DISCOVERING DANIEL

9a
LESSON

WORKBOOK STUDY COMPANION · LESSON 9A

Promises Made, *Promises Kept*

DANIEL 9:1-19

Scripture written out in the NASB95, every question answered in one sentence, cross references, verse-by-verse commentary from three trusted teachers — and for each question, a point of critical thinking and a key question to carry into the week.

Amir Tsarfati
DISCOVERING DANIEL

John MacArthur
GRACE TO YOU

David Guzik
ENDURING WORD

PREPARED FOR ED & PAUL SMITH · BIBLE STUDY

01 CAPTURE THE SCENE

What do I see?

Using my Bible, working through Daniel 9:1-19 verse by verse.

1 What did Daniel discover while he was reading the prophet Jeremiah (Daniel 9:2)?

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Daniel 9:1 NASB95

In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans—

Daniel 9:2 NASB95

in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.

Jeremiah 25:11-12 NASB95

'This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 'Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,' declares the LORD, 'for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation.

IN MY WORDS

I see that Daniel discovered from Jeremiah's own writings that the desolations of Jerusalem were set at seventy years — and since he was reading in the first year of Darius, that period was nearly over.

CROSS REFERENCE **2 Chronicles 36:21** "to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept sabbath until seventy years were complete."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati highlights that Daniel was not waiting for a fresh vision — he was reading the Scripture already given, and the written word was enough to move a prophet to his knees.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes that "the books" shows a canon already circulating and recognized among the exiles; Daniel treated Jeremiah's writings as the authoritative word of God while Jeremiah was barely a generation gone.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel had received visions directly from God — chapters 7 and 8 were his own. Yet the thing that drove him to fasting and sackcloth was reading someone else's book. A man with firsthand revelation still submitted himself to the written word, which quietly settles the question of whether experience outranks Scripture.

KEY QUESTION

When did I last let something I read in Scripture actually change what I did that day?

2 What actions did this discovery prompt Daniel to take (verse 3)?

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Daniel 9:3 NASB95

So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes.

IN MY WORDS

I see that Daniel turned his full attention to the Lord God and sought Him with prayer and supplications, fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

CROSS REFERENCE **Nehemiah 1:4** "When I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven." Nehemiah responded to news of Jerusalem the same way.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik observes that Daniel did not treat the promise as an excuse to relax — a prophecy of certain deliverance became the reason to pray harder, not the reason to stop praying.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati points to the pairing of Scripture and prayer as the engine of Daniel's life: he read what God said, then he talked to God about what he read.

CRITICAL THINKING

Sackcloth and ashes were the clothing of the bereaved and the condemned — Daniel dressed like a guilty man at a funeral. He was the one righteous figure in the account, yet he put on the uniform of the mourner, because he understood that reading a promise about the end of judgment is not the same as being ready to receive it.

KEY QUESTION

Does my praying cost me anything — sleep, a meal, comfort — or only a few convenient minutes?

3 What major theme runs all through Daniel's prayer (see verses 5, 8, 10-11)?

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Daniel 9:5 NASB95

we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances.

Daniel 9:8 NASB95

"Open shame belongs to us, O LORD, to our kings, our princes and our fathers, because we have sinned against You.

Daniel 9:10-11 NASB95

nor have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His teachings which He set before us through His servants the prophets. "Indeed all Israel has transgressed Your law and turned aside, not obeying Your voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him.

IN MY WORDS

I see that confession of sin runs through the whole prayer — Daniel keeps naming the guilt of the people as their own, never blaming God, Babylon, or circumstances.

CROSS REFERENCE **Psalm 51:4** "Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur points out that Daniel stacks up synonyms for sin — sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly, rebelled, turned aside, not listened, not obeyed — because honest confession refuses to soften the vocabulary.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes that Daniel never once argues that the punishment was excessive; he agrees with God's verdict before he asks God for anything.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel pairs the confession with a second theme that is easy to miss: he repeatedly declares God righteous in the very act of judging (verses 7 and 14). Real confession does not merely admit fault — it justifies God. Anyone can say "I was wrong" while privately thinking the consequence was unfair; Daniel closes that escape hatch.

KEY QUESTION

In my last apology to God, did I actually agree that He was right — or just that I got caught?

