

Daniel

Chapter 9

Daniel's Prayer

In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom—² in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years.³ So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.⁴ I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed: “O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands,⁵ we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws.⁶ We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.⁷ “Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame—the men of Judah and people of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far, in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to you.⁸ O LORD, we and our kings, our princes and our fathers are covered with shame because we have sinned against you.⁹ The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him;¹⁰ we have not obeyed the LORD our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets.¹¹ All Israel has transgressed your law and turned away, refusing to obey you. “Therefore the curses and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against you.¹² You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing upon us great disaster. Under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem.¹³ Just as it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us, yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth.¹⁴ The LORD did not hesitate to bring the disaster upon us, for the LORD our God is righteous in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him.¹⁵ “Now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of Egypt with a mighty hand and who made for yourself a name that endures to this day, we have sinned, we have done wrong.¹⁶ O Lord, in keeping with all your righteous acts, turn away your anger and your wrath from Jerusalem, your city, your holy hill. Our sins and the iniquities of our fathers have made Jerusalem and your people an object of scorn to all those around us.¹⁷ “Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, O Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary.¹⁸ Give ear, O God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy.¹⁹ O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and

act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name.”

Ch 9 Luth: “The ninth chapter opens with a splendid prayer in which Daniel prays for his people who are held captive in Babylon, and for the city of Jerusalem and the temple. He prays that the Jews [Judeans] might return to Jerusalem and there resume their worship of God. The prayer is answered, and to Daniel is revealed the number of years until Christ should come and begin his eternal kingdom. Now this is a remarkable and great revelation of Christ which sets the time so surely and accurately” (AE 35:303). (TLSB)

9:1 *first year.* 539–538 B.C. (CSB)

Xerxes. See NIV text note; not the later Xerxes of the book of Esther. (CSB)

9:2 *books.* Scrolls. Daniel searched the Scriptures after learning in his previous vision that the Jerusalem sanctuary would be restored after “2,300 evenings and mornings” (8:14; cf 8:26). Scribes were collecting the Books of the Prophets (the second portion of the Hbr Bible) and regarded them as divine and authoritative. Daniel’s prophecy would later also be collected for the third portion of the Hbr Bible, the Writings, which included the Books of Wisdom and most later historical books (Ru, Lam, Est, Ezr, Ne, 1Ch, 2Ch). (TLSB)

Jeremiah ... seventy years. See **note** on Jer 25:11–12. (CSB)

Jeremiah prophesied that 70 years must pass before the exiles would return to Jerusalem and the desolations of the city would end (Jer 29:10). This was a punishment for the Judeans and a period of rest for the land they had exploited. (TLSB)

9:3–19 Daniel’s prayer contains humility (v. 3), worship (v. 4), confession (vv. 5–15) and petition (vv. 16–19). (CSB)

9:3 Daniel prayed three times a day (6:10). What follows in vv 4–19 is an example of his pleas for mercy, addressed to the Lord shortly before Cyrus issued his decree in 538 BC allowing the Judean exiles to return home (Ezr 1:2–3). (TLSB)

sackcloth and ashes. See **note** on Ge 37:34. (CSB)

9:4 *confession.* Daniel was conscious of his own sins and those of Israel. Cf Ne 9. (TLSB)

keeps covenant and steadfast love. In contrast to Israel’s unfaithfulness, the Lord’s love for His people did not waver. (TLSB)

9:5 *sinned.* Hbr *chata’*, “miss the mark.” Daniel repeatedly characterized Israel’s rebellion and lawlessness with this word (vv 8, 11, 16, 20). (TLSB)

9:7–10 Daniel contrasted God’s righteousness with Israel’s glaring wickedness. Whereas Israel walked in sin, the Lord is distinguished by mercy and forgiveness. (TLSB)

9:11 *curses ... written in the Law.* See Lev 26:33; Dt 28:63–67. (CSB)

Moses had warned the people of Israel that the Lord would pronounce curses on them for their sins. (TLSB)

