans that I have for you . . . plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope."

Within the seventy years, near or at their end, the Lord tells the Israelites,

Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you shall search for Me with all your heart. And I will be found by you . . . and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations . . . and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile (vv. 12-14).

In harmony with God's plan, prayer strategically fits with prophecy affirming restoration in Jeremiah 29.

Daniel, being full of knowledge (1:17; 2:17-30; 4:8, 9; 5:10-16), is steeped in God's promises in chapter 9. He submits himself to God and becomes a representative of his people. As Jeremiah 29 directed, he commits himself to "call," "come," "pray," "seek," and "search" for God with all his heart. God articulates His will in Jer 29:12-14, putting His own authority on prayer as a means in restoring Israel. Daniel is part of a program that God foreordained. He prays, probably kneeling,¹⁷ calling on God to act and forward His purposes. In this he joins a band of others who prayed in agreement with God's purposes to restore Israel.¹⁸ Another thing is clear about Daniel, his sympathy for his people.

Sympathetic with His People

The first person "we" (v. 5, etc.) shows Daniel's deep involvement with and for the sake of his people. In so doing, he fills the role of earlier leaders on behalf of Israel. Moses prayed for Israel's benefit at a crucial time when the people fashioned a golden calf (Exod 32:11-14). Jeremiah also prayed with many tears, seeking the correction of

¹⁷Daniel consistently knelt (Dan 6:10).

¹⁸Ps 80:3, 7, 19 [in Heb. text, 80:4, 8, 20] (prayer); Jer 29:12 (prayer) with vv. 12-14 (restoration); 30:3-11, 18-24; 31:7-40 (restoration); 32:17-25 (prayer) and 32:26-44 (restoration). The anticipated "everlasting covenant" (32:40) appears to be the "eternal covenant" of Heb 13:20.

his people (13:17; 14:17).¹⁹ The psalmists are often moved to such prayer.²⁰ In such a chain of prayer warriors, Daniel longs to see God lift Israel to a bright future (vv. 15-19). He is painfully aware that God's "people" continue to erect a road block against the moral direction God wants. They are unrepentant and do not appropriate the way to blessing (v. 13).²¹ For seventy years plus many years before, they had needed repentance. Israel had "bewailed its sad lot."²² They regretted their sentence, but failed to attain a significant repentance.

Daniel rushes to the crux of concerns, acknowledging sin (vv. 4b-14). He deals thoroughly with sin before he intercedes for restoration from sin and its consequences (vv. 15-19).

Surrendered to God

"So," i.e. consequentially (וַ [wā], v. 3), when Daniel prayed, he was sensitive to his time, steeped in God's plan, and sympathetic with the need for help. Those three characteristics also reflect His surrender to God. His surrender is also visible in his flint-like concentration in v. 3. He says literally, "I set my face toward the Lord. . . ." He resolutely applied his attention, fixed his focus.²³ The verb נָתַן (nātan, "to give, set") appears with the accusative "my face," followed by the infinitive "to seek." In surrender, Daniel stations himself to seek "the Lord," אֲדֹנָי (ʾādōnāy), a word that has in view His almighty authority or Lordship.²⁴ This is the "Lord" Daniel often addresses in this prayer (vv. 4, 7, 8, 16, 17, 19). He combines it here with אֱלֹהֵימָא (ʾēlōhēm, "God") the word used for God the creator in Gen 1:1–2:4a. That Daniel approaches

¹⁹Jeremiah did pray, but some passages have God telling him not to pray for Israel because of their hardened rejection (7:16; 11:14; 14:11, 12).

²⁰Cf. references in n. 18 above and also Psalms 74 and 79.

²¹God calls on people to repent (e.g., 2 Kgs 17:13; Isa 55:6-7; Jer 25:5; Ezek 14:6; 18:30). Yet in enabling grace He helps men repent (Ps 80:3, 7, 19 [in Heb. text, 80:4, 8, 20]; Jer 31:18). Men come as He draws them (cf. John 6:44).

²²H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel* 395-99.

²³BDB, 680; cf. examples in 2 Chr 20:3; Eccl 1:13, 17; 8:9, 16; Dan 10:12.

²⁴In Dan 1:2, for example, אֲדֹנָי is in control even when Babylon's king conquers Judah, because He gave Judah's king into Nebuchadnezzar's hand. And in 9:4, אֲדֹנָי is "the great and awesome God."

God in the humility of "fasting, sackcloth and ashes"²⁵ with a sincere heart also suggests the seriousness of surrender. Daniel is not just going through the motions. His actions express inward earnestness, in harmony with his genuine walk with God throughout the book.

The surrender of the man emerges in the form of "prayer and supplications" (9:3). The former word תְּפִלָּה (*tēpillāh*) does not in itself necessarily mean "intercede" as some assume.²⁶ Sawyer more definitively notes that the noun or its verbal form refers to prayer in general. This could sometimes narrow to distinct aspects such as praise, thanksgiving, confession, petition, and intercession, but not here.²⁷

The latter word "supplications" (וַתְּחַנֵּן [wəṭṭāhānūntm]) occurs often in this prayer (9:3, 17, 18, 20, 23). It is one of several words denoting the idea found in חָנָן (*hānan*), "he is gracious." It is

²⁵Hypocrites can simulate these outward practices, as Jezebel in her fast (1 Kgs 21:9, 12) or wrongly motivated actions of others (Isa 58:3-7). On the other hand, in the lives of pious ones they are signs of God-honoring devotion and true submission (fasting, Dan 10:2, 3; sackcloth, 2 Kgs 19:1, 2; ashes in mourning, Job 2:8; Jer 6:26).