4 What specific pleas does Daniel set before the Lord in… P. 178

Daniel 9:16 NASB95

"O Lord, in accordance with all Your righteous acts, let now Your anger and Your wrath turn away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; for because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people have become a reproach to all those around us.

Daniel 9:17 NASB95

"So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, and for Your sake, O Lord, let Your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary.

Daniel 9:18 NASB95

"O my God, incline Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Your name; for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion.

Daniel 9:19 NASB95

"O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name."

a. **verse 16?**

IN MY WORDS

I ask that God turn His anger and wrath away from Jerusalem, His city and His holy mountain, because our sins have made it a reproach to everyone around us.

CROSS REFERENCE **Psalm 79:4** "We have become a reproach to our neighbors, A scoffing and derision to those around us." The shame of the city was a standing argument against God's name.

b. **verse 17?**

IN MY WORDS

I ask that God listen to my prayer and let His face shine on His desolate sanctuary — and I ask it for His sake, not mine.

CROSS REFERENCE **Numbers 6:25** "The LORD make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you" — Daniel prays the priestly blessing back over the ruined temple.

c. **verse 18?**

IN MY WORDS

I ask God to incline His ear and open His eyes to our desolations, admitting plainly that I bring no merits of my own — only His great compassion.

CROSS REFERENCE **Luke 18:13** "God, be merciful to me, the sinner!" The tax collector prayed on exactly the same ground and went home justified.

d. **verse 19?**

IN MY WORDS

I ask God to hear, to forgive, to listen and take action — and not to delay — because His own name is attached to this city and these people.

CROSS REFERENCE **Exodus 32:11-12** Moses likewise appealed to God's reputation among the Egyptians rather than to Israel's worthiness.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati observes that every plea is anchored to God's own name and character — 'for Your sake,' 'for Your own sake,' 'called by Your name' — which is why the prayer has such confidence without a trace of presumption.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes the crescendo in verse 19: the sentences get shorter and the verbs get sharper as Daniel moves from reasoning to pleading.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel asks for four things and grounds none of them in Israel's need. Jerusalem's ruin matters to him mainly because a ruined Jerusalem makes God look weak in front of the nations. That reverses how most of us pray — we lead with our situation and add God's glory as a closing formality.

KEY QUESTION

If God answered my prayers exactly as I prayed them this week, whose reputation would be served — His or mine?

02 ANALYZE THE MESSAGE

What does it say and mean?

Using my Bible and my copy of Discovering Daniel.

1 **Daniel 9:2 tells us the prophet was reading the book of Jeremiah when he noticed a prophecy about the length of Judah's exile in Babylon.** P. 171

Jeremiah 25:11-12 NASB95

‘This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. ‘Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,’ declares the LORD, ‘for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation.

Jeremiah 29:10 NASB95

“For thus says the LORD, ‘When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place.

2 Chronicles 36:20-21 NASB95

Those who had escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept sabbath until seventy years were complete.

Ezra 1:1-3 NASB95

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying: “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. ‘Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel; He is the God who is in Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 29:14 NASB95

‘I will be found by you,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.’

a. **What passage had Daniel read in the book of Jeremiah (see page 171 in Discovering Daniel)?**

> **IN MY WORDS**
>
> I understand he had read Jeremiah's seventy-year prophecy — Jeremiah 25:11-12, with its companion promise in Jeremiah 29:10 — which fixed the length of the Babylonian captivity.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 9:2** Daniel names the source himself: “the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet… namely, seventy years.”

b. What promise did God give in this prophecy (see page 171 in Discovering Daniel)?

IN MY WORDS

God promised that when the seventy years for Babylon were completed He would visit His people, fulfill His good word to them, and bring them back to this place.

CROSS REFERENCE **Jeremiah 29:10** "I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place." The return was a promise, not a possibility.

c. What was the near-term fulfillment of this prophecy, and the far-term fulfillment (see page 171 in Discovering Daniel)?

IN MY WORDS

The near-term fulfillment was the decree of Cyrus and the return of the exiles to rebuild Jerusalem; the far-term fulfillment reaches past that first return to God's final regathering of Israel from all the nations.

CROSS REFERENCE **Ezra 1:1** Cyrus's decree came "in order to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah" — the near-term half, dated and documented.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati reads the seventy years as a genuine historical term that God kept to the letter, and as a pattern for the larger restoration still ahead — Jeremiah 29:14 speaks of gathering Israel "from all the nations," which the modest return under Zerubbabel never exhausted.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes that Chronicles connects the seventy years to the sabbath years Israel had failed to keep — the land collected the rest it was owed, and the number was not arbitrary.

