

Daniel's Prayer

Daniel 9:1-19

By Scott Huckaby

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Daniel Chapter 9 is one of the most significant chapters in all of prophecy. It foretells the exact time the Messiah would be officially presented to the world and that He would be “cut off”. It gives the time-frame for God working through Israel until they would be established as the preeminent nation on earth during the Millennial Kingdom along with many other important details. With that preview, let’s look at the prayer Daniel made that resulted in these revelations...

Daniel's Prayer for the People, Daniel 9:1-19

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.

³ *Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.* ⁴ *And I prayed to the Lord my God, and made confession, and said, “O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, ⁵ we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. ⁶ Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land. ⁷ O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You.*

⁸ *“O Lord, to us belongs shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. ⁹ To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. ¹⁰ We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. ¹¹ Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and*

has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him. ¹² And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem.

¹³ *“As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth. ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for the Lord our God is righteous in all the works which He does, though 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 made Yourself a name, as it is this day—we have sinned, we have done wickedly! ¹⁶ “O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are a reproach to all those around us. ¹⁷ Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord’s sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate. ¹⁸ O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. ¹⁹ O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”*

What prompted Daniel to pray for Israel?

He realized that they were coming up on the 70 years that Jeremiah had prophesied that Israel would be in captivity...

Jeremiah 25:8-11 – *“Therefore the LORD Almighty says this” “Because you have not listened to my words, ⁹ I will summon all the peoples of the north and my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon,” declares the LORD, “and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I*

will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin. ¹⁰ I will banish from them the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, the sound of millstones and the light of the lamp. ¹¹ This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.”

Daniel saw the captivity of the Jewish Nation coming to its end. It is important to point out that to Daniel, seventy years literally meant seventy years.

2 Chronicles 36:21 – *“The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah.”*

Why might Daniel have thought they were coming up on the 70 years prophesied by Jeremiah?

Daniel was taken into captivity in 605 BC and Darius became king of Babylon in 539 BC... it had been 66 years.

How might Psalm 137 have reflected what prompted Daniel to pray?

Psalm 137:1-4 – *By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. There on the poplars we hung our harps, For there our captors asked us for songs, our tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion.” How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?*

Daniel and the Jews in captivity were homesick for Jerusalem.

v3 – What does it mean when Daniel wrote, “I set my face toward the Lord”?

This possibly means that he turned his face toward Jerusalem, the place where God had dwelt; the place of His Holy abode on the earth, but more appropriately it means he went to God in a special earnest prayer.

Why was this probably a special prayer of Daniel, not one of his regular, 3-times-a-day prayers?

- The subject... having to do with Israel coming up on the 70 years in captivity.
- Daniel was praying in such a way as to put into motion something that God had already stated that He would do (Daniel knew how to pray so that God would answer)
- He was fasting and wore sackcloth and ashes

What was the significance of prayer coupled with fasting, sackcloth and ashes?

It reflected the seriousness of the concern he had that prompted his prayer. His fasting time showed that he prepared for this prayer no doubt spending time reflecting

on what he would pray about. The sackcloth and ashes show that he took a humbling posture.

How does fasting aid in prayer?

It helps you cast off the lures of this world and helps you focus on the spiritual issue at hand. Note that Jesus started his ministry by fasting for 40 days

What is the difference between prayer and supplications?

Mostly the terms are synonymous, but supplication is a form of prayer in which a humble petition is being made to God. Such an entreaty to God might include taking a more humbling posture than is taken for more routine prayer.

v4 – How did Daniel start out his prayer?

By praising God for His mercy and faithfulness in keeping His promises with those who love Him and keep His commandments.

v5 – What did Daniel confess in his prayer?

How God’s people Israel (of which he was part) had sinned against God by being wicked, rebelling against Him, by departing from His precepts (principles in the Law).

Is there a difference between sinning and committing iniquity? Why is both stated here?

- Iniquity is a special type of sin... Iniquity in the Hebrew is “avon” and means “to bend, twist, distort” so iniquities are a bending, twisting, or distorting of the law or God’s Word.
- Even in Daniel’s day, the legalists were twisting God’s Law making it out to be onerous in an attempt to keep the letter of the Law while totally missing the spirit of the Law.

What kind of iniquity do we see today?

- Taking Scripture out of context to cause it to mean what it doesn’t say... thus you can use the Bible to support anything.
- Spiritualizing God’s Word... applying a spiritual interpretation to Scripture while ignoring what it literally says. For example, taking Revelation as an allegory on the struggle between good and evil.

What kind of wickedness that Israel committed that Daniel might have had in mind?

- Compromising with the world around them by worshiping other gods.
- Not keeping the Law of God in general and not observing the sabbath for the land in particular since it was connected to the 70 years... $7 \times 70 = 490$ years of not keeping the sabbath for the land...

605 + 490 = 1095 ...the beginning of Saul's reign over Israel

It is easy to see how Israel had departed from God's precepts, how had they departed from God's judgments?

They had not listened to or believe His prophets who told them of the judgment of God. Indeed, they persecuted God's prophets because they didn't like their message as reinforced in the very next verse.

How are we ignoring the prophets today?

God's people are neglecting Bible prophecy paying lip-service to the return of Jesus thinking His return is so far off that it is nothing that concerns us in the here and now...

2 Peter 3:3-4 – scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

How is it that scoffers walk after their own lusts?