²⁶J. F. A. Sawyer, "Types of Prayer in the Old Testament. Some Semantic Observations on Hitpallel, Hithannēn, etc.," *Semitics* 7 (1980) 131-43.

²⁷Sawyer, "Types of Prayer" 131-43. The idea of intercession is specified by a preposition such as בְּעַד (*bē'ad*, "pray on behalf of") (e.g., Gen 20:7; Num 21:7; Jer 7:16). Used alone as in Dan 9:3, the word usually refers to liturgical prayer in general (cf. 2 Sam 7:27; 1 Kgs 8:54; Ps 35:3; 80:5; Isa 1:15; Dan 9:3, 21 [noun] and 9:4 [verb]). Another indication of the word's general meaning is in Isa 56:7 where the temple is twice the "house of prayer" (*tēpillāh*). Prayer in God's temple could diverge into a variety of particular facets. Jonah, while intensely alarmed inside the great fish, illustrates a more restricted meaning: "My prayer (*tēpillāh*) came to Thee, into Thy holy temple" (Jonah 2:7 [Heb. text, 2:8]). In such a predicament, the term for prayer must denote the specific aspect of petition. The general meaning of *tēpillāh* is similar to προσευχῆς (*proseuchēs*) in the NT (cf. Eph 6:18; Phil 4:6) where other words specify requests (e.g. δεήσεως [*deēseōs*], Eph 6:18; Phil 4:6, and αἰτήματα [*aitēmata*], Phil 4:6) (cf. J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* [1953 rpt.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.] 160). In the LXX פָּלַל (*pālāl* is usually rendered by προσεύχομαι (*proseuchomai*) (R. B. Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament* [1976 rpt.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.] 219).

a prayer for favor.²⁸ Jeremiah employs it in 3:21 and 31:9 as a parallel with "weepings," the outpourings of a soul in trouble, desperate for grace. Such a term is apt when a person approaches God in "particularly urgent prayer, loud or tearful supplication. . . ."²⁹

Probably remembering King Solomon, Daniel does the same thing as he did in the prayer of temple dedication. "Listen," Solomon had pled before God, "to the supplications of Thy servants and Thy people Israel, when they pray toward this house . . ." (2 Chr 6:21).³⁰

DANIEL'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF BLAME (9:4b-14)

Daniel's prayer acknowledges Israel's blame, first giving prominence to God's glory (vv. 4b, 7a, 9a) and then confessing their guilt in comparison to that glory.

Daniel "prayed" using the same umbrella word for prayer as in v. 3. Then he uses a specific word for prayer (יָדָהּ [yadah]) in confessing the sins of his people (cf. v. 20 also). Confession is an implicit acknowledgment of worthiness in God and in His standards while admitting guilt because of factors that violate His character and values.

God's Glory First (9:4b)

Daniel first saw the guilt in the light of God's glory, similar to what Jesus taught in His model prayer which begins with God as heavenly and hallowed (Matt 6:9; Luke 11:2). To Daniel, one title for God is אֲדֹנָי (ʾādōnāy) as articulated twice in v. 4. He is also "the great and awesome אֱלֹהִים (ʾēl)." It is apropos for Daniel to conceive of God this way, not because of borrowing from post-exilics but through

²⁸Johannes Hermann, "εὐχομαι, εὐχή, etc.," *TDNT*, 2:785.

²⁹Hermann, "εὐχομαι" 2:785. Cf. Pss 28:2, 6; 31:22; 116:1; 130:2; 140:6 for other examples. Zechariah 12:10 refers to a spirit (or Spirit) of grace (רִחֻם, *hēn*) and of supplications, i.e. a receptive and repentant attitude, sensitive to the need for grace. God "gives grace to the afflicted" (Prov 3:34b). Among others, He gave grace to Noah (Gen 6:8), Abraham (18:3; cf. vv. 17-19), Lot (19:19), Moses (Exod 33:12, 13; 34:9), Gideon (Judg 6:17), and David (2 Sam 15:25).

³⁰Solomon has *tahānūnīm* often in prayer for Israel (2 Chronicles 6 = 1 Kings 8). Daniel exemplifies an adeptness in Scripture that fosters naturalness and spontaneity in incorporating biblical wording and concepts in prayer.

his meditation on Deuteronomy, which was written centuries before his day.³¹ Deuteronomy 10:17 says, "For the Lord your God is the God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God . . ." (cf. also Deut 7:21; 10:21). Daniel knew such a God whom he has already described as the "Prince of princes" (8:25).³² As *ʿādōnāy*, the mighty God, nothing was too hard for Him as proven by His deeds in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and at the Jordan. He was awe-inspiring, incredible, and not to be taken lightly, but greatly feared.

He is a God of glory also as "one who keeps" His covenant. He is so different from the Israelites who had broken their covenant. He made a covenant with Abraham and his people in Gen 12:1-3, 7. As the covenant God He kept Jacob wherever he went (Gen 28:15, 20) and keeps those who love Him (Ps 145:20). His blessing and preservation of Israel is invoked (Num 6:24). He is asked to keep Israel as a precious pupil of an eye (Ps 17:8). He can be trusted to enliven His servant to keep His word (Ps 119:17, 44). By the authority of Scripture as borne out in personal experience, Daniel knew that God keeps His covenant.

