

RTO™ School of Prayer

The Prayer of Daniel

Daniel 9:1-22

by Dave Mozdin

***1**In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans— **2**in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.*

***3**Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. **4**I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession, saying, “O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, **5**we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. **6**We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. **7**To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you. **8**To us, O Lord, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you. **9**To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him **10**and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God by walking in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. **11**All Israel has transgressed your law and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice. And the curse and oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him. **12**He has confirmed his words, which he spoke against us and against our rulers who ruled us,^a by bringing upon us a great calamity. For under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what has been done against Jerusalem. **13**As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us; yet we*

*have not entreated the favor of the Lord our God, turning from our iniquities and gaining insight by your truth. **14**Therefore the Lord has kept ready the calamity and has brought it upon us, for the Lord our God is righteous in all the works that he has done, and we have not obeyed his voice. **15**And now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly.*

***16**“O Lord, according to all your righteous acts, let your anger and your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy hill, because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a byword among all who are around us. **17**Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy, and for your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate. **18**O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. **19**O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name.”*

***20**While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea before the Lord my God for the holy hill of my God, **21**while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice. **22**He made me understand, speaking with me and saying, “O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding.*

(Note: The basis and inspiration for this teaching come from a John MacArthur sermon, “A Pattern of Prayer from a Man of Prayer”, Daniel 9:1-19).

Have you ever been in a situation, a difficult situation, a trial, a spiritual battle, perhaps even a persecution? One that has lasted for a long time, with seemingly no end, no relief in sight? Even as you have prayed and prayed and fasted and pleaded with God---with apparently no answer?

Then suddenly, the Lord gives you a sign, a sign that the trouble, the trial, the persecution will be over soon. Finally, relief at last! You also sense that with this sign, God will be giving you an answer to your prayers regarding this situation.

So how do you respond? What do you do to honor God for what He has done for you? Do you say a brief but impassioned prayer of thanksgiving? That's all well and good, but what else can we pray? Anything come to mind? Are you stuck with just a few generalities? When we go to God for help, where do you think He wants to send us? (If any of you know me, you'll know where I would go!) How about His holy word, the Bible?

Perhaps you're not that familiar with the Bible that you would immediately go to the passage we'll examine here, but suffice to say that this passage highlights a humble, but great man of God who was in a situation of a long running persecution, in exile in a strange land, far from home, for many years. One day during his time with the Lord he receives a sign from God that the persecution, the exile will end soon. Good news!

What does he do? He prays and prepares, and the prayer that he prays covers a wide range of the character and attributes of God, and the sin and redemption of man. It serves as a good pattern for us, whether we're in a trial or not, whether we have received a sin or an answer or not. This is the Prayer of Daniel.

It is a joy to continue this series of the great prayers of God's great people, and as was just mentioned, this passage of Scripture is one of the best illustrations of a model of prayer which we would all do well to follow. It is a shining example of James 5:16 (NKJV), "The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." We could also say that God gets a lot accomplished through the right prayer prayed by the righteous person. Or as we say in RTO, "When you hallow the Father's Name, BIG THINGS HAPPEN." And this is precisely what Daniel did and what God did in response.

When we study the book of Daniel carefully, we learn three important things. They are:

1.) The character of the man Daniel.

A.) **Daniel was faithfully loyal to God.** As a young man, Daniel was part of a group of people who were carried away from Israel and exiled to Babylon when it was sieged by the Chaldeans. The king's master eunuch selected him and a fellow group of young Israelite men to be trained for special service in the king's court because they were "without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, and competent to stand in the king's palace". (Dan 1:4) The king wanted these gifted young men to be used to build up *his* kingdom. They were also offered choice food and drink, and when Daniel learned that to consume this food and drink could be a sign of honoring the false gods, (or it could have been a mark of rebellion against his captors) he refused. "But Daniel resolved (purposed in his heart) that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or the wine that he drank" (Dan1:6).

He risked great punishment for being faithfully loyal to God. He faced grave consequences if his eating the food he chose rather than the king's food would adversely affect him physically. But God gave Daniel grace and his physical health was not affected by his choices. And as we all know, he was sent to the lions' den for refusing to bow down to worship the king instead of God (chapter 6). God gave him *great* grace in protecting him from certain death there.

