

THE PROPHETIC WORD TODAY

Understanding

Text: Daniel 9:1-2

INTRODUCTION: A young woman was at the hospital about to deliver her first baby. Her husband being overseas in the army, she had asked her mother and aunt to be with her. When a hard contraction hit she cried out, "Momma, it hurts so bad. Help me."

Her mother squeezed her hand and said, "Honey I'm sorry, but there is nothing I can do."

The woman then shifted her gaze to her aunt and said, "Auntie, you help me. Momma doesn't understand what I'm goin' through!"

A lot of times we think and say that others just don't understand. Sometimes we are right. Sometimes we are the ones that lack understanding. No wonder the Holy Spirit instructs us in

Proverbs 4:7 *Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.*

We have been studying God's prophetic word for us today by going through the book of the prophet Daniel. From the very first chapter, we have seen that Daniel was a man of great wisdom and understanding.

- He understood what to do when faced with a law that commanded him to do evil. He handled the situation without yielding to sin and without being rebellious to authority.
- He understood how to gain the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the colossal statue.
- He understood the warning God sent to proud King Nebuchadnezzar and gave him wise counsel.
- He understood the handwriting on the wall in Belshazzar's wicked feast.
- He understood the importance of prayer, even if doing so cost him his life.
- He understood the visions revealing God's plan for the coming world empires.

Solomon is noted as being the wisest man who ever lived in the things of this world, but Daniel was much wiser than Solomon in the things of God

Do you want to be wise in the things of God? Do you want to know what is right in His eyes? Do you want to recognize His way as opposed to the ways of the world? Parents, would you like your counsel to your children to always be the very best advice that could possibly be given?

Husbands, do you want your words to your wife to be words of lasting wisdom rather than fleeting foolishness.

Wives, do you want your pleadings with your husband to be saturated with righteousness and truth?

Students, do you want to have an understanding that goes beyond the ever changing opinions of lost people headed nowhere?

Daniel did. Daniel is a man who both wanted and attained understanding. And Daniel did not gain this understanding by the fell swoop of the hand of the Almighty nor by the divine winking of an eye. The way Daniel gained understanding, any man or woman can gain understanding. You and I can gain wisdom and understanding just like Daniel if we will do what Daniel did. We see it in two short verses of Daniel 9.

Daniel 9:1–2 ¹ In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans— ² in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years *specified* by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

What did Daniel understand?

I. THE CAPTIVITY OF THE JEWS WOULD LAST 70 YEARS.

Jeremiah 25:11 And this whole land shall be a desolation *and* an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

- A. So what?
- B. This was contrary to the common understanding.
 1. **Before the captivity, the Jews thought it would be brief.**
 2. **So God had to tell them...**

Jeremiah 29:4–7 ⁴ Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵ Build houses and dwell *in them*; plant gardens and eat their fruit. ⁶ Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters—that you may be increased there, and not diminished. ⁷ And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace.

3. **After they lived there for decades, the common understanding was that they would never go home.**
4. **So God had to tell them...**

Jeremiah 29:8–10 ⁸ For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are in your midst deceive you, nor listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. ⁹ For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them, says the LORD. ¹⁰ For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.

C. The reason the captivity was seventy years long –

1. God commanded the people to work the land 6 years and let it rest on the seventh or Sabbath year.

Leviticus 25:4 but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the LORD. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard.

2. God warned them not to disobey.

Leviticus 26:27 ‘And after all this, if you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me,

Leviticus 26:33–35 ³³ I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste. ³⁴ Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as long as it lies desolate and you *are* in your enemies’ land; then the land shall rest and enjoy its sabbaths. ³⁵ As long as *it* lies desolate it shall rest— for the time it did not rest on your sabbaths when you dwelt in it.

3. The people of Israel quit observing the Sabbath rest for the land every seven years. They missed 70 sabbaths over a period of 490 years.