God also keeps His covenant loving-kindness—His *ḥesed*. Daniel knew this from a vast number of passages. The covenant God is a God of kindness (Ps 59:18; 130:7). He delights in it and, because of it, assures Israel that He will stand true to His covenant even when they are in exile (Mic 7:18). He is kind in His deliverance from enemies and other troubles (Ps 21:8; 143:8, 12). So men rejoice in His kindness and hope in it (Ps 33:18). He is kind in keeping His covenant with David (2 Sam 7:15 = 1 Chr 17:13 = 2 Sam 22:51) and in quickening with spiritual life (Ps 109:26; 119:41, 76, 88, 124, 149, 159). He is the God who gives what Daniel and his people need—forgiveness, hope, covenant fulfillment.

It is fitting for Daniel to accent these positives before spelling

³¹For evidence of a Mosaic dating of Deuteronomy, see R. K. Harrison, *Introduction* 637-62.

³²Some refer this to the high priest Onias III, murdered in 171 B.C. However, the reference is more reasonably to God (Goldingay, *Daniel* 210-11; Wood, *A Commentary* 228; Young, *The Prophecy* 172, 181). In favor of this, God is the "Prince of the host" (8:11), since the place Antiochus Epiphanes opposes is "His sanctuary," i.e. more probably God's. God instituted the sacrifice (Exodus 29). And in 8:25 it is God that the "horn" (leader) stands against, for the "horn" is broken without human agency, i.e. by the One he opposes, God (cf. Dan 2:45).

out the sin for which God's lovingkindness is a remedy.

Still, God is not an impersonal machine that automatically cranks out forgiveness. He is what He is for Israel and does what He does for Israel toward the goal of what He wants Israel to be toward Him. He is such a God toward "those who love Him and keep His commandments." Loving Him and obeying His commandments entwine with one another in Scriptures familiar to Daniel (cf. Deut 5:10; 7:9). They would eventually combine in the teaching of Daniel's "anointed one"—the Messiah (cf. Dan 9:25; John 14:21-23). A psalmist, long before Daniel, knew the people whom God keeps are those who love Him (Ps 145:20a). "But all the wicked He will destroy" (Ps 145:20b).

Daniel learned from the Word that Israel was to keep (שָׁמַר) [šāmar] God's covenant (Exod 19:5) and commandments (Exod 20:6; Deut 4:2; 5:29). Some did, though not sinlessly, and found God's blessing in a life of intimacy (Ps 103:18; 106:3; 119:63, 67). This also would happen later in NT times (John 14:21-23; 1 John 2:5; 3:24). The OT had other ways to articulate this obedience, besides through šāmar. Some people walked blamelessly in the law of God, seeking Him (Ps 119:1, 2), delighting in His law, and bearing fruit (Ps 1:1-3). Daniel was this kind of person (Daniel 1, 6). God has His remnant (Isa 6:13) and can restore by turning Israelites to Himself (Jer 31:18; cf. Ps 80:3, 7, 19 [Heb. text, 80:4, 8, 20]).³³

The prophecy later in Daniel 9 tells how the covenant God will terminate Israel's sin. He will bring in "everlasting righteousness" (9:24).

Israel's Guilt in Light of God's Glory (9:5-14)

Using different terminology, the prayer acknowledges Israel's sin at least nineteen times. In v. 5 Daniel reels off four finite verbs for sin followed by a fifth verb—an infinitive absolute. He also has other expressions for sin or repeats some of these words for emphasis.

The enormity of sin. Heaping up terms, he candidly acknowledges serious guilt before God. Solomon's prayer, which had used three verbs to acknowledge sin (1 Kgs 8:47 = 2 Chr 6:37), resembles v. 5. But here two more words are added to Solomon's list.

Daniel includes himself with his people by using "we." Whatever the degree and nature of his sin, he confesses it along with theirs.

Israel has "sinned," חָטָא (ḥātāʿ), i.e., "missed the mark" of God's

³³Cf. nn. 8 and 21 regarding God's bringing men to repentance.

will. Daniel uses this word often (vv. 5, 8, 11, 15). His competency in the Scriptures provides him many examples of the word. Often these name Israel's sin (Num 14:40; Josh 7:11; 1 Sam 12:10; Ps 78:32). As Jerusalem is in wreckage, Jeremiah says, "we have sinned" (Lam 5:16). Cases of an individual who sinned, such as a priest (Lev 4:3), Balaam (Num 22:34), Saul (1 Sam 15:24, 30), David (2 Sam 24:10), are frequent.

Not only did they "miss the mark," they also "committed iniquity" (חַטָּא [cārāh]), another word used frequently in the prayer (Dan 9:5, 13, 16). God promises an eventual solution to iniquity (v. 24). The term speaks of doing wrong. Its noun form is exemplified in the iniquity of the Amorites (Gen 15:16) with Leviticus 18 specifying hideous perversions, Cain's murder of Abel (Gen 4:13), the ten spies' belittling of God as inadequate to conquer walled villages and giants (Num 14:34), and David's ugly escapade with Bathsheba (Ps 51:2a).

Daniel strengthens his description of the enormity of the sin even more. "We acted wickedly," עָשָׂנוּ רָשָׁעִים (*rāš'a*^c, vv. 5, 15). The word sometimes contrasts with righteousness (Ps 45:7; Eccl 3:16). It describes the misdeed when King Jehoshaphat "acted wickedly" in tolerating an alliance with wicked King Ahaziah, causing God to destroy his ships as a sign of displeasure (2 Chr 20:35). The word also describes resistance to God's ordinances and departing from His statues (2 Sam 22:22 f. = Ps 18:22 f.; cf. also Ps 106:6; Neh 9:33).