9:12 *confirmed His words.* Fulfilled the prophetic warnings spoken by Moses and other prophets. (TLSB)

done against Jerusalem. City and temple had been destroyed by the Babylonians and still lay in ruins (v 17). (TLSB)

9:13 *not ... turning from our iniquities.* Exiles were guilty of continuing in the sins of their ancestors. (TLSB)

9:15 *brought Your people out of ... Egypt.* Daniel concluded his confession of sin by reminding the Lord of His great act of salvation on behalf of Israel. (TLSB)

9:16–19 Repeated plea that the Lord would have mercy on Jerusalem. (TLSB)

9:16 *holy hill.* Mount Zion, location of the temple in Jerusalem. (TLSB)

9:17 *make Your face to shine.* Sign of God’s favor. (TLSB)

9:18 *Open Your eyes.* Vivid way of appealing to God to take note of the desolations in Jerusalem (cf Ps 44:23). (TLSB)

because of your great mercy. God answers prayer because of his grace, not because of our works. (CSB)

“Faith saves because it takes hold of mercy, or the promise of grace, even though our works are unworthy” (Ap V 217). (TLSB)

9:19 *hear ... forgive ... pay attention and act.* Daniel concluded his appeal for the Lord’s mercy with a litany of petitions. “So Daniel teaches us in praying to seize mercy, that is, to trust in God’s mercy and not to trust in our own merits before God” (Ap V 210) (TLSB)

9:1–19 Daniel fervently longs for the restoration of Jerusalem and the temple. His search of the Scriptures leads him to Jeremiah’s prophecy that the captivity would end after 70 years. Daniel is aware that Israel’s sins brought God’s curse on them. His long prayer is a heartfelt confession of sins and an earnest plea for the Lord’s mercy. The pattern of Daniel’s prayer is one that we continue to follow in worship and private devotions. We are confident of being heard because Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father. • O Christ, Lamb of God, have mercy on me, a sinner, and grant me peace. Amen. (TLSB)

The Seventy “Sevens”

²⁰ While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the LORD my God for his holy hill— ²¹ while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. ²² He instructed me and said to me, “Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. ²³ As soon

as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision: ²⁴ “Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy. ²⁵ “Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. ²⁶ After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. ²⁷ He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”

9:20 *While I was speaking.* See Isa 65:24. (CSB)

9:21 *man Gabriel.* Angel who had appeared to Daniel previously and interpreted his vision of the ram, goat, and little horn. (TLSB)

swift flight. Gabriel came at once in answer to Daniel’s prayer. Hipp: “You see how the prophet likens the speed of the angels to a winged bird, on account of the light and rapid motion with which these spirits fly so quickly in discharge of orders” (ANF 5:190). (TLSB)

evening sacrifice. Daniel’s evening prayer coincided with the time the evening sacrifice would normally have been offered in the temple (cf Ps 141:2). (TLSB)

9:23 *word went out.* God commanded Gabriel to go to Daniel. (TLSB)

you are greatly loved. Daniel needed this assurance after confessing his sins and deploring Jerusalem’s desolations. (TLSB)

consider the word and understand the vision. Gabriel links the word of Jeremiah (v 2) with the previous vision (ch 8). We are helped to understand Gabriel’s answer in vv 24–27 notes) by recalling his interpretation of the previous vision (8:19–26) and what follows in ch 11. (TLSB)

9:20–23 God demonstrates His love for Daniel by immediately responding to his prayer. Today, we have Jesus’ assurance that He will hear and answer the prayers of His disciples (Jn 14:13–14; 15:16; 16:23–24). Therefore, we may pray with confidence and patience, knowing that God will hear. • Lord, hear my prayer and answer me as You know best. Grant me great patience and faith in Your love. Amen. (TLSB)

