

DANIEL (DARE TO BE GOD'S MESSENGER)
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SERIES: Daniel (Dare To Be God's Messenger)

TITLE: Program 32 – Daniel's Prayer

TUESDAY

OPEN

Do you live as if God is God? I mean is your life ordered by you or is it ordered by God? Are your responses ordered by you or are they ordered by God? O beloved, if you don't live as if God is God, why should you expect others to live that way? It's a good question, isn't it? We'll deal with it today.

PART ONE

O beloved, we have finally come to Daniel, chapter 9. And Daniel, chapter 9 is absolutely an awesome, awesome chapter. It contains a prophesy that is so incredibly accurate, that if the Jews had paid attention to it they could have figured out when the Messiah was coming, when the Messiah was coming, if they had paid attention to it. Also, it contains a prayer that you and I need to be familiar with. It's a prayer that Daniel gives on behalf of his people, on behalf of his holy nation. We're in for such an awesome study in this

chapter. Well let's look at Daniel, chapter 9, because it includes a new vision. It says in Daniel 9, verse 1: In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans, in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of 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. So I gave my attention to seek the Lord, to seek Him by prayer and supplications with fasting and sackcloth. Daniel had read something that caused him all of a sudden to prepare himself in order to seek God, to get wisdom from God and to get an audience with God on behalf of his people. I want us to stop and I want us to look at what's happening. I want us to see what year this is. This is the first year of king Darius, the son of Ahasuerus. Now remember Darius is the Median king who is reigning when Daniel is thrown into the lion's den. And we think that probably it was in that first year or second year when Darius was organizing his kingdom and setting it all up that that happened. It is 66 years after the first siege of Jerusalem. Daniel, we figure is about 82 years old. And he has this vision from the Lord. After he seeks God, and what I want you to see is it comes after he's seeking God. It comes after he's in the word that was written to him by Jeremiah the prophet. By this time Jeremiah is dead. Now as we look at this he was reading in the book of Jeremiah and I want us to go to Jeremiah, chapter 29 and see what he was reading. Okay, remember Jeremiah was a contemporary prophet and Jeremiah prophesied from king Josiah all the way through the end of King Zedekiah who was the one that was taken into captivity when Jerusalem was destroyed, in 586 B.C. Jeremiah, chapter 29, and let's look at these first eleven verses. Now these are the words of the letter which Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem; he was the one that stayed in Jerusalem; to the rest of the elders of the exile, the priests, the prophets, and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. Now let's review, okay. There were three sieges

of Jerusalem. The first one was 605 B.C. and Daniel was taken captive along with some of the nobles into Babylon. This is the first year of Nebuchadnezzar. There was a second siege of Jerusalem. Can you remember when it was? It was 597 B.C. and this is when Ezekiel was taken captive. And he was to be a priest and he never ever got to serve in the temple. And he would never get to serve in the temple and it's kind of sad until you realize that the whole end of the book of Ezekiel is a vision of the temple that is to come when Jesus Christ returns and sets up His kingdom as King of kings and Lord of lords. So he was taken captive, Ezekiel, in 597 B.C., along with 10,000 others. Okay, so that third siege of Jerusalem came in 586 B.C. and Jeremiah was in Jerusalem. All right now, he was there from the time of Josiah all the way through the destruction in, under the king Zedekiah, as I said. All right, now, he is writing a letter to all the exiles and he says thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. Now remember Daniel said he was reading the word of the Lord to Jeremiah; this was taken as God's word. And God is saying I have sent you into exile. He says build houses and live in them and plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and become fathers of sons and daughters and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to your husbands that they may bear sons and daughters and multiply there and do not decrease. In other words, don't say un, un, not tonight sweetheart, because we're going to be out of captivity soon and I don't want to be pregnant and on the road returning to Jerusalem. No, he says don't do that because you're going to be here a long time. Don't fight your captors. Don't resist them. As a matter of fact, he says in verse 7, and seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, do not let your prophets who are in your midst and your diviners deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams which they dream. For they prophesy falsely to you in My name, I have not sent them. Now this is