CRITICAL THINKING

Notice that the exile lasted exactly as long as the debt Israel had accumulated by ignoring the sabbath years. God did not invent a round number to make a point; He collected what the law had specified all along. The judgment was, in the most literal sense, the bill coming due.

KEY QUESTION

What obedience have I been deferring, assuming the account would never actually be settled?

2 In Daniel 9:3, what clues are we given about the intensity of Daniel's prayer?

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Daniel 9:3 NASB95

So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes.

IN MY WORDS

I see five clues stacked in one verse — he gave the Lord his full attention, he sought Him, he used prayer and supplications, he fasted, and he put on sackcloth and ashes.

CROSS REFERENCE **Ezra 9:5-6** Ezra likewise fell on his knees at the evening offering with his garment torn, ashamed to lift his face — the posture matched the grief.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur observes that the verbs describe deliberate effort, not a mood that came over him: Daniel set himself to it, the way a man sets himself to a task he intends to finish.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes that supplication is the language of a beggar rather than a citizen — Daniel came asking, not negotiating.

CRITICAL THINKING

Sackcloth and ashes were public signals in a culture where mourning was visible. Daniel was the senior official of a world empire, and he put on the clothes of the destitute. Whatever this prayer cost him in dignity in front of the Persian court, he decided the answer was worth more than his standing.

KEY QUESTION

What would I be unwilling to look foolish over — and does that tell me where my faith actually stops?

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3 **As you read through the prayer, observe the many times that Daniel used the words we, us, and our. Though Daniel was a righteous man, he included himself in this prayer of repentance along with the rest of the people of Judah.** P. 177

Daniel 9:5-6 NASB95

we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances. “Moreover, we have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes, our fathers and all the people of the land.

Daniel 9:15 NASB95

“And now, O Lord our God, who have brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and have made a name for Yourself, as it is this day—we have sinned, we have been wicked.

1 Timothy 1:15 NASB95

It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.

a. **Why do you think Daniel included himself in the request for God's forgiveness (see page 177 in Discovering Daniel)?**

IN MY WORDS

I think Daniel included himself because he genuinely counted himself part of the people who had sinned — he stood inside the guilt rather than above it, and a man who has spent his life near God is the last man to think himself exempt.

CROSS REFERENCE **Isaiah 6:5** “Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips…” The closer the vision of God, the deeper the sense of one's own guilt.

b. **Do you see a parallel here with Paul calling himself the chief of sinners in 1 Timothy 1:15? Explain.**

IN MY WORDS

Yes — Paul, writing as a mature apostle, still called himself foremost of sinners, and like Daniel he was not exaggerating for effect but measuring himself against God rather than against other people.

CROSS REFERENCE **1 Timothy 1:15** “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.” Present tense — Paul did not say he used to be.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati draws out that Daniel's intercession is priestly in shape: he stands between God and the nation and speaks as one of them, which is the only place from which anyone can truly intercede.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes that neither Daniel nor Paul was performing humility — both had seen enough of God's holiness to know that comparing themselves favorably to other sinners was meaningless.

CRITICAL THINKING

There is no record in Scripture of Daniel committing the sins he confesses here. He is not admitting to acts he did not do; he is refusing the distance that would let him pray "they" instead of "we." The moment intercession becomes a report on other people's failures, it has stopped being intercession.

KEY QUESTION

When I pray about the sin of my church, my family, or my country, do I say "they" — and what does that reveal?

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4 **In verse 18, Daniel said, "We do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies." Daniel had a correct understanding of people's inability to be righteous and their need for God's mercy. What do the following passages say about our deeds versus God's mercy?** P. 179

Daniel 9:18 NASB95

"O my God, incline Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Your name; for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion.

Romans 5:8 NASB95

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Ephesians 2:4-5 NASB95

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

Ephesians 2:8-9 NASB95

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Titus 3:5 NASB95

He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,

a. **Romans 5:8**

IN MY WORDS

God proved His love by sending Christ to die for me while I was still a sinner — before I had cleaned anything up, and with nothing in me to recommend the transaction.