9:24 *Seventy weeks.* Likely related to the “seventy years” of which Jeremiah spoke (v 2). Numbers like seven, seventy, and other multiples of seven are often symbolic (cf Mt 18:21–22). The figure here is not a literal 70 weeks referring to the restoration of the temple, because the

second temple was not completed until 516 BC (c 23 years after Daniel's vision). The Hbr word for "week" is literally "seven." (TLSB)

sevens.† The sevens are nowhere defined as chronological years. But as the image of metals (ch. 2) and the beasts (chs. 7–8) are not meant to appear in these forms but are figurative of God's direction of world events, so here the number seven, the sacred number of completeness, is not to be computed arithmetically but portrays, in apocalyptic language, the full attainment of God's goal of history: the universal redemption of mankind. (CSB)

Seventy "sevens" is 490 units of time, which some regard as symbolic for c 490 years, from the end of the exile to the time of Christ. (TLSB)

FOR YOUR PEOPLE – Gabriel in 9:24 uses six infinitive phrases to describe God's purpose for the seventy weeks. They are arranged in two groups of three with the third in each group being the climax. The first three are these:

to end transgression,
to finish sin,
and to atone for iniquity (CC)

These three assure Daniel that his sin and the sin of his people are forgiven through the coming Messiah. He will bring an end to sin's power by atoning for all sin. These infinitives point to the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the purpose and goal of the seventy weeks. They view it from a negative perspective: our need for the forgiveness of our sin. (CC)

The second group of three infinitives focuses on the same thing, but in a positive sense:

to bring everlasting righteousness,
to seal up vision and prophet,
and to anoint a Most Holy One (CC)

The righteousness that the Messiah will bring will be everlasting. This implies that there will be no further need of righteousness obtained by repeated sacrifices at the temple; Christ's once-for-all sacrifice atones for all sins committed by all people (Heb 7:27; 9:12; 10:11–14). Therefore, the advent and atonement of the Messiah toward the end of the seventy weeks will bring an end to the temple and its system of sacrifices instituted by Moses. (CC)

holy city. Jerusalem. (TLSB)

finish the transgression ... iniquity. The people and city would continue to suffer for their sins, as God had threatened.

SEAL UP VISION – The seventy weeks will also see the sealing of "vision and prophet" (9:24). While some commentators view this as a witness to the authenticity of

the words of the prophets, a seal not only witnesses to the authenticity of the words on a scroll, but it also prevents further words from being written on it (see the fourth textual note on 9:24). Thus the sealing of “vision and prophet” is an affirmation that no further prophecy will be needed once the seventy weeks are ended. (CC)

Wording indicates that the prophecy of 70 weeks has to do with the future, when it would be unsealed. (On the practical use of seals, Jer 32:10.) The prophecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled literally during the 70 years of the exile. But here Gabriel uses the symbolic quality of the number to introduce another topic of prophecy. The idea of 70 weeks may also connect with the OT theme of Sabbath rest for the land during the exile. (TLSB)

MOST HOLY – Jesus is the ultimate sanctuary for his people. In Mt 12:6 he compares himself to the temple and declares that he is greater. He is the Word who became flesh and dwelt or tabernacled (ἐσκήνωσεν) among us (Jn 1:14). His body is the temple that will be destroyed and raised in three days, since in his body dwells the fullness of God (Jn 2:18–22; Col 1:19–20). In the new Jerusalem, the eternal state of the redeemed, he, along with the Father, will be the temple (Rev 21:22). Moreover, Jesus is the cornerstone of the temple, which is his church (1 Cor 3:16–17; Eph 2:19–22; 1 Pet 2:4–9; Rev 3:12) and his body (Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 12:27; Eph 4:12). (CC)

This translation implies rededication of the temple (cf Ezr 6:13–18; 1Macc 4:42–59). However, the Hbr literally says “to anoint a holy of holies” or “to anoint a most holy one” (see ESV note), which could refer to a person such as the Messiah (cf “anointed one,” v 25). Hipp: “The Most Holy is none else but the Son of God alone” (ANF 5:181). (TLSB)

