



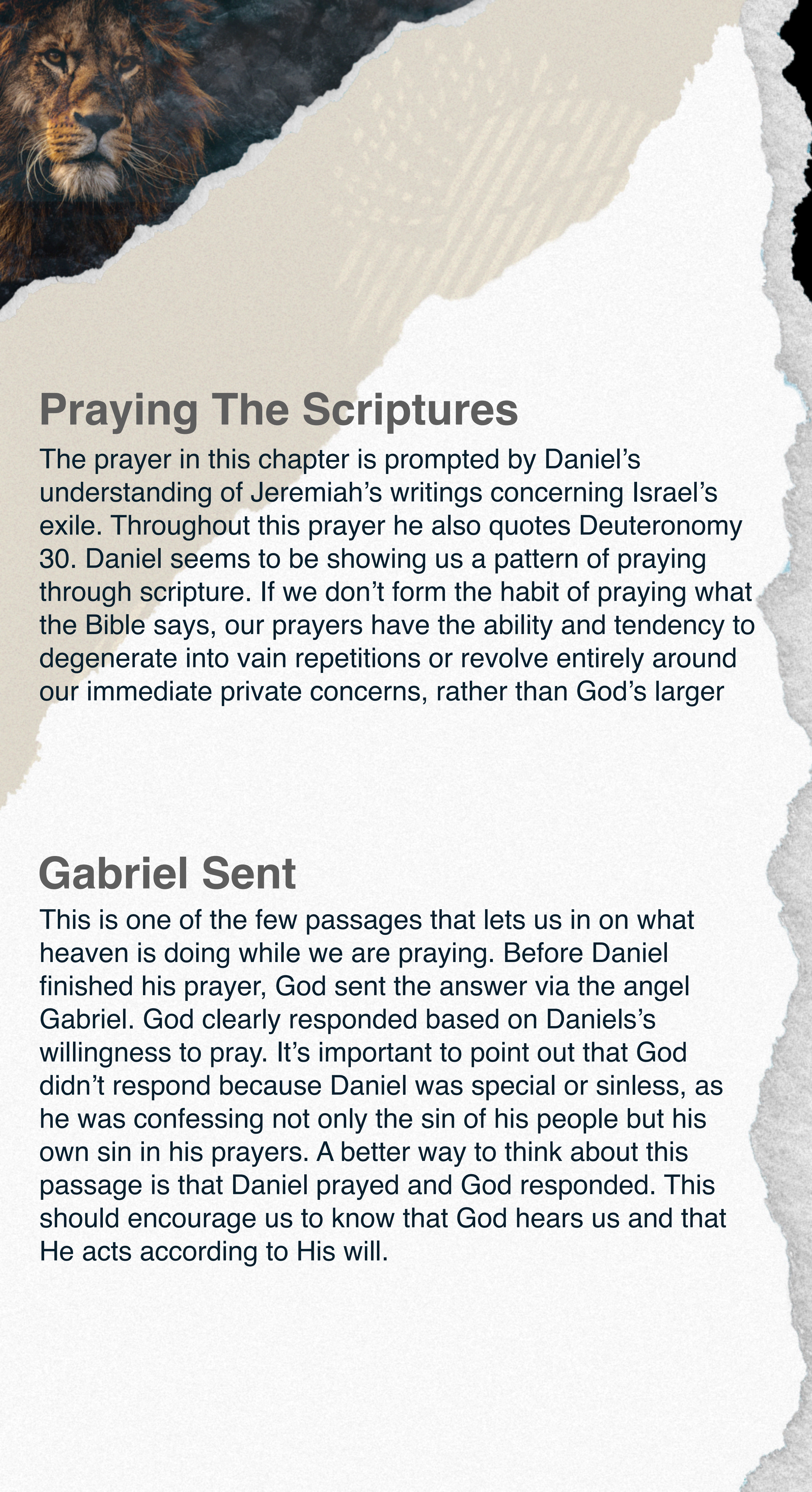
THE BOOK OF **DANIEL**

What Heaven Does When We Pray

Chapter 9

Goal Of Chapter 9

Daniel 9 contains a record of the prayer of Daniel on behalf of the covenant people - Israel - and God's response to that prayer. There is much we can learn about prayer and how God responds. Discarded by many, prayer seems to be the vehicle in which the promises laid out in scripture become enacted. Not only do we get to see principles that make for effective prayer, we also get a unique glimpse into what happens in heaven as we pray.



Praying The Scriptures

The prayer in this chapter is prompted by Daniel's understanding of Jeremiah's writings concerning Israel's exile. Throughout this prayer he also quotes Deuteronomy 30. Daniel seems to be showing us a pattern of praying through scripture. If we don't form the habit of praying what the Bible says, our prayers have the ability and tendency to degenerate into vain repetitions or revolve entirely around our immediate private concerns, rather than God's larger

Gabriel Sent

This is one of the few passages that lets us in on what heaven is doing while we are praying. Before Daniel finished his prayer, God sent the answer via the angel Gabriel. God clearly responded based on Daniels's willingness to pray. It's important to point out that God didn't respond because Daniel was special or sinless, as he was confessing not only the sin of his people but his own sin in his prayers. A better way to think about this passage is that Daniel prayed and God responded. This should encourage us to know that God hears us and that He acts according to His will.

Why Does God Respond To Prayer?

At the core of why God responds to our prayers is undoubtedly His love for us. In verse 23 Gabriel proclaims that "At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are *greatly loved*." In Hebrew "Greatly loved" describes something or someone desired or counted as precious. The term is used to speak of the value of gold in Ezra 8:27 and costly garments in Gen 27:15. Thus Daniel was considered to be a "very precious treasure" to the Lord, as are all of God's children; He loves them greatly. The cross is the greatest display of God's love for us.

Questions:

- 1) Assuming we could all do better with consistency in prayer, what hinders you from praying more?
- 2) Have the hard circumstances of life ever made you question God's love for you?
- 3) How can the knowledge that God used the angel Gabriel to send an answer before Daniel was even done praying give you confidence in prayer?