CROSS REFERENCE **Romans 5:6** "While we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly." Helpless is the operative word.

b. **Ephesians 2:4-5**

> **IN MY WORDS**
>
> Because God is rich in mercy and loved me with great love, He made me alive with Christ when I was dead in my transgressions — a dead man contributes nothing to his own resurrection.

CROSS REFERENCE **Colossians 2:13** "When you were dead in your transgressions… He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions."

c. **Ephesians 2:8-9**

> **IN MY WORDS**
>
> I am saved by grace through faith, and even that is not from myself but is God's gift — not a result of works, so that no one can boast about it.

CROSS REFERENCE **Romans 3:27** "Where then is boasting? It is excluded." Grace does not merely discourage boasting; it removes the grounds for it.

d. **Titus 3:5**

> **IN MY WORDS**
>
> He saved me not on the basis of any righteous deeds I had done but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.

CROSS REFERENCE **Isaiah 64:6** "All our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment…" Even our best offerings need cleansing.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur ties the four passages to a single point: every one of them names what did not save us before naming what did, because the human heart will smuggle merit back in wherever the text leaves a gap.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati observes that Daniel arrived at this doctrine six centuries before Paul wrote it down — the gospel's logic was already the ground of Old Testament prayer.

CRITICAL THINKING

The workbook quotes verse 18 in a wording that says "righteous deeds"; the NASB95 renders it "any merits of our own," which is broader. Daniel is not only disclaiming good works — he is disclaiming his reputation, his sixty-plus years of faithfulness, and his standing as a prophet. He brings none of his résumé to the throne.

KEY QUESTION

What part of my record do I quietly expect God to take into account when I ask Him for something?

03 COMPARE THIS PASSAGE WITH THE REST OF SCRIPTURE

How is it supported elsewhere in the Bible?

Every cross reference written out in the NASB95.

1 **In Deuteronomy 28:15-68, God warned the people of Israel about the high cost of disobedience. God then listed the curses the people would experience. Look up the verses below. What specific punishments line up with the fallout that occurred when the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem and took Hebrew captives into exile?** P. 175

Deuteronomy 28:15 NASB95

"But it shall come about, if you do not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:

Deuteronomy 28:20 NASB95

"The LORD will send upon you curses, confusion, and rebuke, in all you undertake to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, on account of the evil of your deeds, because you have forsaken Me.

Deuteronomy 28:25 NASB95

"The LORD shall cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you will go out one way against them, but you will flee seven ways before them, and you will be an example of terror to all the kingdoms of the earth.

Deuteronomy 28:32 NASB95

"Your sons and your daughters shall be given to another people, while your eyes look on and yearn for them continually; but there will be nothing you can do.

Deuteronomy 28:36 NASB95

"The LORD will bring you and your king, whom you set over you, to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone.

Deuteronomy 28:48-49 NASB95

therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in the lack of all things; and He will put an iron yoke on your neck until He has destroyed you. "The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as the eagle swoops down, a nation whose language you shall not understand,

Deuteronomy 28:52 NASB95

"It shall besiege you in all your towns until your high and fortified walls in which you trusted come down throughout your land, and it shall besiege you in all your towns throughout your land which the LORD your God has given you.

a. **Verse 20**

> **IN MY WORDS**
>
> Curses, confusion, and rebuke in everything they undertook, until they were destroyed — and the stated reason was that they had forsaken God, which is exactly what Daniel confesses.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 9:11** "…so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses…" Daniel names Deuteronomy as the document being enforced.

b. **Verse 25**

IN MY WORDS

Defeat before their enemies — going out one way and fleeing seven ways — which is what happened when Zedekiah's army broke and scattered before the Babylonians.

CROSS REFERENCE **2 Kings 25:4-5** All the men of war fled by night; the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook him in the plains of Jericho, and all his army was scattered from him.

c. **Verse 32**

IN MY WORDS

Sons and daughters handed over to another people while the parents watched helplessly — the deportations that carried Daniel and his friends to Babylon as young men.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 1:3-4** Nebuchadnezzar ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring in youths of the royal family and of the nobles — someone's children, taken while their families looked on.

d. **Verse 36**

IN MY WORDS

The king carried off with the people to a nation they had never known, where they would serve gods of wood and stone — fulfilled when Jehoiachin and later Zedekiah were taken to Babylon.