Missing the Sabbath was not the only reason they went into captivity. They committed every abomination known to sinful man. But missing the Sabbaths determined the length of the sentence. The land needed to make up 70 years of rest, so God sent them into captivity for 70 years.

By the way, do you know what happened 490 years before that caused Israel to quit observing the Sabbath of the land? 490 years before the end of the captivity in 536 B.C. is 1026 B.C., during the reign of Israel’s first king, Saul. And why did Israel have a king? Because they wanted to be like all the nations around them. God had called them to be a distinctive nation, a witness to the pagan people around them. The people rejected that calling and wanted to become like the lost nations rather than seeking to being the lost nations to know the living God.

So the nations around them didn’t let the land rest every seventh year. You can’t get ahead like that.

It was **work, work, work,**
 so you could **get, get, get,**
 so you could **spend, spend, spend,**
 so you could **have, have, have, have.**

And Israel wanted to be like that.

I'm glad nobody today wants to be like that!

Now, here is an even more important question:

How did Daniel gain his godly understanding?

We saw that it was not by the conventional wisdom.

II. BY GOING TO THE BOOKS

A. What books?

1. Jeremiah – completed in 560 B.C. (When Jeremiah was an old man, Daniel was a young man) Dan. 9 takes place in the first year of Darius which is 538 B.C. That means that the Book of the Prophecy of Jeremiah is only 22 years old.

But that is not all he has. The text says books.

2. The Books of Moses – Genesis though Deuteronomy – because Daniel understood what I just explained to you about why God set the length of the captivity at 70 years. To understand that, you need what both Moses and Jeremiah wrote.
3. Very likely he had all the others of the OT that were written by this time as well because the historical accounts of the preservation of the books places their safekeeping in Babylon.

B. Daniel recognized these books as the Word of God.

Daniel 9:2 ... I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD

1. Daniel knew the books of the law were written by Moses, but he knew they were not written just by Moses.
2. He knew that the words of the Book of Jeremiah came from Jeremiah, but not just from Jeremiah.
3. He knew what the Holy Spirit would later say explicitly through Peter.

2 Peter 1:21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

When Daniel read the words from the books, he knew he was reading the very Word of God.

Do you know who else quoted Old Testament passages and referred to them as the Word of God? Jesus!

Mark 7:10-13 ¹⁰ For Moses said, '*Honor your father and your mother*'; and, '*He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.*' ¹¹ But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me *is Corban*"—' (that is, a gift *to God*), ¹² then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, ¹³ making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

CONCLUSION:

Dear skeptical friend, who tries to balance the world's intellectualism with some semblance of religion,

Dear doubting friend, who does not believe a donkey was really made to talk or an iron axe head was really made to float

Dear analytical friend, who cannot figure out how any person could write a perfect book with no mistakes or errors,

Let me tell you what I could do for you this very day.

If you would allow me to persuade you to seriously read and study the Scriptures, you would discover what Daniel discovered and what Jesus knew without discovery that

Psalm 19:7 The law of the LORD *is* perfect...

Psalm 119:89 Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.

Psalm 19:9 ... The judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether.

Timothy 3:16 All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

And when you make that discovery, you know what will happen? You will begin to grow in understanding.

You will understand the mysteries of the origin of this universe and all that is in it. You will no longer have to change theories more often than you change underwear.

You will understand life, and how it works.

You will understand relationships and how to nurture and enjoy them.

You will understand how to have a relationship with the God who made you.

You will understand how to go to heaven.

You will understand why trusting Jesus as your Lord and Savior is the one and only way to salvation.

You will understand God's plan for mankind and the appointed destination of history.

You will understand the future.

And dear skeptical, doubting, analytical, unbelieving friend, you are saying right now, "And pastor how do you know that is what will happen if I seriously read and study the Scriptures?"

Because that is what happened to me. I was the skeptic, the doubter, the intellectual analyzer, until I began to seriously read and study the Scriptures. And when I did, I remember the time, I came to the clear conclusion, "It really is true. It's all true."