

Daniel 9:1-19 • The Right Response to Prophecy

Introduction

If you were in the presence of the smartest person on earth, would you learn from them? Would you even go so far as to copy or imitate their behavior so as to deal with situations the way they do? Daniel's an interesting biblical phenomena because what God revealed through Him is often quoted, but the substance and nature of His life and faith are often overlooked. In other words, how did Daniel himself react to God's Word, God's prophecy? Shouldn't that be one of our strongest clues as to how to act upon them our self? Just as we clearly see the fulfillment of prophecy today, so Daniel in chapter 9 saw the fulfillment of a prophecy in his day. How alike or different is our attitude and reaction to that of one of the greatest and wisest of all of God's Believers?

¹In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans— ²in 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. ³So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes.

⁴I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said, "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, ⁵we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances. ⁶Moreover, 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.

Read verses 1-3

Q: Throughout the book of Daniel God reveals His will through dreams and angels and prophets. How is His will revealed in this instance? Why is this so different from the other examples of God's revelation to this point?

A: It is revealed simply by Daniel reading His Word. It did not come by so-called supernatural methods such as a dream or an angel, but in the normal course of reading Jeremiah. It was enough for Daniel to know that this was God's Word, that what He'd spoken He would do.

Application: Especially when it comes to prophecy, do we truly believe and understand that God has provided enough information? Why do we seek other sources? What if we simply took Him at His already given Word?

Q: For those that believe we are living in the Last Days—that is, seeing the fulfillment of God's Word—what is different about Daniel's response from ours?

A: Daniel's reaction is to focus on God Himself through intense prayer and fasting and personal submission—many of us never stop looking at the signs long enough to consider God Himself.

Application: For Believers, the correct response to prophecy is not the desire for **MORE** prophecy but to turn to Him in an even more and committed manner than ever before in our life. The common reaction of all men who have experienced the very presence and knowledge of the One True God is great fear, humility, and worship of Him—not to become celebratory or giddy.

Read verses 4-6

Q: What is Daniel's first response to this revelation that God will be restoring the nation Israel after it's destruction and captivity for the past 70 years and why?

A: Confession. First, Daniel realized that Israel was supposed to learn the right lesson from what happened to them so as to prevent it from happening again. Second, Daniel realized that Israel was responsible to be in a right spiritual relationship with God. That is why he identifies from the outset that God "keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and **keep His commandments**". Biblical obedience is a matter of the condition of the heart more than anything else.

Q: What are the 2 areas Daniel initially confesses as a result of acknowledging Israel's sin, wickedness, and rebellion?

A: "...turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances..." and "...we have not listened to Your servants the prophets..." It's the dual rejection of His Word that they must atone for and subsequently change their behavior in regard of.

Point: Prophecy is the very Word of God; therefore, it should drive us **MORE** towards obedience and submission to all of His Word.

⁷“Righteousness belongs to You, O Lord, but to us open shame, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of their unfaithful deeds which they have committed against You.

⁸“Open shame belongs to us, O Lord, to our kings, our princes and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. ⁹To the LORD our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him; ¹⁰nor 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.

¹¹“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.

¹²“Thus He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us and against our rulers who ruled us, to bring on us great calamity; for under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what was done to Jerusalem. ¹³As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us; yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth. ¹⁴Therefore the LORD has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us; for the LORD our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done. but we have not obeyed His voice.

¹⁵“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. ¹⁶O 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

Read verses 7-11

Q: What are the 2 basic groups that Daniel identifies as bearing the blame?

A: The general population—whether remaining in Israel or still scattered throughout the known world—and the leaders (“our kings, our princes and our fathers”)

Q: What is identified as the core problem for each group?

A: In v.7 the problem with the general population is “unfaithful deeds”; in v.8-10 the core problems of leadership is sin and rebellion, the result of a complete lack of obedience to both the voice of God and His prophets.

Q: If leadership is singled out for their responsibilities in all of this, and their role is obviously to reinforce the validity of God’s Word and the authenticity of His prophets, why is the general population still being held accountable?

A: Every individual is responsible to be responsive and obedient to God’s Word and His prophets—someone else’s failure to do so never lets us off the hook. We can never blame someone else for the behavioral choices **WE** make that result in “unfaithful deeds”.

Q: What were the curses and the blessings detailed in the Mosaic law based on?

A: The choice to obey or disobey God’s Word.

Application: *If the signs and works of God’s End Times judgment are upon us, what is the number one thing **WE** should personally be concerned with? The quality of our obedience to His Word. What difference in your life would it make if you realized the one and only thing you can and are to do to prepare for the Last Days is to be completely obedient to His Word? Being in possession of God’s Word, do you know that **YOU’RE** responsible to act on it regardless of what someone else might say?*

Read verses 12-14

Q: How does God “confirm” His Word?

A: By bringing about the exact results He promised based on our obedience or disobedience. What He says will happen.

Q: What was supposed to be Israel’s right response to God’s judgment according to v.13?

A: To turn from iniquity (a.k.a., “evil” or “wickedness”) and give “attention to Your truth”. The proper response to the works of God’s prophecies is to flee from sin and embrace His Word.

Application: *Do you somehow have the false notion that you belong to a “protected” group that will not bear most if not all of the End Times judgments? Do you see in Daniel’s example as a righteous Believer himself that our response should be an increased fervor to reject sin and employ God’s Word in our life?*

Read verses 15-16

Q: Why is Daniel’s mention of the Exodus from Egypt so appropriate?

A: It’s a reminder not only that God has the proven power and history of making the impossible happen, but that He accomplishes **EVERYTHING** according to His Word. The current generation of Israelites has only suffered captivity for 70 years—they had been under Egyptian rule for 430 years before being led out and established. In that respect, the return from Babylon would be a smaller thing to accomplish.

have become a reproach to all those around us.

¹⁷“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. ¹⁸O 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. ¹⁹O 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.”

Read verses 17-19

Q: For what is Daniel the most concerned? What is the core of his request?

1. “...for Your sake, O Lord...” (v.17)
2. “...the city which is called by Your name...” (v.18)
3. “...not...on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion.” (v.18)
4. “For Your own sake...” (v.19)
5. “...because Your city and Your people are called by Your name.” (v.19)

Point: Have you noticed that the great men of God are more concerned for the name of the Lord than for their own or others? When God proffered to Moses the idea of destroying all of Israel and starting over with Moses, his appeal to God was for the sake of His name. When Hezekiah was told of his impending sickness and death, his sorrow was expressed not for his own life but for all that was yet to be accomplished for the name of God.

Q: What is the action most sought after by Daniel? What should this teach us?

A: Forgiveness. It speaks to the most important thing on earth to God, our soul. Whether or not a building, city, or even an entire nation is restored and built into something is not as important as a soul restored to a right relationship to Him. Earthly structures are temporary—a right soul is eternal.

Overall Application

- What should our response and attitude be to what God has revealed in His Word for these Last Days?
- Do you evaluate books, conferences, speakers, and even movies on the End Times by how much or little they focus on the overriding need for a right relationship with God? What does this say about your own focus?
- If Daniel—one of the greatest of God’s prophets to whom much wisdom and knowledge was directly given by God—acted in this manner, why aren’t we more inclined to learn from his example?