CROSS REFERENCE **2 Kings 24:15** "So he led Jehoiachin away into exile to Babylon" — the king went with the people, exactly as warned.

e. **Verses 48-49**

IN MY WORDS

Serving their enemies in hunger, thirst, nakedness, and lack of all things under an iron yoke, with a distant nation swooping like an eagle and speaking a language they could not understand.

CROSS REFERENCE **Jeremiah 5:15** "I am bringing a nation against you from afar… A nation whose language you do not know, Nor can you understand what they say."

f. **Verse 52**

IN MY WORDS

A siege pressed against their towns until the high fortified walls they trusted came down — which is precisely how Jerusalem fell after eighteen months of siege.

CROSS REFERENCE **2 Kings 25:1-4** The siege began in the ninth year and lasted until the eleventh, when the city wall was breached.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik points out that Israel was not ambushed by these judgments — the terms had been read aloud and written down roughly eight centuries earlier, and God simply did what He said He would do.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati stresses that Daniel prays with the covenant open in front of him: he is not guessing at God's disposition, he is reading the contract and pleading its mercy clause.

CRITICAL THINKING

Deuteronomy 28 devotes fourteen verses to blessing and fifty-four to cursing — the warning is nearly four times the length of the promise. That imbalance is itself an act of mercy: God spent most of the chapter describing, in detail no one could later claim was unclear, the exact ruin He hoped they would avoid.

KEY QUESTION

What warning in Scripture have I read so many times that it has stopped sounding like a warning?

2 **At the same time Jeremiah warned of judgment, he also offered hope. God's promise in Jeremiah 29:10 caught Daniel's attention. Daniel knew with certainty that God keeps His promises — and God said He would fulfill this promise regardless of the spiritual state of His people. Even so, Daniel saw the need for the people to repent.** P. 180

Jeremiah 29:10 NASB95

"For thus says the LORD, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place.

Numbers 23:19 NASB95

"God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?

1 Kings 8:56 NASB95

"Blessed be the LORD, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised; not one word has failed of all His good promise, which He promised through Moses His servant.

Psalm 32:2-5 NASB95

How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit! When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away Through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"; And You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah.

Psalm 51:4 NASB95

Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.

Proverbs 28:13 NASB95

He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.

1 John 1:9 NASB95

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

a-1. **What assurances are we given about God's promises in Numbers 23:19?**

IN MY WORDS

God is not a man that He should lie — if He has said it, He will do it; if He has spoken it, He will make it good.

CROSS REFERENCE **Titus 1:2** "God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago." It is not merely that God does not lie; He cannot.

a-2. **What assurances are we given about God's promises in 1 Kings 8:56?**

> **IN MY WORDS**
> Solomon testified that not one word had failed of all God's good promise — the track record was already perfect before Daniel ever prayed.

CROSS REFERENCE **Joshua 21:45** "Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass."

b-1. **What do we learn about confession in Psalm 32:2-5?**

> **IN MY WORDS**
> Silence about sin wore David down physically until he acknowledged it and stopped hiding it — and the moment he confessed, God forgave the guilt.

CROSS REFERENCE **Psalm 32:1** "How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered!" The relief is described as blessedness, not merely as relief.

b-2. **What do we learn about confession in Psalm 51:4?**

> **IN MY WORDS**
> Real confession recognizes that sin is ultimately against God Himself, and it agrees that God is justified and blameless when He judges.

CROSS REFERENCE **Genesis 39:9** Joseph called adultery a sin "against God" even though the offense would have been against Potiphar.

b-3. **What do we learn about confession in Proverbs 28:13?**

> **IN MY WORDS**
> Concealing my transgressions guarantees I will not prosper, but confessing and forsaking them is how I find compassion — confession and forsaking are named together.

CROSS REFERENCE **Luke 3:8** "Therefore bear fruits in keeping with repentance," Admission without change is only half of what is asked.

b-4. **What do we learn about confession in 1 John 1:9?**

> **IN MY WORDS**
> If I confess my sins, God is faithful and righteous to forgive them and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness — forgiveness is His faithfulness, not His mood.

CROSS REFERENCE **Micah 7:19** "You will cast all their sins Into the depths of the sea." The cleansing is as thorough as the promise is certain.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati draws the pastoral point that God's faithfulness never becomes an excuse for our passivity — Daniel believed the seventy years were certain and prayed as though the outcome depended on repentance, because both are true at once.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes that 1 John 1:9 grounds forgiveness in God being faithful and righteous rather than merely lenient — the cross is what makes forgiving sinners a righteous act rather than an overlooked one.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik observes that Psalm 32 describes the physical cost of unconfessed sin, which is one reason confession is a mercy to the confessor and not only a duty owed to God.