Daniel continues: "and rebelled" (cf. also v. 9). Joshua and Caleb urged Israel to act on their scouting report and not rebel (רָבַדָּ [mārad]) against the Lord (Num 14:9). Their sin of rebellion was so enormous to God that He would shut them out of Canaan. In context, the essence of that rebellion was a shrinking back in unbelief. They preferred their own notions of what was reasonable over the specific direction of God.

Daniel incorporates a fifth word: "and turned aside" (סָרָה [sār], vv. 5, 11). The idea is that they apostatized, or veered off course from the path of God. This resembles a woman who turns aside (*sār*) into a shameful impurity (Prov 11:22). Israel turned aside (*sār*) to make a molten image—a revolt, in essence—from fidelity to God's commandments (Deut 9:12). A new generation after Joshua turned aside (*sār*) quickly from obeying the commandments (Judg 2:17). The word occurs with another word, נָזַף (cāzab, "forsake"), in Jer 17:13: "Those who turn away from the Lord the hope of Israel . . . have forsaken the fountain of living waters."

Daniel includes still more phrases to show the enormity of sin

that warranted a great judgment.

The embarrassment of sin. Literally, "shame of faces" belongs to Israel (vv. 7, 8). Theirs is an "open shame," a humiliation. The same expression describes King Sennacherib of Assyria (2 Chr 32:21). He saw the overwhelming destruction of his military personnel in a single night's visitation by God's angel and retreated with shame of face to his own country.

In Ps 69:20 (Eng. text, 69:19), David prays for deliverance from shame. The context links the shame with sinking in the mire, being caught in deep waters, distress, reproach, and dishonor. Shame is the humiliation a broken heart can feel; it is a sick feeling, pain, and a wiped-out feeling producing weeping. In another case, Jer 2:26 likens Israel's shame in its ruin to the ignominy of a thief when exposed—a downcast, hopeless sensation. Jeremiah himself is ashamed before a rejecting people. He feels it in the whisperings, the ridicule, and the torture of the stocks (20:18).

In the context of Dan 9:7, the shame is the same. It is the emptiness produced when God has left some in Judah to behold a shattered existence and driven others to distant countries to taste bitterness without their land, city, temple, and other blessings.

Daniel knew from the Scriptures about God's promise of replacing shame with blessing in the Messianic day (Isa 61:7). Only God could do this, because righteousness [not shame] belongs to Him (Dan 9:14, 16). God loves righteousness (Ps 11:7), and His right hand is full of it (Ps 48:10). It was because of God's own nature and not for Israel's righteousness that God has blessed the nation (Deut 9:5). And it was because of His nature that He judged. Yet hope is in Him, in spite of judgment. From the Scriptures Daniel knew that God pledges to establish Israel in righteousness eventually (Isa 54:14). The prophecy corresponding to the prayer in Daniel 9 will show that God guarantees everlasting righteousness in place of earlier shame (v. 24).

The result of sin. The consequence for Israel's sin was the "curse and the oath" (v. 11). Daniel refers to the judgment God had warned He would bring if the people disobeyed. By His servant Moses He had promised blessings in the case of obedience (Lev 26:1-13; Deut 28:1-14), but curses as a penalty for disobedience (Lev 26:14-39; Deut 28:15-68).

The two nouns "curse" and "oath" are linked by a conjunction, which brings some to see a hendiadys. If so, the idea is "the curse of

the oath" or "the curse (pronounced) under oath."³⁴ It makes no sense to take the oath as a promise to bring judgment and the curse as the punishment itself, i.e., the content of the oath.

The judgment about which God warned Israel was the calamity that Daniel says "has been poured out" (נָטַף [nāṭak]). The word can picture a downpour of rain (Exod 9:33), but it usually pertains to pouring out God's wrath on Jerusalem.³⁵ It is forecast (Jer 7:20), then carried out (Jer 42:18). Sin's end was a "great calamity," so utter that Daniel says no city had been dealt a judgment as great as Jerusalem's (v. 12). The great (גָּדוֹל [gādōl]) God of v. 4 brought the great (gādōl) judgment of verse 12.³⁶ God in carrying out this devastation "caused His words to stand." The hiphil form registers a causative thrust of קָמַן (qām, "to stand, rise up," v. 12).³⁷ He promised His wrath against Israel would be great (Deut 29:24, 28) and their calamity at His hand would be great (Jer 30:14-15).

A man schooled in Scripture could see that as God was absolutely faithful to fulfill His judgment, He will be absolutely faithful to fulfill the promised blessing. He knew that the same word for "great," gādōl, attaches not only to calamity but also to God's great compassion (1 Kgs 3:6; Ps 57:10). Joining Daniel in prayer for Israel's future, Jeremiah assures that God will hear those who call upon Him and show them "great (gādōl) and mighty things . . ." (Jer 33:3). In that very context he defines these as a restoration of Israel to her land (33:6-22).

Lamentations depicts Jerusalem's awesome destruction, misery, desperation even to the point of parents eating their own children, and bankruptcy of all temporal comforts.³⁸ Jeremiah 16:1-9 portrays rampant death, lack of burial or regular mourning (vv. 4, 7), and

³⁴André Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1979) 176.

³⁵E.g., a pouring out of wrath on Jerusalem yet to come (2 Chr 34:25; Jer 7:20) and later reported as recently accomplished (Jer 42:18; 44:6); cf. BDB, 677.

³⁶However, the "great" in "great compassion" (Dan 9:18) is a different word, רַב (rab), "much, many, great."

³⁷Ronald J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax* (2nd ed.; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976) 36; BDB, 879.

