

Daniel 9

A prayer and a puzzle



The visions that we've seen so far in this book have perhaps been initially puzzling, but have either been explained in the book itself, or fall into place quite tidily with knowledge of a bit of history. But of the “word”/“vision” (23) towards the end of this chapter ... if only it were that easy!

But before tackling these latter curiosities, there is first of all so much to learn from Daniel's prayer.

➤ **The background of the prayer** (1-3)

Daniel, himself a prophet, has been reading the works of another prophet. So how should we value “the Word of God”?

So if Daniel makes this discovery perhaps 67 years into the 70, why does he pray, instead of just waiting for the clock to tick?

➤ **The content of the prayer** (4-19)

Daniel starts with the nature and promises of God (4) – but these don't always give us immediate comfort. Why not (11-13)?

Nowadays it would seem outrageous to speak of anyone deserving “open shame” (7,8). Is God fair to take sin so seriously? What is so terrible about merely “not listening to your servants” (6), and so on? How do we try to re-brand “sin” and “shame” instead?

“And now” (15) marks the turning point of the prayer. Daniel returns again to the nature of God, not just as just judge, but as gracious redeemer. How do we make sure that we give full measure to *both* sides of God's character?

So how might we learn to pray better, using Daniel's example here? (Perhaps that is why it was included here!)

➤ **The outcome of the prayer** (20-27)

Some encouragements: Daniel's prayer was heard *immediately* (23), and he is “greatly loved” (23). Do we need these?

What do you make of “the time of the evening sacrifice” (21) – which hadn't been offered for decades!

How do Gabriel's explanations (24-27) grab you?

The “seventy weeks”, particularly, we will need to re-visit. But what have you perhaps heard in the way of explanations in the past – and what do you still want to clarify?