

I WANT TO KNOW MY BIBLE

There's A New Day Coming

TEXT: Daniel 9

INTRODUCTION: Do you realize what this Bible reading plan has done to me? I have one Sunday morning to preach out of the Book of Daniel! Twelve chapters of some of the most exciting pages to be found in all of the Old Testament, and I get one sermon? Who picked this plan? Oh yeh, that was me!

So, I have had to pray much about which part of Daniel to preach to you today, and I have, and in a moment we are going to go to Daniel, Chapter 9.

However, we have an uncomfortable situation in our community regarding this thing called Spring Break. And most of you know the national news has portrayed Panama City Beach Spring Break as exemplary of the rampant drunkenness and debauchery that is typical of college spring break sights around the country and the world.

The sad thing about the media portrayal of the gross licentiousness that takes place annually for about six weeks in our community is that apparently it is true! Nobody seems to be denying it, and social media video footage seems to confirm it.

Therefore, on our way to Daniel 9, I think we better make a brief pit stop at Daniel 1, where Daniel and his three friends, having been brought as captives to Babylon were ushered into the king's palace to be trained to serve Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire. But as you can imagine, the king's palace was filled with all of the sins and excesses that properly go with the name Babylon, and Daniel and his friends had previously committed to God to have nothing to do with these things contrary to the Lord's Word and His way.

So, what did they do? They appealed to a person in authority. They were not rebellious. They were not self-righteous. They were not haughty. They just appealed to the man in charge and said, "Please allow us to do what is right in the eyes of God and then you see how it works out and do with us as you see fit."

The short story is that their supervisor agreed. God blessed them for their obedience. The supervisor could see that God had made them the best of the king's new servants, so he let them maintain their godly ways, and the problem was solved, literally for the rest of their lives.

Now, what has that to do with our problem with Spring Break? Well, the sheriff of Bay County has written officials of the County Commission and officials of Panama City Beach and has made five suggestions of things city and county officials could do to lessen the drunkenness and debauchery that has become commonplace during spring break.

His suggestions do not amount to prohibition; and in all honesty, they will not solve all of the problems. But they are reasonable initiatives that could make things much better than they are. To read them, one would think, "What reasonable person could oppose doing these things?" But the answer to that question is that those people who make extensive profit from the unbridled sin of the college students oppose anything that might lessen their profits. Therefore there is considerable behind the scenes opposition to the sheriff's proposals, and that opposition is supported by lots of money.

Now folks, I am saying to you that **we need to be Daniels concerning our Spring Break Babylon.** We need to appeal to our Bay County Commissioners and to the Mayor and City Council of Panama City Beach for them to support the initiatives of Sheriff McKeithen.

- **We need to do it properly.**
- **We need to do it nicely.**
- **We do not need to be mean or ugly about it.**
- **But we need to make our appeal.**
- **We must not be silent.**

This week, I wrote personally to each commissioner and council member as well as to the Mayor and the City Manager.

You will find at the desk in the mall copies of Sheriff McKeithen's letter which will give you the detail concerning his proposals. There will also be a list of the Commissioners and City Council members and their contact information in case you desire to make an appeal to them as I have. Also there is a meeting of the City Council of Panama City Beach this Thursday at 6 p.m.

Now, with our necessary detour to Daniel 1 complete, come with me to Daniel 9.

Between these two chapters of the Book of Daniel, 65 years have passed.

- Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, destroyer of Jerusalem is dead.
- Belshazzar his grandson who ruled the city for a while was slain the very night God announced his doom through Daniel, God's prophet.
- The kingdom of Babylon has been conquered by the Medo-Persian Empire, and Darius the Mede sits upon the throne.
- For 65 years Daniel and his people have been in captivity. Many times he must have wondered, "How long, oh Lord, how long?"

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.

I. THE WORD OF GOD REVEALED THAT A NEW DAY WAS COMING.

A. God's Word revealed the Babylonian captivity would be over in 70 years.

God gave Jeremiah the prophesy that the captivity would be 70 years near the same time that Daniel was taken captive. Daniel did not know this until he read it from a copy of Jeremiah's book, maybe from the autograph or one of the earliest copies!

It is not only possible but it is likely that even at this point in his life, Daniel did not know what you and I read last week from Ezekiel. See Ezekiel was with the captives out by the River Chebar and Daniel was in the palace. There is no indication that there was a lot of contact between them.

Therefore, what God is telling Daniel in His Word is that God has a new day coming for Israel. And we saw in God's Word through Ezekiel last week that the new day was coming because of the grace and faithfulness of God Himself.

B. When we need a new day in our lives, the Word of God is what shows us the way.

Last Sunday I told you about Karen and my Saturday night surprise that took us back into the pit of despair from which we had been delivered by the Lord for five years.

Now before I go on, let me be quick to tell you that God has delivered us yet again, and very quickly so, praise His name!