³⁸Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *A Biblical Approach to Suffering* (Chicago: Moody, 1982), has a detailed description of the horror in Lamentations.

emptiness of peace or joy (vv. 5, 9).

True, terrible doom overtook other cities such as Sodom and Gomorrah and Admah and Zeboim, which are used as later examples.³⁹ But Jerusalem was in a class all its own. Its destruction was greater because it was distinctive as the city in which God had promised to dwell (v. 19; cf. Ps 9:11).⁴⁰ The greater fullness of light given Israel, light she chose to reject (e.g., Dan 9:5, 6, 10), matches the greater degree of judgment.

DANIEL'S REQUEST FOR BLESSING (9:15-19)

Pointing to the Past Deliverance (9:15)

Daniel selects two great acts of God's power in Israel's history. One was at the beginning of the nation: the deliverance from Egypt (v. 15). The other came at the end of her past kingdom: the doom of Jerusalem (v. 12). He appeals to the past exodus as a backdrop for future restoration.⁴¹

Both main sections of the prayer (9:4b-14 and 9:15-19) begin with a look at God's greatness (vv. 4b, 15). Both times Daniel contrasts God's glory with Israel's guilt. In each he links God with His people, and the source of God's action in blessing His people is what He is. In the first section Daniel prays in view of God's perpetual action in keeping His covenant and loving-kindness. In the second he cites the one case in the past when God restored Israel to the promised land. This has direct relevance. Restoration is the specific need Israel has in Daniel 9.

Pleading for the Prospective Deliverance (9:16-19)

The man of prayer, alert in vv. 1-2 to a turning point in God's dealings, now intercedes by asking God to restore Israel. He bases this on God's concern for them—they are His people (v. 16)—and also on His compassion for them. What drives Daniel is zeal for the Lord to

³⁹E.g., Sodom and Gomorrah (Deut 29:23); Admah and Zeboim (Deut 29:23; Hos 11:8).

⁴⁰Joyce C. Baldwin, *Daniel* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1978) 166.

⁴¹Isaiah 11:16 compares a future restoration of Israel with the past one from Egypt. It is very difficult to identify details of Isaiah's description with a historical period before that relating to the second advent of the Messiah.

act to uphold *His* interests.

The basis of His concern for them. Noting the relationship in which God took the initiative in making a covenant and has maintained His plans for Israel, the supplicant makes his plea.

What God did in judgment He did in fulfillment of His word and because of His own integrity, His own interests, and His own purposes. As he prays, Daniel is sensitive to God's anger and wrath (v. 16). He sees things from God's standpoint with a zeal for matters that He is concerned about. His perspective speaks of *God's* city, *God's* holy mountain, *God's* people, *God's* servant, *God's* sake, and *God's* sanctuary (vv. 16-17). The intercession begins and ends on the note of *God's* name (vv. 15, 19).

"Our desolations" are Israel's heartaches (v. 18), but the intercessor's chief focus is on God's heartbeat. And so Daniel prays aggressively for three accomplishments. All, he can be scripturally confident, are God's will by His own promises.⁴² God's yes answer to them is certain in honor of His plan. In essence Daniel implores, "Bring back your city" (v 16), "Bring back your temple" (v 17), and "Bring back your people" (vv. 16, 19).

The basis of His compassion for them. Daniel approaches the God who hears "prayer" (Ps 65:2)⁴³ on the ground of His righteousnesses (v. 16), not that of Israel (v. 18). His approach rests also on His great compassion (v. 18). Already Daniel has enumerated Israel's demerits, enough to sink her into depths of hopelessness. He now flees to the steadfast refuge. God in the past has been compassionate in working good for His people and exalting His name. Daniel believes that God, being what He is, will perform other comparable acts to glorify His name because He has not yet done for Israel all He promised.

Earlier in the book, God uses Daniel to describe His gracious

⁴²Cf., for example, n. 5.

⁴³In Ps 65:2 (Heb. text 65:3) "prayer," תְּפִלָּה (*təpillāh*), is the general noun for prayer as in Dan 9:3, 17, 21 (cf. verbal forms in vv. 4, 20). Also in the same verse, a form of the same word for "hear", שְׂמֹעָה (*šhōmēa*^c, "you who hear") appears in Dan 9:17 (שְׂמָעָה [*šəma*^c, "hear"]) and 9:19 (שְׂמָעָה [*šəma*^c, "hear"]).

designs for Israel (cf. Jer 29:11). After four empires conquer Israel, the God of heaven will establish His kingdom on earth (Dan 2:35, 44). It will never pass to another people (Dan 2:44). He will bless His people in ruling as king over them and the other nations (7:15-28).

Later in the book, God pledges further assurance. God's people will be rescued at a time when resurrection and reward combine (Dan 12:1-3).

When praying in chapter 9, Daniel already knew God's intent as expressed in chapters 2 and 7. It was natural for him to plead in light of God's plan for the future. His request for help is plain, primary help being asked for the city and sanctuary.

(1) If God does let His anger and wrath "turn away" (v. 16), this in effect will result in the restoration of the city. This is a direct reversal of the problem at the moment. It also is plain in prophecies prior to Daniel's time.⁴⁴

(2) If God resolves the "reproach" before other peoples (v. 16), it will entail a return to the land from which Daniel and others had been taken (Dan 1:1-3). Ezekiel observed that nations brought insults not only on Israel (36:1-15) but also on her Lord—defaming His reputation and profaning His holy name (Ezek 36:20). Restoration to the land would "vindicate the holiness" of His great name, causing the nations to know that He is the Lord (Ezek 36:23). God established His reputation when He restored Israel from Egypt (Dan 9:15). Now He will be glorified again by a restoration. The stakes are high, with His honor on the line. Moses had prayed, pleading God's honor (Exod 32:11-13). Daniel does the same with great passion. Note phrases such as "Thy sake" (v. 17), "Thy name" (v. 18), "called by Thy name" (v. 19).