They are all about experiencing all this world has to offer... they have no interest in what lies beyond this mortal life.

What do scoffers forget?

That God has intervened in the affairs of mankind with a time of judgment before and He will again.

- It is interesting to note from this passage in 2 Peter that scoffers also embrace the world's narrative of origins, that God would have had to use an evolutionary process to bring about life on the earth. One of the assumptions of the theory of evolution is uniformitarianism... *all things continue as they were from the beginning*

v7-8 – What sin of Israel did Daniel highlight here?

Israel's shame of face before the Lord... their unfaithfulness to Him.

- The term "shame of face" implies more than just normal shame... it was shame so egregious that they couldn't even face God with such shame.

From Christinprophecy.org: The Land Covenant promised that Israel would become the prime nation of the world if the Jews were obedient to God (Deuteronomy 28:1,13). But the covenant warned that many curses would befall the people if they were disobedient (Deuteronomy 28:15-37), including exile from the land (Deuteronomy 28:38-57). The covenant warned further that if temporary exile did not restore the Jews to obedience, they would suffer worldwide dispersion and persecution (Deuteronomy 28:58-68). But

nowhere are they told that their disobedience would lead to a loss of their title to the land.

v9 – What is the hope that Daniel had for him and his people?

The mercy and forgiveness of God even though His people have a propensity to rebel against Him.

How is the merciful characteristic of God important to us today?

We too live in a nation that has rebelled against God. Thank God that He has made provision for us as individuals in Jesus Christ.

v10 – How do people rebel against God?

By not obeying Him, applying His Law and His Word.

v11 – How is it that all Israel had transgressed God's Law? Wasn't Daniel faithful to God?

Daniel was faithful but that doesn't mean he was perfect. Daniel knew that even he fell short of the perfection God demanded...

Romans 3:23 – for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Of course, Daniel might have had something in mind more of his time...

Isaiah 64:6 – But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags

What curse did Daniel have in mind?

Probably Deuteronomy 28:15-37 as previously mentioned.

Deuteronomy 28:33 – A nation whom you have not known shall eat the fruit of your land and the produce of your labor, and you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually.

v12 – How had God confirmed His words that He spoke against Jerusalem?

Multiple prophets had warned about what would befall the Jews if they did not repent and turn back to Him.

Who were the judges who judged Israel that God spoke against?

These judges were the rulers and leaders who ignored the prophets misleading the people by telling them that all would be well when that would not be the case.

What great disaster that befell Jerusalem was Daniel referring to?

When the Babylonians attacked them, sacked the city and destroyed the temple.

v13 – What was Daniel lamenting in this verse?

That Israel as a nation had not turned back to God despite realizing the curses described in the Law of Moses has been realized. ... That Israel as a nation was still not understanding the truth of God.

- There had always been a remnant of which Daniel was part but the nation of Israel was still on the wrong side of God

v14 – What was the reason for disaster that befell Israel?

The righteousness of the Lord demanded that the rebellion of Israel be corrected... sin always has consequences despite the patience of God.

v15 – How had God made a name for Himself?

By bringing Israel out of Egypt and more recently demonstrating faithfulness to His Word and working in the life of Daniel in such a way that it even made an impact on those conquered Israel.

What wickedness of Israel do you think Daniel might have had in mind?

Israel's unfaithfulness to God... disobeying Him, not listening to the prophets, compromising with the world by worshiping idols.

v16-17 – What appeal did Daniel make for God to deliver Israel?

That Jerusalem, the Temple and God's people would be restored so that they would not be a reproach to Him and the peoples surrounding them. The appeal was for the mercy of God. And that God's own reputation was suffering due to the suffering of His people... *for the Lord's sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate.* (v17).

v18 – On what did Daniel base his appeal to God?

because of Your great mercies – not because Israel had earned God's favor but because of God's character

What are desolations?

A state of complete emptiness or destruction... which was certainly the case in Jerusalem and other parts of Judah.

- This is plural which indicates that there is perhaps another kind of desolation Daniel might have had in mind... in context, a desolation of the spirit on the part of God's people.

v19 – How did Daniel wrap up his prayer?

By asking Him to hear his prayer and forgive the sins of Israel; to intervene on their behalf.

How did Daniel appeal to God's reputation?

- That His intervention should not be delayed for His own reputation (the prophecy of Jeremiah was no-doubt in mind).
- And the reputation of God was also at stake because people knew that Jerusalem was God's city and that the Jews were God's people.

What applications do we see for us in the here and now?

As Daniel prayed for his nation, we too should pray for our nation to turn back to God...

- The USA is recognized as a Christian nation because Christian principles were applied in our founding and we have done much to extend God's kingdom.

Applying Christian principles results in freedom...

John 8:36 – *if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed*

Conversely, rejecting Christian principles results in bondage...

John 8:34 – *whoever commits sin is a slave of sin*

- But we have been turning our back on this heritage increasingly embracing wickedness.
- We have ignored the principles in God's Word and are increasingly marginalizing and persecuting those who speak for God.
- As Israel & Judah before us, we are headed down the same path in compromising with the world and there will be consequences.
- Pray that God would open the eyes of His people in this country and give them the courage to speak up for Jesus and stand against the evil that is growing in this land; that He'd preserve the peace and freedoms we have enjoyed in this country for His Name's sake. That He'd give godly wisdom to our leaders and bring us a spiritual revival.