CRITICAL THINKING

God told Jeremiah the return would happen after seventy years regardless of Israel's spiritual condition — and Daniel prayed anyway. That is the hardest thing in this chapter to hold together. Prayer is not the mechanism that changes God's mind about His promise; it is the means by which God prepares a people to receive what He had already decided to give.

KEY QUESTION

Do I pray less about the things I am most certain God will do — and what does that say about why I pray at all?

04 EXECUTE

How does this affect my life?

Taking Daniel 9:1-19 off the page and into the week.

1 **Daniel's dedication to understanding Scripture and his devotion to praying fervently made for a powerful combination. Have you ever considered that to carry out one of those habits without the other can be detrimental? Ask yourself:** P. 181

Daniel 9:2 NASB95

in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.

Daniel 9:3 NASB95

So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes.

a. **What are the potential dangers of being a good student of God's Word but negligent in prayer?**

IN MY WORDS

I can end up with a head full of accurate doctrine and a cold heart — knowing about God without actually knowing Him, and using Scripture to win arguments instead of to meet God.

CROSS REFERENCE **John 5:39-40** "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life… and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life."

b. **What are the potential dangers of being fervent in prayer without having a clear understanding of Scripture?**

IN MY WORDS

I can pray sincerely for things God never promised, mistake my own desires for His will, and build a private religion on feelings that no text ever supported.

CROSS REFERENCE **Romans 10:2** "They have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge." Sincerity is not the same as truth.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur frames the two as the two halves of one conversation: in Scripture God speaks to us, in prayer we answer Him, and a conversation with only one side talking is not a relationship.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati points out that Daniel's prayer in this chapter is saturated with the language of Moses and the prophets — he prayed Scripture back to God, which is what keeps prayer from drifting.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel's prayer is not a list of requests with a verse attached at the end; the whole prayer is built out of Deuteronomy, Exodus, and Jeremiah. He was not applying Scripture to his prayer — Scripture had become the vocabulary he prayed in. That is a different order of intimacy with the text than most of us have.

KEY QUESTION

If someone transcribed my prayers this week, how much of the language would be borrowed from Scripture?

2 **Scripture makes it clear that God takes sin seriously. The question is, Do we take sin seriously enough? As you consider your perspective of sin, answer the questions below:** P. 182

Romans 5:12 NASB95

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—

Isaiah 59:2 NASB95

But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.

Isaiah 53:5 NASB95

But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.

1 Peter 3:18 NASB95

For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

Galatians 5:16-18 NASB95

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

a. **What effect did the sin of eating from a specific tree have on the entire human race (see Romans 5:12)?**

IN MY WORDS

Through one man's sin, sin entered the world and death came through sin, so death spread to every human being — one act in a garden put the whole race under a death sentence.

CROSS REFERENCE **1 Corinthians 15:22** "in Adam all die" — the reach of a single sin is measured in every grave since.

b. **What effect does sin have on us (Isaiah 59:2)?**

IN MY WORDS

My sins put a separation between me and God and hide His face from me, so that He does not hear — sin does not merely offend God, it cuts the line.

CROSS REFERENCE **Psalm 66:18** "If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear…" Cherished sin and answered prayer do not coexist.

c. What did Christ do to make forgiveness possible for us (see Isaiah 53:5; 1 Peter 3:18)?

IN MY WORDS

He was pierced for my transgressions and crushed for my iniquities, and He died for sins once for all — the just for the unjust — to bring me to God.

CROSS REFERENCE **2 Corinthians 5:21** "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

d. Read Galatians 5:16-18. Is it possible for us to walk in the Spirit and walk in sin at the same time? Explain.

IN MY WORDS

No — Paul says the flesh and the Spirit are set against each other in direct opposition, so walking by the Spirit is precisely what keeps me from carrying out the desire of the flesh; I cannot be led two directions at once.

CROSS REFERENCE **Matthew 6:24** "No one can serve two masters… You cannot serve God and wealth." The principle is the same: divided allegiance is not allegiance.

e. In light of the above, why do you think God hates sin so much?

IN MY WORDS

Because sin killed His Son and it kills His creatures — it separates people from Him, it cost Christ the cross to undo, and God hates what destroys what He loves.