(3) The prayer grasps for a solution for the problem of seventy years away from the land. Daniel knew the same passage that predicted the seventy-year duration of desolation of the city assured Israelite re-entry into her land (Jer 29:10-14). He also was aware of other prophecies to bring them back and comfort them, which equates with a reversal of the current desolations (Dan 9:18). The return presumably would be just as literal as the desolations, so Daniel naturally prayed for this.

(4) Daniel sees the best solution for a return as based on God's compassion, not human merits. God initiated the covenant (Gen 12:1-3, 7). He often reaffirmed His pledge, even when His people had

⁴⁴Cf. n. 18.

failed (e.g., Genesis 13, 20-21). He ratified the covenant by walking alone between the sacrifices while Abram slept (Genesis 15). By this God pledged by His very being that He would graciously bring the covenant to fulfillment.⁴⁵ Later He made a covenant with David (2 Sam 7:16) verifying that even though His people failed and had to be disciplined, He would not break His promise (Ps 89:30-37).⁴⁶

(5) Daniel's passion that God "listen" (שָׁמַע [šāma^c]) to his prayer (v. 17) agrees with God's avowal in Lev 26:40-45 to remember His covenant even when Israel was in exile by not destroying them. It also accords with what Solomon prayed would be the response of God's people in exile (2 Chr 6:36-39) and with God's direct promise to "listen" to prayer by the exiles (Jer 29:12, also šāma^c) and reinstate Israel in her land.

His concern also extended to the temple in the city:

(1) God's face shining on the temple (v. 17) implied a restoration of it, too. Such a connection is confirmed by Ps 80:3, 7, 19 (Heb. text, 80:4, 8, 20).

(2) It is in the interests of the Lord Himself, i.e., for His sake (v. 17), that the temple be restored. God needed to restore it to uphold His very honor as in Ezekiel 36.

GOD'S PROVISION FOR BLESSING (9:20-27)

God uses an angel with a prophecy of His future plan to answer the prayer of Daniel. This assures Daniel and his people that God has determined to provide a future of blessing for them.

The Angelic Messenger (9:20-23)

The accord with God (v. 20). God's provision for Israel's needs was revealed while Daniel was praying about them.⁴⁷ He was speaking to God,⁴⁸ in particular confessing the sin of his people Israel and

⁴⁵Cf. Rogers, "The Covenant" 248, 255-56.

⁴⁶Cf. nn. 7, 8.

⁴⁷Isaiah 65:24 refers to God's determination before man's prayer occurs (cf. Isa 46:9-10).

⁴⁸General words for prayer as found in Dan 9:3 (noun) and 9:4 (verb).

presenting⁴⁹ supplication, i.e. his intercessions for favor in a situation of need.⁵⁰ He was zealous for God's interests too, praying on behalf of "the holy mountain" of his God.

The arrival of Gabriel (9:21). When Gabriel arrives, Daniel is "wearied with weariness,"⁵¹ or, as some prefer, Gabriel comes, "being caused to fly swiftly," a rapid transit since the beginning of the prayer (cf. v. 23).⁵² The evening-arrival time was at the important moment of Israel's evening sacrifice (cf. Exodus 29). In exile and away from the temple, they could not offer a sacrifice, but they could pray toward the temple (Dan 6:10). Daniel and other godly Israelites aspired that their prayer would ascend as fragrant incense to God (Ps 141:1-2).

The assurances of Gabriel (9:22-23). The angel explains that his visit purposes to give Daniel "insight and understanding," for which Daniel obviously longed (vv. 1, 2). Gabriel quickly responds with the assurances by coming while the prayer was in progress. He encourages Daniel by observing the esteem in which he is held by God, calling him "a precious treasure."⁵³ The intensive plural of the Hebrew noun here

⁴⁹Lit., transitive idea, "falling (a tree)" or "causing to fall," מַפְּטִיל (mappṭl) as in Dan 9:18.

⁵⁰As also in Dan 9:3, 17, 18.

⁵¹C. F. Keil, *Biblical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.) 33. Keil sees the cause of Daniel's weariness in his spiritual quest for God's will. This fits with the larger context in which Daniel is weary and in need of angelic strengthening (8:17-18, 27; cf. 10:8, 16-19). It is difficult to conceive of a celestial being as wearied, even when opposed by another celestial creature (10:13). The view also suits the words used: מְעִיָּב (mu^cāp, "wearied") and בְּעִיָּב (b^tcāp, "with weariness") (BDB, 419), not עוֹפֵי (cūp, "he flies,") (BDB, 733).

⁵²So Wood, *A Commentary* 245; John F. Walvoord, *Daniel, The Key to Prophetic Revelation* (Chicago: Moody, 1971) 215; Young, *The Prophecy* 190. These prefer a reference to Gabriel as "being caused to fly rapidly," based on the word meaning "to fly" (see n. 51) rather than the meaning chosen by BDB (419), "weary from winged flight." It is problematic to assume that this angel has wings, like other celestial beings (e.g., cherubim, seraphim) (see Goldingay, *Daniel*, 228 n. 21).