B.) **Daniel was a humble man of grace.** He was always gracious in dealing with rulers and authorities who had captured him and exiled him to a faraway land of pagan religions. He graciously reasoned with the chief steward concerning his choice of food (1:11-14). He asked the king to not destroy the wise men of Babylon who could not interpret the king's dream (2:24). Before he read the writing on the wall, he refused the rewards King Belshazzar offered and asked that they be given to someone else (5:17). While in the lions' den, he was gracious while talking to the king who ordered him placed there (6:21-22).

C.) **Daniel was a man of God's wisdom and influence.** From the time he arrived in Babylon as a young man (possibly a teenager), Daniel was recognized as "... gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand...." (1:4), "...in all matters of wisdom and understanding.....ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers...." (1:20). He performed the virtually impossible task of describing and interpreting the king's dream even though the king refused to tell anyone what the dream was! (chapter 2). He also interpreted a second dream (chapter 4). When King Belshazzar was troubled by the writing on the wall, the queen remembered the wise man Daniel, who at this time might have become obscure, and was summoned by the king and correctly interpreted the writing (chapter 5). After being miraculously saved by God from the lions, the king wrote a decree that "...in all my royal dominion, people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel...." (6:26). Daniel had various visions and prophecies that covered the whole sweep of human history, all the way through the end of time (chapters 7-12)! Some biblical scholars speculate that the Magi, who came from the same Babylonian area, the "three wise men" who sought Christ shortly after His birth (Matthew 2) were influenced by Daniel's teaching hundreds of years after his passing. All this evidence to prove that indeed Daniel was a man of God's wisdom and influence.

D.) **Daniel was a man of prayer.** "...he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open towards Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since the early days." (6:10 NKJV) He was well trained and practiced in the school of prayer.

John MacArthur writes: "Daniel's uncompromising pattern of prayer towards God's temple conformed to Solomon's prayer that the Lord's people would do so (1 Kings 8:44-45). Three times a day was also the pattern established by David (Psalm 55:16-17)."

Note: This does not imply that in our day age we need to face Jerusalem or any other geographical location when we pray, that was an Old Testament directive. In the New Testament economy, our Holy Spirit controlled bodies are the temple (1 Cor 6:19). Daniel's pattern of prayer is a witness to his discipline and devotion to God in prayer. He prayed early and often, and he prayed radically, as we will see when we break down his prayer.

2.) The Character of the Prayer he prayed in chapter 9.

A.) **Driven by God's word.** Since Daniel was faithfully loyal to God, he wanted to know God, to please God, to know what God wanted from those who truly love Him. The only way to know was to read and study God's word. Daniel, being a man who loved God's word, did this: "... I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years." (9:2) Daniel was reading the book of the prophet Jeremiah, and in this passage is most likely referring to Jer 25:12: "Then after seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, declares the LORD, making the land an everlasting waste." And Jer 29:10-11: "For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."

This was great news, the Babylonian captivity was about to end, God was about to bring them back to their land and give them a future and a hope.

So what did Daniel do? Did he just jump up and down, shouting "Alleluia, thank You Lord!" Did he run down to the nearest Babylonian bar and announce to everyone: "Fellow Israelites, after seventy years have passed, and that's gonna be here real soon, God will bring us home and has planned a bright future for us, drinks are on me!"

NO! He prayed.....seriously, fervently and radically! “Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.” (9:3) As a result of reading and studying and perceiving God’s word, he begins to pray one of the most profound prayers found in the Bible.

- B.) **A prayer of worship**, acknowledging God’s greatness and response those who are obedient to His commandment. “O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments...” (9:4) “And now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and have made a name for yourself....”(9:15)
- C.) **A prayer of confession**. This is a major part of this prayer (vv. 5-11, 14-15), and all throughout it, Daniel is constantly confessing the sins of the people of Israel, and how their unfaithfulness to God and disobedience to His commands have made them to suffer the consequences by being in exile for seventy years. Daniel may have understood during these seventy years of exile, the Israelites had been detached from their holy city, Jerusalem, and had not practiced any of the ordinances, commands and feasts that God decreed to Moses in the first five books of the Old Testament. As a result, the people were steeped in their sin and most likely not even conscious of it. Daniel was aware of his own sin, virtuous man that he was, by including himself in these confessions, using the words “we” and “us” frequently in this confession.

An application note here: Make confession of sin a regular part of your prayers, as the Holy Spirit convicts you of your sin. (John 16:8). And ask yourself: “Was this trial a result of your sin and/or anyone else’s? This always ought to be a question to ask yourself when you encounter trials. Trials may not always be provoked by our sin which require God’s judgment, but you always want to be rightly reconciled to God, and not have your unconfessed unresolved sin standing in the way. Plus, this confession is the basis for your repentance, which would be helpful in keeping God from exacting more consequences upon you if you repeat the sin in your ignorance. (Proverbs 26:11).