But after I shared that, so many of you were quick to pray for us and offer us comfort in person or through a note or email. One of the notes we received came from Alice and George Emerson, and it was a personal note inside a printed card. And the printed card was one written by our own Jan Whittle Dye. She wrote,

Healing Words for Hurting Hearts

Dear Friend,

When Stan had his accident in 1988, I faced the darkest days of my life. My source of strength and my sanity came from the precious Word of God. I have compiled a list of verses that helped me through those awful days. Lately the Lord has laid on my heart that I need to actually type out the verses instead of just the references to make it easier for those hurting to seek comfort. Please use these verses in whatever way ministers to you the best.

The first verse I came upon was **Psalm 57:1 – I will hide beneath the shadow of your wings until this storm is past.**

Fear not, for I am with you. Do not be dismayed. I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will help you; I will uphold you with my victorious right hand. Isaiah 41:10

When you go through deep waters and great trouble, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown! When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up – the flames will not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, your Savior, the Holy One of Israel. Isaiah 43:2, 3

Weeping may go on all night, but in the morning there is joy. Psalm 30:5b

We are pressed on every side by troubles, but not crushed and broken. We are perplexed because we don't know why things happen as they do, but we don't give up and quit. We are hunted down, but God never abandons us. We get knocked down, but we get up again and keep going. 2 Corinthians 4:8, 9

My only hope is in your love and faithfulness. Otherwise I perish, for problems far too big for me to solve are piled higher than my head. Psalm 40:11, 12

Lord, when doubts fill my mind, when my heart is in turmoil, quiet me and give me renewed hope and cheer. Psalm 94:19

And your strength shall be renewed day by day like morning dew. Psalm 110:3b

This verse ties them all together – The Lord's promise is sure. He speaks no careless word; all He says is purest truth, like silver seven times refined. Psalm 12:6

When we need a new day in our lives, the Word of God is what shows us the way.

But that is not all that God showed Daniel.

Daniel 9:20–23 ²⁰ Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God, ²¹ yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. ²² And he informed *me*, and talked with me, and said, “O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. ²³ At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell *you*, for you *are* greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:

Notice “command” in verse 23. Literally it says “word.” Gabriel said, Daniel, God sent you a word.

II. THE WORD OF GOD REVEALED HOW AND WHEN GOD WOULD SEND A NEW DAY.

God sent the prophecy that is one of the most important New Testament prophecies in the Old Testament. In fact, it is given a name it is called the Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks. Now I have preached on this prophecy before, and I have done my best to explain it to you. It takes a

minimum of 45 minutes just to explain the four verses of this prophecy, so I am not going to try to explain it all to you again this morning.

I just want to show you two things from it. So let me read the first half of the prophecy and show you how God revealed to Daniel the how and when of God's coming new day.

Daniel 9:24–25

²⁴ "Seventy weeks are determined

For your people and for your holy city,

To finish the transgression,

To make an end of sins,

To make reconciliation for iniquity,

To bring in everlasting righteousness,

To seal up vision and prophecy,

And to anoint the Most Holy.

²⁵ "Know therefore and understand,

That from the going forth of the command

To restore and build Jerusalem

Until Messiah the Prince,

There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;

The street shall be built again, and the wall,

Even in troublesome times.

A. How?

God said, "I am sending the promised Messiah."

Messiah had been promised since death entered the Garden of Eden through the sin of Adam and Eve. That was nearly 3500 years before this moment in Daniel's life.

After that time, prophet after prophet declared His coming.

Now God said, "I have fixed the time."

B. When?

God said Messiah would come in 69 weeks, literally, 69 "sevens." Turns out those sevens are not seven days but seven years. God said, **"In 483 years, I send Messiah the Prince to Jerusalem!"**

Now let me give you the short course in fulfilled prophecy.

From the command recorded in Nehemiah 2 by King Artaxerxes Longimanus until Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday was 483 years to the day!

The Word of God revealed how and when God would send a new day.

C. When God sent the New Day and showed us a New Way, He began to give us the New Testament to make both clear.

D. Folks, we are very, very near the end of the Old Testament. And here at the end of the Old Testament, God is getting us ready for the New Testament. God is getting us ready for a New Day and A New Way.

1. **Here in Daniel, He showed us that the New Day and New Way is revealed by His Word.**
2. **Next week, Mothers' Day, we will be in Esther. Through her life, we will see a second aspect of how God prepares us for His New Day and A New Way.**
3. **Then on May 18, we will finish the Old Testament talking about Nehemiah. And there, God shows us the third and final preparation for His New Day and A New Way, and we as a church are going to do something very special to enter that preparation. And on Tuesday of that week we start reading the New Testament together.**
4. **Then all through the summer, we are going to be going through the New Testament looking at God's New Day and New Way.**

CONCLUSION: For Daniel, the new day was coming. For us the new day has come in Christ. You can trust Him today, and today can be a new day for you.