⁵³Cf. BDB, 326, on חֲמֻדָּה (ḥāmūdāh, "treasure") and the word as used in Dan 11:38, 43; Ezra 8:27.

and in Dan 10:11, 19 could be rendered "you are one of precious qualities."⁵⁴ Daniel abounds in traits pleasing to God: He is pure (Dan 1:8), humble (2:9), righteous (4:27), selfless (5:17), depends on God (2:17, 18), and models integrity (6:4) and consistency (6:10, 11). He is persistent (10:2, 3), sincere (chap. 9), earnest (9:3), saturated with Scripture (9:4b-19), and involves himself for the sake of others (chaps. 2, 4, 5, 7-12). God's high regard assures His willingness to answer Daniel's prayer.

The admonition of Gabriel (9:23). Gabriel exhorts Daniel to pay attention to the message and gain insight. He wants Daniel to *grasp* the truth communicated through him by God (v. 22).

The Answer Expressing God's Aim (9:24-27)

God covers the same subjects about which Daniel had prayed. He sums up in v. 24 the good status to which He will restore Israel in a prophecy that corresponds to the precise concerns of the prayer: "your people," "your holy city," and the temple, "the most holy place" (v. 24).

God's blessing on Daniel's people is enumerated in six parts.⁵⁵

⁵⁴Intensification rather than numerical plurality is the force of the plural form.

⁵⁵To relate the six aspects in 9:24 with the complex of realities God will consummate at the second advent is reasonable. Based on the death of the Messiah at His first advent (cf. Isaiah 53), Israel will see these benefits realized fully at Messiah's second advent (Jer 31:33-34; Ezek 37:23; Rom 11:25-27). Wood's perspective is helpful (*A Commentary*, 247-51): God will restrain the transgression of Israel without denying extension of the same restraint to Gentile sin. He will bring it under His sovereign control and end the enmity of centuries. Not only will He stop transgression, but He will "make an end of sins" through a lasting solution. He tells us how He will do it too: by expiation "to atone for iniquity." "Atone," the usual OT word for atonement, was often used in the sacrifices that pointed to Messiah's future death for sin, referred to here as His being "cut off" (v. 25). The basis for atonement has been laid, but as Romans 11 explains, Israel's national benefits await the second advent. This agrees with much OT prophecy in which the final resolution of Israel's trouble is in a second advent context (cf. n. 15). Fourth, God will "cause righteousness of ages to come in" through a permanent cure. Previously, Israel always fell back into transgression and needed the more permanent solution anticipated in OT prophecies of the second advent. "To seal up vision and prophecy" relates to fulfilling prophetic revelation. Anticipated conditions will become realities for Israel. Daniel's larger perspective provides for Gentile blessing at the second advent, too (cf. Dan 7:27). "To anoint (consecrate) a holy of holies," as Wood shows, refers to God's

They involve the resolution of sin and the provision of righteousness. Through "the anointed one," i.e., the Messiah (v. 25), God will implement these. According to v. 26 the Messiah will be "cut off," presumably in death. Other parts of the book reveal more details about what the Messiah will be and do. From our twentieth-century perspective we see how these details connect with a second coming of this Messiah in that as a "stone," He will catastrophically and abruptly pulverize Gentile kingdoms who control Israel into fine dust (2:35, 44; Luke 20:18). This naturally means conquest of a military and political nature that is as literal as empires subjecting other empires in the context of Daniel 2. It is not just spiritual control. The Messiah also is portrayed as "one like a son of man coming on the clouds of heaven" (7:13-14; cf. Mark 14:62; Rev 1:14; 14:14), as one linked with humanity but also heavenly and doing what God does in other OT passages.⁵⁶

God's answer to Daniel's prayer provides encouragement by speaking of restoration and rebuilding. The temple would be rebuilt as during Ezra's ministry⁵⁷ and later, in a final sense, in the Messianic Kingdom after the second advent (Ezekiel 40-47).⁵⁸ The city also

restoration of temple operations during the future millennial era.

⁵⁶Cloud imagery linked with a person is a mark of divine presence and authority (E. J. Young, *Daniel's Vision of the Son of Man* [London: Tyndale, 1959] 11). God makes the clouds His chariot (Ps 104:3) and comes in a cloud (Exod 34:5; Num 10:34; Isa 19:1). At least 70 times God is associated with a cloud (e.g., Exod 13:21; 2 Sam 22:12; Job 22:14; Ps 68:34). His glory cloud appears in the temple (1 Kgs 8:10-11; Ezek 10:3), and He is connected with clouds in Ezek 1:4, 28. The NT also associates the Son of Man with deity, as a figure from heaven (e.g., Matt 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Rev 1:7). A. J. Ferch, though favoring the view that the son of man in Daniel 7:13-14 is an angel, admits that before the 19th century, "The majority of interpreting commentators considered Daniel 7:13 to be a prophecy of Christ's second advent" (*The Apocalyptic Son of Man in Daniel 7* [Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1979] 36).

⁵⁷The rebuilding of the temple in 520-515 B. C. is the focus in the Book of Ezra: 1:2-5; 2:68; 3:6, 8-12; 4:1, 3, 24; 5:2-3, 8-9, 11, 13, 15-17; 6:3, 5, 7-8, 12, 14-16 (temple finally completed), 17, 22.

⁵⁸Cf. n. 55 and Ralph Alexander, *Ezekiel* (Chicago: Moody, 1976) 129-36; Paul Enns, *Ezekiel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986) 179-81; Charles H. Dyer, "Ezekiel," *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (eds. J. F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck; Wheaton: Victor, 1983-85) 1:1303-4.

would be rebuilt as in Nehemiah's era.⁵⁹ Time has revealed that the perspective of Dan 9:24-27 covers many centuries and extends to the final restoration of the city when "everlasting righteousness" gains complete control.