9:25–27† However, God would not carry out his plan of universal salvation at once or even in the immediate future. Therefore the 70 weeks are broken down in verses 25–27 into unequal stages or segments of “seven,” “sixty-two” and “one” weeks. This division of the symbolic total gave assurance that the redemption of mankind would take place in a historical setting but not before two distinguishable eras had run their course. The first seven weeks were God’s pledge to restore and build Jerusalem. But the vision enabled Daniel to look beyond his immediate concern. The 62 weeks to follow affirmed that the rebuilt city would continue to function as Israel’s religious center when the Messianic age was to begin. The final week would bring the consummation of all things which are decreed and preceded it: (1) the death of “the Anointed One, the ruler” to atone for sin; (2) the ratification of a covenant with abrogated sacrifices and offerings; (3) the destruction of rebuilt Jerusalem, no longer a holy city but filled with abominations. (CSB)

Having cleared most of the problems associated with this difficult and enigmatic prophecy, the events of 9:25–26 can now be identified in summary: (CC)

<i>Gabriel’s Words</i>	<i>Fulfillment</i>
“Seven weeks” (9:25).	Rebuilding of Jerusalem (538–445 BC).
“Sixty-two weeks when it will again have been built [with] plaza and moat” (9:25).	From Nehemiah to Jesus (445–2 BC).

“Troubled times” (9:25).	The Hellenistic era (Daniel 11), especially the persecution of Antiochus (ca. 167–164 BC).
“Messiah will be cut off” (after the sixty-ninth week and during the seventieth week; 9:26).	Jesus’ crucifixion (ca. AD 33).
“The city and the holy place will be destroyed with a Leader who is coming,” the risen Messiah who will return (9:26)	Roman devastations of Jerusalem under Titus (AD 70) and Hadrian (AD 135), which portend the end of the world at the return of Christ.

Gabriel finally relates details about the seventieth week. They were fulfilled in this way:

<i>Gabriel’s Words</i>	<i>Fulfillment</i>
The Messiah “will confirm a covenant for the many” (9:27).	Jesus establishes the new covenant in his blood, shed for many (Jer 31:31–34 ; Mt 26:28 ; Mk 14:24 ; Lk 22:20 ; 1 Cor 11:25 ; 2 Cor 3:6 ; Heb 7:22 ; 8:8 , 13 ; 9:15 ; 12:24 ; 13:20).
In the middle of the week, the Messiah “will cause sacrifice and offering to cease” (9:27)	Titus conquers Jerusalem and destroys the temple, ending its sacrifices (AD 70).
At the end of the seventieth week, there will no longer be a connection between Daniel’s people and the holy city (cf. 9:24).	Hadrian conquers Jerusalem and bans Jews from entering the city (AD 135).
There will be desolation until the final decree is poured out on the desolator (the end of the seventieth week and beyond; 9:27).	The Roman Empire falls (as predicted in Daniel 2 and 7). The Antichrist continues to persecute the church until he falls at Christ’s return.

9:25 *the word to restore*. Possibly refers to the decree of Cyrus in 538 BC ([Ezr 1:2](#)), which ended the exile. (TLSB)

anointed one, a prince. May refer to either Zerubbabel or Joshua. (TLSB)

seven weeks. Relatively short period of time, perhaps to the completion of the second temple. (TLSB)

sixty-two weeks. Bulk of the time period, which may extend to the NT era. (TLSB)

built again with squares and moat. Nehemiah would rebuild the walls and city of Jerusalem. (TLSB)

moat. Defensive trench, not necessarily filled with water.(TLSB)

troubled time. Jerusalem was dominated by the Persians, Alexander the Great and his successors (cf [8:1–8](#); [11:2–4](#)), the Maccabees, and finally the Romans. However, the city was

continually inhabited amid all this trouble and became the capital of the region. Only during the reign of Antiochus IV were temple services disrupted. (TLSB)

9:26 Luth: “Then after sixty-two weeks (he says) Christ shall be put to death. Here he shows what is to happen when these sixty-nine weeks are up, and Christ has begun [his ministry], namely, that Christ shall be crucified” (AE 35:305). Aph: “Daniel testifies that, when Christ comes and is slain, Jerusalem shall be destroyed, and shall continue in desolation until the accomplishment of the things which are determined, for ever” (NPNF 2 13:390). (TLSB)

people of the prince ... destroy. Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70. (TLSB)