very important. Everybody that claims to be a prophet; everybody that claims to have a dream and a vision is not necessarily from God. And the only way you know whether they are a true prophet or not is to measure them by the word of God. But you not only measure them, but you measure their lifestyle to see what is their lifestyle like. Are they consistent? One of the things about Jeremiah is you find consistency in his life. You find him in a pit with this water coming up around his ankles because he's faithful to the Lord, no matter what. You find him as a man that is rejected and as a man that wrestles with this fire in his bones and wanting to speak the word of God and yet getting the repercussions from speaking it. But here he's saying to them, settle down. Settle down. Build houses. Have kids. Pray for the welfare of Babylon because in their welfare you have welfare. And he says and don't listen to those false prophets. Verse 10: for thus says the Lord, when seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, I will bring you back to this place. For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. Are you excited? Did you see where that verse that you've quoted so often is? Did you see its context? Its context is in God's message to Israel. And God's message is this: you're going to be in captivity for seventy years. But listen; after the seventy years are complete I'm going to bring you home. For I know the plans that I have for you. They're plans for welfare. They're plans for good. They're not plans for evil. I have a future for you. I have hope for you. If you happen to be listening, and you're Jewish, I just want you to know that it's in the sovereignty of God beloved, that you are listening. You say why are you calling me beloved? Because Israel is beloved to God. Because the Jews are beloved to God. Because you are His elect nation. Because you were given tremendous privileges and it's because of you that I have all the benefits that I have. I've reaped the blessings that belong to Israel. I've reaped the promise of the new covenant because I have believed in your Messiah. I

have believed in the Anointed One. I have believed in the Christ and I've discovered that His name is Jesus. And God wants you to come to Him. God wants you to know Him. God says I'm not through with Israel. But beloved if you don't come to Him now you're going to go through the most incredible hell that is going to make the holocaust look like kindergarten in comparison to what is coming on the Jews. Calamity is coming and He tells us about it in Daniel, chapter 9. Now let's go back and let's look at Daniel, chapter 9, because he sees this promise. He sees the fact that they're going to be in captivity for 70 years. And so he says so I gave my attention to the Lord, to seek Him by prayer and supplications with fasting, sackcloth and ashes. Now fasting means he's going to go without food. Sackcloth means he's going to cover himself with this black, rough, course material. And then he's going to take ashes and he's going to put the ashes on his forehead. Now what is he doing? He is showing God signs of his humility. He is bringing himself low. He has seen a truth and he is concerned. And he is concerned because 66 years have passed. If this prophecy is true and he knows it's the word of the Lord, only four years remain. And so he's going to seek God. How is he going to seek Him? What is he going to do? We can learn lessons from it and we will when we come back in just a minute.

PART TWO

Let's get back beloved in Daniel, chapter 9 and let's start in verse 4. It says I prayed to the Lord God. Now the word prayer is going to become a key word in this chapter. And so you want to go back and you want to mark it in a distinctive way in verse 3 and then you want to mark it in verse 4. He says I prayed to the Lord, my God and confessed and said, alas O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and loving kindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments. Now anytime I come across the word covenant in the Bible, I mark it and I color it red and then I put yellow around it. I color it red because to make a covenant means to cut a

