



Ministry of the Word

***Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2017***

by Vincent Gannon

**Scripture:** Daniel 9:20-23

*“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, <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, “O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. <sup>23</sup> 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:”*

**Subject:** Chapter 9, Part 29 –

Last week we looked at Daniel’s approach to prayer and seeking God in verses 1-19 of this chapter. Here in these verses we see how God answered Daniel.

While not going into every aspect of his prayer, Daniel did start off his prayer by praising and worshipping the Great and Awesome God, who made and keeps covenant with His people as well as showing mercy to those He loves when they keep His commandments.

While Daniel was praying, God was very much in tune with what he was saying. We need to remember that God knows everything even before we do. God wasn’t waiting till he had the gist of what Daniel’s prayer, what Daniel really needed. No God knew and that is why he could send out his answer as Daniel began to pray. God sent Daniel a heavenly messenger to not just confirm this but also to give him skill to understand. But to give him skill to

understand what? It was to give him further insight into what had already been revealed to him. Many of us here and around the world, would love this... would we? A messenger of God coming to give us God's reply to our prayer straight away! Often in the Christian life this is one of the most common complaints, is God really listening? Does God even know that I am here asking for help? Does God want to answer me... if so, when? But this verse shows us three things. God hears, God will answer, in his time for his Glory. Prayer is not hoping and trying to get God's attention, no! It is a way of communication with God. Yes, it is a way we bring our supplications to him but it is also for our benefit, to change us. When we spend time before God in prayer and in His word, it can be a time, if we allow God to speak and we are prepared to listen, for him to give us further insight into what has already revealed. God's general revealed will has been made known, where? The bible of course, in his word where he tells us how we can become a child of God by grace through faith, and become heir of the convenient and promises. It also tells us of God's standards for our life so that we can be truly free as well as being in fellowship with him.

Just because we don't get everything we ask for or have it our way, does not mean that God does not bother, hear, or care. That is completely wrong. He does all things as our heavenly Father who knows what's best for us.

Daniel knew Gabriel as God had used him before as we seen in chapter 8. Gabriel, as you are probably very well aware of, is recorded as having visited three people in Scripture; Daniel (a few times), Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, and Mary the mother Jesus. Gabriel may have appeared to more for example, Joseph, but we are not completely certain about that. We know that from chapter 8 he appears to be like a man and here in verse 21 he was "*caused to fly swiftly*". From the encounters that these people had with Gabriel we know that he is a messenger of God specifically in relation to the coming of the Messiah. For Zechariah and Mary, it was the first coming of the Messiah but for Daniel it was details around the first coming as well as the second coming of the Messiah. While Gabriel gave the message, there were different responses as well as ongoing attitudes of the recipients of those messages. Let's just look at this quickly as we can learn from them. Firstly, let's look at Zechariah. He was a priest, he had prayed for a child but now he and his wife were naturally to old, he was in Jerusalem's temple serving God, burning incense. When Gabriel appeared to him announcing that he was going to become a father of the forerunner to the Messiah, his

automatic response was he needed proof. Gabriel confirmed who he was and who had sent him as a result of his doubt there were consequences. Zechariah was stuck dumb.

Mary, on the other hand, was a young woman who loved God, and she was just going about her daily routine. When Gabriel appeared to tell her that she would be the chosen women to be the mother of Jesus, her response, Luke 1:13, while she was troubled, frighten even, yet, she was a willing servant no matter what. Then Daniel, a political deportee, in prayer searching for God's will and forgiveness, then Gabriel speaks to him and he records all that he is required to do.

You see, God can speak to you when you are before him and even when you are not. There is no formula of how it's done. But for a moment, imagine an angel appeared before you to tell you something, what would be your immediate response be? Then would you apply what you heard? Do we really need appearances from angels to know what God has to say? You know in Galatians it tells us something about encountering angels. It's found in Galatians 1 verse 18

***"But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed."***

God has given us his word so that we can get to know him and love him deeply. Everything we hear and understand must be in line with the word of God. There is no compromise on this point, no matter who is telling you what. The warning given to us by the Lord is not only timely, as for us today, but it needs to be taken very seriously Matthew 24:4-5.

***"And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many."***

What about Paul in Galatians 1:6-9.

***"I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed."***

Daniel was not trusting in his own intelligent mind and heart, not even in his past spiritual experiences. He wanted to hear from God Himself and so, he waited on the Lord. You are aware that many of the big ministries are in the business of the miraculous. It's fascinating to be sure, it attracts a lot of people but is it real? We know that the miraculous can still happen, but there is a lot of deception out there. For those involved in those ministries, faith

solely gives way to experiences, feelings, emotions and moods. It becomes humanly supernaturally and not from God. The healer can become the demi god and he is the one that gets the praise and the support. This “ministry” is highly emotive and it heightens the senses; its eye and ear catching and of course. It’s ‘sprinkled’ with a mention of Jesus or a verse of scripture just to give the impression that it is Christian. But what has happened to the Gospel? What has happened to the exposition of God’s Word, understanding the truth in order to combat the error we face in our lives and those of others! It’s frightening that now days very few are interested in growing in grace. There just happy, if I can use the term, to be saved. It’s simply a ticket, a pass, but to where? 2 Corinthians 4:3-12. It very important not to rely either on past experiences as it’s so easy to do. Yes, remember them as a point of encouragement but keep looking forward so that your relationship with God grows and not stays stagnant. We need to hear from God personally and continuously to ensure we are walking in the right direction, not just standing still or walking backwards.