CROSS REFERENCE **Habakkuk 1:13** "Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You can not look on wickedness with favor."

f. Why is it dangerous for us to downplay the seriousness of sin?

IN MY WORDS

Because the moment I make sin small, I make the cross small — and a person who does not think he is badly hurt will not take the cure seriously.

CROSS REFERENCE **Jeremiah 6:14** "They have healed the brokenness of My people superficially, Saying, 'Peace, peace,' But there is no peace."

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes that Isaiah 59:2 locates the problem in us rather than in God's willingness — God has not moved, and it is our iniquity that has built the wall.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur emphasizes "once for all" in 1 Peter 3:18: the sacrifice does not need repeating, which means the guilt it covers cannot be re-charged to the believer's account.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel's generation is the case study for this question. They did not deny God existed; they simply stopped treating His commands as serious, one small compromise at a time, until the walls came down and the temple burned. Nobody in Judah chose the exile — they chose a hundred small things that added up to it.

KEY QUESTION

What sin have I stopped calling sin, and started calling a personality trait?

3 **According to Hebrews 4:12, what resource has God given us to help examine our hearts and see whether we are allowing sin to reside within us? What does this tell us about the priority this resource should have in our lives?** P. 182

> **Hebrews 4:12 NASB95**
> For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

> **IN MY WORDS**
> God has given me His Word — living, active, and sharp enough to divide soul from spirit and judge the thoughts and intentions of my heart — which tells me it should have first priority, because nothing else I own can show me what is actually in me.

CROSS REFERENCE **Psalm 139:23-24** "Search me, O God, and know my heart… And see if there be any hurtful way in me." The examination David asks for is the one Hebrews says the Word performs.

> **Amir Tsarfati** DISCOVERING DANIEL
> Tsarfati closes the loop back to verse 2: Daniel read the Word, the Word exposed his nation's condition, and the exposure drove him to prayer — exactly the sequence Hebrews 4:12 describes.

> **David Guzik** ENDURING WORD
> Guzik notes that the sword image is diagnostic before it is destructive: it is described as judging thoughts and intentions, which is surgery rather than execution.

> **CRITICAL THINKING**
> Hebrews says the Word judges the intentions of the heart — not just the actions. That is a harder standard than any court applies, because it reaches the motive behind the good deed as well as the bad one. It means Scripture can convict me over something I did right, for the wrong reason.

KEY QUESTION
Am I willing to let Scripture examine my motives this week, or only my behavior?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Daniel realized the seventy years of captivity were nearly up, and that his people would soon be able to return to Jerusalem. But what would they find there? An entire generation of Hebrews had been born in Babylon and died there, having never seen the land of God's promise. Anyone still alive who had watched Judah fall would have been in his sixties or older. The houses, the farms, the fields — someone else was living on them now.

Between the destruction of their homeland and seventy years in Babylon, the people of Judah had been through enough to make them wonder whether God had finished with them for good. The psalmist put the fear into words: “Will the Lord reject forever? And will He never be favorable again? Has His lovingkindness ceased forever? Has His promise come to an end forever? Has God forgotten to be gracious, Or has He in anger withdrawn His compassion?” (Psalm 77:7-9).

But the psalmist did not stay there. Instead of looking down at his circumstances, he looked back at God's record — “I shall remember the deeds of the LORD; Surely I will remember Your wonders of old” (Psalm 77:11). That is the same move Daniel makes in his prayer. He does not ask God to do something new; he asks God to do what He has already said He would do, and he grounds the whole request in God's name rather than in Israel's worthiness.

That is why this lesson is called Promises Made, Promises Kept. Nearly every terrifying thing Deuteronomy 28 warned about had come true, down to the besieged walls and the unfamiliar language of the invaders. Daniel looked at that record of fulfilled warnings and drew the only reasonable conclusion: a God whose threats come true that precisely will keep His promises with the same precision. The judgment was the evidence for the hope.

“O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”

Daniel 9:19

Most of us are not waiting on a seventy-year sentence to expire. But we all have something we have been praying about long enough to start wondering whether God has forgotten. Daniel's answer was not to feel better about it — it was to open the book, find what God had actually promised, and pray it back to Him with his face on the ground. God has not been silent about who He is or what He intends to do. The question is whether we have been reading closely enough to know what to ask for.

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