The scope of this essay does not include detailed interpretive issues of vv. 24-27. This has been done elsewhere.⁶⁰ Primary attention here is toward how prayer relates to prophecy, but the compatibility of this prophecy can be shown to harmonize in general with other prophecies in Daniel and the OT.

The perspective of Daniel. Some of Daniel's prophecies span many centuries, stretching to Israel's complete deliverance from other nations and possession of spiritual blessings (Dan 2:44; 7:15-28; 12:1-3, 13). The promised kingdom of Israel's blessing will fill the entire earth (2:35) and embrace peoples of all nations with God ruling over all (7:27). The perspective also includes resurrection and final reward (12:2-3, 13), integrating with the second advent of the Messiah and beyond.

The perspective of other prophecies. Daniel's prophecies (9:24-27) correlate well with OT prophecies outside of Daniel too. They constitute a comprehensive summary of several ways in which God will answer the prayers of other prophets (cf. Jer 29:12; 33:3). The process will result in the welfare for Israel (Jer 29:12-14; 33:6 ff.) Details from Daniel 9 integrate meaningfully with details of other OT predictions.

The first sixty-nine "sevens" (Dan 9:25), "sevens" being composed of years,⁶¹ are the early part of the process that will issue in Israel's

⁵⁹Rebuilding the *city* and its *wall* is emphasized in Nehemiah: 1:2-33; 2:3, 5, 8, 12-13, 15, 17; 3:1, 3, 6, 8, 13-15; 4:1, 6, 15, 17, 19; 5:16; 6:1, 6, 15 (city finally completed).

⁶⁰To supplement the prophetic viewpoint of this essay, see Paul D. Feinberg, "An Exegetical and Theological Study of Daniel 9:24-27," *Tradition & Testament, Essays in Honor of Charles Lee Feinberg* (eds. John S. and Paul D. Feinberg; Chicago: Moody, 1981) 189-220; Harold H. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977) 115-39.

⁶¹Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects* 117-19. That the "sevens" are composed of years is a natural conclusion based on Daniel's attention to years in 9:1-2, on the phrase "sevens of days" (10:2-3) where "sevens" have to be clarified as referring to days and not years, and the computation through which sevens of years works out

good. The time period covered spans the interval until the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, and His death.⁶² A suggested placement of the seventieth "seven" of years has been at the first advent of Jesus Christ and shortly after,⁶³ but it fits better after a hiatus of time between His first and second advents.⁶⁴

It is difficult to place the covenant in the last seven years (v. 27) at the first advent. The new covenant Jesus inaugurated (Jer 32:40; Luke 22:20; Heb. 13:20) is eternal, and the "he" of Dan. 9:27 is more likely the "prince" of v. 26, the nearest antecedent of the pronoun. He is a prince (ruler) rising from the fourth empire, the Roman (Daniel 2, 7), that will bring desolation to Israel immediately before the second advent. Further, the panorama of Dan 9:24-27 more probably agrees with Daniel's other prophecies (chaps. 2, 7 and 12) that reach to the second advent.

This harmonizes with other OT prophecies that speak of the installation of God's king over Israel and the world (Jer 23:5-6; Ezek 34:11-31; Zech 14:1-3, 9). The NT also supports this anticipation as it looks beyond the Messiah's crucifixion to His second appearance (Mark 14:62; Rev 1:7; 14:14; 19:11 ff.).

So Dan 9:24 sums up in a comprehensive unit the facets of reassurance by noting God's full restoration of Israel. These bring comfort to Daniel's people, while other parts of Daniel show the inclusion of Gentiles in the provisions (7:27). This coincides with much OT and NT prophecy, too.⁶⁵

Verses 25-27 spell out the broad steps by which God will make v. 24 a reality. These extend from the rebuilding of Jerusalem (v. 25), to the cross of the Messiah (v. 26), and then to the end of desolations (v. 27). The last of these was still future from Jesus' vantage point at His first advent (Matt 23:37-39). God decrees the welfare described in Dan 9:24 as the final solution, not an intermediate one that leaves

as Hoehner shows, with the end of the sixty-two plus seven (= sixty-nine) sevens at the first advent of Jesus Christ.

⁶²Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects* 119-31.

⁶³E. G. Young, *The Prophecy* 208-19.

⁶⁴Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects* 131-33.

⁶⁵E.g., Gen 12:1-3; Isa 49:6; 51:4; 56:6-7; Zech 14:9, 16.

Israel still in difficulty. God's unalterable word is a pledge of "everlasting righteousness."

CONCLUSION

Daniel's prayer for Israel concerns matters of sin that have been roadblocks to blessing. He confesses the sin, but recognizes that Israel's blessing—a direct reversal of its desolation—will come from the God who is faithful to His covenant and His compassions. He depends on God's righteous acts, not the nonexistent ones of Israel. He pleads for restoration of the people, the city, and the sanctuary. God answers with reassurances that He will restore all three. The answer does not correct Daniel, but correlates with his prayer formulated in light of earlier OT Scripture. Submissive to God, he prays for the fulfillment of blessings God has promised. So he makes himself available to participate in what God wants to do. God has a plan from beginning to end (Isa 46:9-10) and affirms His good designs for Israel (Jer 29:12-14). He allows men the privilege of laboring together with Him by yearning and praying for the same wonderful ends (Jer 29:12).

Christians of the present generation can learn many important lessons from the prayer in Daniel 9 as they engage themselves in the vital ministry of prayer.



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