Paul exhorts us to “Examine yourselves to see if you are in the faith....” (2 Cor 13:5), you can also pray “Search me O God and know my heart....” (Psalm 139:23-24).

Conviction of sin is an attribute of the Holy Spirit within you (John 16:8).

- D.) **A prayer for revival and repentance.** Daniel realized that the people were far from God and needed to repent to be properly spiritually prepared for the return to their homeland. “....yet we have not entreated the favor of the LORD our God, turning from our iniquities and gaining insight by your truth.” (v.13) As we well know, God’s desire is for all His people to repent. “The Lord... is patient toward you not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9).
- E.) **A prayer of intercession.** Just like our Lord Jesus, and despite the rampant sin of the people, Daniel pleads and cries out to God for them. “O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations...” (v.18)
- F.) **A prayer for mercy.** Daniel knows they don’t deserve God’s favor or relief from the consequences of their sin, but they NEED God’s mercy, His supply to fill their every need, everywhere. “For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy.” (v.18)
- G.) **A prayer for forgiveness,** their ultimate essential need for restoration mercy. “O Lord hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act.” (v.19)
- H.) **A prayer for God’s glory.** We often use the terms “God’s glory” or “Glory to God”, but what does that mean? One preacher put it quite simply this way: “We give glory to God by making Him look good.” God exhibits His glory through His power and His grace and directly through Jesus Christ His Son. Daniel’s heart was indeed for God to look good, and for God’s people to help God look good, to reflect His glory. “O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your Name.” (v. 19). Daniel ends this prayer by praying for the glory of God, also ending the way he begins it, by hallowing the Father’s Name.
- I.) **A prayer answered.** After Daniel hallowed the Father’s Name, big things did happen, immediately! “While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the

sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea before the LORD my God for the holy hill of my God, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice.” He made me understand, speaking with me and saying, ‘O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding.’” (vv.20-22). God sent the angel Gabriel to give Daniel an even further understanding of events that were to come, namely the Seventy Weeks prophecy, the events that foretold of the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ our Lord, His death and God’s ultimate victory over the desolator, all the way to the end of this age at Christ’s Second Coming! (v.24-25, 27).

3.) The character of God illustrated throughout chapter 9.

- A.) **God’s faithfulness.** Just as God was faithful in keeping His promises to His people all throughout their history with Him, (v. 15), He did keep His promise, and His people eventually did return to Israel. (Ezra 1).
- B.) **God’s love, grace, mercy, forgiveness and patience (longsuffering).** All throughout this prayer, Daniel is confessing the continual habitual sins of God’s people, yet God continues to exhibit His attributes in forgiving, healing, restoring and fulfillment of the people’s needs.
- C.) **The sovereignty of God.** Despite the apparent delays, the sins and evil schemes of man, He brought forth the fulfillment of the prophecies of Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:11, and he WILL bring forth the fulfillment of the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks He gave to Daniel as the answer to Daniel’s prayer. Take heed, He will do what He says He will do (Isa 46:10, Eph 1:11). We need to be aware of the plans He has for us, too, plans for a future and a hope. And that sure biblical hope is based in the sacrificial life, death, resurrection and return of His Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. That wonderful future, however, is available only to those who have committed to repent and have placed their faith and trust in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, to declare Jesus as Lord and to believe from the heart that God has raised Him from the dead. (Rom 10:9-10). If you do that, you will be insured to have that wonderful future in the bliss and joy of heaven, and to be spared the

agony, torment and horrors of being in hell forever. If you have not yet made that commitment to Christ, please do so now. Please ask Him to forgive your sins and to become Lord of your life. In His word, the Bible, He says He will turn away no one who comes to Him. (John 6:37).

4.) Summary and Conclusions.

Daniel was a man of God who walked with God. He was loyal, faithful and obedient to God under some very difficult prolonged situations throughout his lifetime. He read, studied meditated upon and prayed God's word. Daily he prayed radically to love radically. He impacted and influenced many people around him in many blessed ways. He left a fantastic legacy to those who have known of him, a legacy that *blesses us* to this very day! Much of his character that we studied in this lesson is a direct reflection of the character of the God-man, Jesus Christ Himself. It would be a good thing to study this passage of God's word and those passages which reflect the character of Jesus Christ and to imitate them in all we think, do and say, all for the glory of God. Amen. Alleluia!

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