Daniel was all about continually seeking God regardless of his situation or surroundings. And we see, that Daniel’s relationship with God benefited from this as well as those around him. Gabriel brought the answer.

Before Gabriel gave Daniel the understanding of things to come, he told him something of great value, comfort and also something that was rare in those days. Gabriel told Daniel that he was greatly loved by God. Wow! To receive such a personal message, carried by an extraordinary messenger from heaven, must have been overwhelmingly reassuring.

God’s personal assurance of love for individuals was not a common occurrence in the Old Testament. Would you love such a personal message from heaven? God’s love is a continuous theme of the New Testament to all who believe in Jesus for salvation. Let’s look at it. This is how we know that Jesus really personally loves us.

John 15:13

“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”

In the Old Testament, it is the “convent” love of God displayed, in the New Testament it is the “redemptive” love of God that is assured.

Love is the grandest theme not only in the Bible but even outside of it. Love is prized and precious when its pure and true, it is elusive to many and not quite easy to understand, so

many songs, stories, scripts, and screen plays with this powerful theme and varied outcomes. Yet, in Scripture, the greatest symbol of God's love is the Cross.

I was very much taken by the comments made by the Poetry Foundation when Isaac Watts wrote his amazing hymn, "When I survey the Wondrous Cross" remember the third stanza?

**"See from His head, His hands, His feet.  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down,  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?"**

They rightly said ***"The Cross records all values and cancels all vanities"***

God's love is so amazing and powerful that it changes the heart, the head, and the hands of every individual that is truly born again. Without going into this amazing subject let me just give you a very brief description of God's love for His people. This is not based on your feelings but on the authority of God's own Word.

1. It is inexpressible - John 3:16  
***"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."***
2. It is inconceivable - Ephesians 3:19  
***"to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."***
3. It is everlasting - Jeremiah 31:3  
***"The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore, with lovingkindness I have drawn you."***
4. It is Sovereign - Deuteronomy 7:8  
***"but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."***
5. It is free and undeserved – Ephesians 2:8-9  
***"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."***
6. It is Immutable (unable to be changed over time) - John 13:1  
***"Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end."***

7. It is boundless and infinite 1 John 4:16

*“And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.”*

We have by no means exhausted the list because it is like trying to count the grains of sands one at a time.

*“And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.”* Romans 5:5

One of the strangest places to find God expressing His great love is in Exodus 20:6 –

*“but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments”*

The following verses in the chapter, is not about God’s love for Daniel. The rest of the chapter is in fact in relation to a prophetic revelation in relation to the Jewish nation, the first and second coming of Christ. We have already looked at the time line that Daniel discovered while reading Jeremiah and the fact that the restoration at that moment in time was not in sight.

Here is something that I felt was thought-provoking. When Jehoiakim (Yahweh lifts up) was taken into captivity with the people, the faithful Jews knew of the promise of a coming Messiah, to rule and reign. The devastation brought into question the promises of God, the prophetic Word. You see, for the faithful, their minds and hearts were on what God said. The situation looked impossible but not for the first time. They had grieved God so much that it was game, set and match! But let’s look back to what the faithful Jews in that day would have known. God had promised Abraham that from him kings would come, yes you heard me right, God made the promise to Abraham long before any king was over the children of Israel we find the promise in Genesis 17:6. In 2 Samuel 7:13 God made a promise to king David which he realised that it was not about him or his descendants as he realised to reign forever you would have to live forever. And no one had or could do that? Not even Methuselah who lived 969 years could live for ever, remember Methuselah lived that long because of his mercy on humanity (Genesis 5:27).

When Israel and Judah lost their kingdoms, it must have seemed to many that the promise of a future King Messiah had finally been extinguished. Yet the very prophets who had announced the deportations to Assyria and Babylon also spoke of the hope of a future restoration for Israel. God had not finished with His people and He is still not finished with them yet. He still has a plan and purpose for Israel, particularly in the end times too. Very

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seldom are we given such clear and precise time lines as we have in Daniel. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus spoke about taking note of the signs of the end times not the actual occurrences of which Revelation fills out.

How concerned are we? What difference does it really make in our live? Are we truly living by grace or have we consented to the '*we will be alright on the night*' licence? Do are live match what we proclaim to believe? Gabriel's actual message to Daniel is not about restoration primarily or even repentance, it is about final retribution of the world. Are we ready? When I come back to Daniel we will unfold the rest of this chapter.

**AMEN**