covenant and I put the yellow around it for the picture of God. A covenant is a solemn binding agreement made by passing through pieces of flesh. And God made a covenant with Abraham in Genesis, chapter 15, a covenant that promised him that the land would belong to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob forever and ever. But He also promised Abraham in that covenant a seed, that the Messiah would come from him. And he says you're a God who keeps covenant. You don't break a covenant. He says and you have loving kindness. Now loving kindness is the word hesed. And the word hesed is a covenant term because it's the blessing that comes on those that are in covenant. And he says You have kept Your covenant and loving kindness for those who love Him, who love You and keep Your commandments. You see if you love God, beloved, then You're going to obey Him. Love and obedience go together. They're synonymous. And he says we have sinned. We have committed iniquity. We have acted wickedly. We have rebelled, even turning aside from Thy commandments and ordinances. Moreover, we have not listened to Thy servants the prophets who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes, our fathers and all the people of the land. What is the first thing that he does is he says this is Who you are. You're a covenant keeping God. You have loving kindness for those who love You and keep Your commandments and God, we have sinned. We have acted wickedly. We have transgressed against You. And see Daniel knows this and this is why he's seeking Him and fasting. This is why he's seeking Him in sackcloth. This is why he's putting on the ashes. He is coming to God not as a righteous man, so to speak, representing a righteous people, asking a righteous God for help or benefit. He is coming in great humility, identifying with his people because of their sin, because they have rebelled against God, because they have done wickedly against God. He says righteousness belongs to Thee O Lord. But to us, open shame as it is to this day. Those, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel; now watch what he says. Those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the

countries to which Thou has driven them because of their unfaithful deeds which they have committed against Thee. Why does 70 years in a letter from Jeremiah provoke Daniel when 66 years are already passed and he only has 4 years of captivity to go, why does this provoke such a response? Why 70 years of captivity? Why confessing of sin? Well I want to pause here for a minute and I want to take us back to the book of Leviticus, chapter 26. In Leviticus, chapter 26 God is talking to them about the land. In Leviticus, chapter 26 He says to them in verse 2, He says you shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary. I am the Lord. And then He says if you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, so as to carry them out, then I shall give you rains in their seasons so that the land will yield its produce and the trees will bear its fruit. And then He tells how He's going to bless them. How, in verse 6, I'm going to grant peace in the land. And He tells how that He's going to chase their enemies and how God is going to bless them. He says so I will turn to you and make you fruitful and multiply you and confirm My covenant with you. He says verse 11, moreover, I will make My dwelling among you and My soul will not reject you. He says I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt so that you should not be their slaves. I broke the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect. But, and this is a sad one in verse 14. But if you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commands, if instead you reject My statutes and if your soul abhors My ordinances so that as not to carry out all My commandments and so as to break My covenant, I in turn will do this to you. And then He begins to give them a group of judgments that He is going to bring on them. He says in verse 31: I will lay waste your cities as well and will make your sanctuaries desolate and I will not smell your soothing aromas. That soothing aroma of the evening and the morning sacrifice, like we saw in the last lesson. He says I will make the land desolate so that your enemies who settle in it shall be appalled over it. I'll ruin the land itself. You however, I will scatter among the nations and will draw out a sword after you as your

land becomes desolate and your cities become waste. Then the land, listen carefully, will enjoy its Sabbaths all the days of the desolation, while you are in your enemies' land and the land will rest and enjoy its Sabbaths. Do you know why they were in captivity for 70 years? Because they had not allowed the land to enjoy its Sabbaths and therefore, God was dealing with them. And that's why they were in captivity. He says all the days of its desolation it will observe the rest, which it did not observe on your Sabbaths when you were living in it. Every seven years the land was to have a Sabbath. I want you to go to the last chapter of 2 Chronicles. In 2 Chronicles, chapter 36 in verse 19 it's talking about the destruction of ah, the land and the final siege in 586 B.C. Then they burned the house of God and broke down the wall of Jerusalem and burned all of its fortified buildings with fire and destroyed all its valuable articles. And all of this beloved is because they sinned against God, because they did not honor God as God. It says and those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon and they were servants to him and 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 70 years were complete. So what we see is we see Daniel in Daniel, chapter 9 confessing his sin. You see Daniel saying I want to be right with God. You see Daniel acting as if God is God. O beloved, if you expect others to act as if God is God, then you need to act as if God is God. And when you do, you manifest God to others. And when they don't act like that you understand that it's because they've rejected Him.