Its end ... flood. The end would come suddenly. Cf Mk 13:14–23 for Jesus’ warnings. (TLSB)

9:27 *He will confirm a covenant ... will put an end to sacrifice.*† A reference to the Messiah’s (“the Anointed One,” v. 26) instituting the new covenant and putting “an end” to the OT sacrificial system. (CSB)

Luth: “The preaching of Christ spread mightily ... proclaiming to the people the promised grace” (AE 35:305). (TLSB))

one week. Short period of time. (TLSB)

half of the week. About midway through the final period. (TLSB)

end to sacrifice and offering. Luth: “Christ was put to death. And then the sacrifice ceased; that is, through Christ’s death, which is the true sacrifice, the Jewish sacrifice and worship were abolished (AE 35:305). (TLSB)

abomination that causes desolation. See **note** on 11:31. (CSB)

Luth: “The Romans under Emperor Caius Caligula placed an idol in the temple (as the angel says here [9:27]) as a sign that the temple and Judaism were to be at an end” (AE 35:305). (TLSB)

The Messiah’s coming also brings an end to sacrifices: “on the wing of detested things (is) a desolator, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator” (Dan 9:27). Jesus speaks of “the detested thing of/causing desolation” (τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως) in Mt 24:15 and Mk 13:14, echoing Dan 9:27. Luke records Jesus saying, “When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation [ἐρήμωσις] has drawn near” (Lk 21:20). This helps explain the difficult phrase “on the wing of detested things” (Dan 9:27). “Wing” (רִיב) brings to mind (by synecdoche of a part for the whole) a swift raptor such as an eagle or falcon. “Wing” is used several times in the Prophets in connection with swiftly attacking armies (Is 8:8; Jer 48:40; 49:22; Ezek 17:3, 7). The “desolator” (Dan 9:27) or “detested thing of/causing desolation” (Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14) is the pagan Roman legions that conquered Jerusalem in AD 70 and again in AD 135. (CC)

The Roman general Titus quelled the Jewish revolt in AD 70. Jews were still allowed to live in the city after it was conquered and the temple destroyed. However, in 132 a Jewish messianic revolt arose. It was led by Simon bar Kozibah, called “Bar Kochba,” meaning “son of the star,” in reference to the messianic prophecy in Num 24:17. This revolt was sparked by the Emperor Hadrian’s plan to build a temple dedicated to Jupiter on the ruins of the Jewish temple. For a short time, Jews took control of Jerusalem, but in 135 AD, they were defeated by Hadrian’s legions. He razed the city, renamed it Aelia Capitolina, and erected a temple to Jupiter. Jews were forbidden to enter the city. This marks the end of the seventieth week, according to the traditional messianic interpretation. (CC)

Gabriel adds one final note, the notice that a final decree will be poured out on the desolator (Dan 9:27). Following the end of the seventieth week, the desolator, Rome, will also have judgment poured out on it. This, of course, was already spoken of in Daniel 2 and 7, both of which predict the fall of the Roman Empire. Likewise, final judgment shall be poured out on Satan and his minions, including the Antichrist, at the end of the world (Rev 19:20; 20:10). (CC)

decreed end. God is also speaking about the end of Rome. (TLSB)

9:24–27 Gabriel directs Daniel to expand his vision of the future. Daniel was to think not of seventy years but of seventy times seven. The things of which Gabriel spoke remain somewhat mysterious. What we can learn from Gabriel’s message is that God’s vision of the future surpasses all our thinking and calculating. We walk by faith and not by sight (2Co 5:7), trusting that the One who kept His promise to send the Messiah, the Anointed One, will keep all His promises to us in His own time and way. • Take my hand and lead me, dear Lord, for then I know I am safe Amen. (TLSB)