

DANIEL

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Daniel chapter 9 as we continue our study through the Word of God. As you will see, Daniel chapter 9 can be broken down into ***PRAYER*** and ***PROPHECY!***

This evening we are going to focus on prayer because I believe it is so important for us to understand the power of prayer keeping in mind that prayer does not change the heart of God but it changes our hearts. That is not to say we don't intercede for people, for nations, for ourselves but we always seek the will of God in these matters.

If you want to check out some of the other great chapters of prayer in the Old Testament that deal with intercessory prayer, look at Ezra chapter 9. Here we see Ezra intercede for the unfaithfulness of Israel towards God. Also, in Nehemiah chapter 9 we see intercessory prayer and the focus here is God's great deliverance's and Israel's great failures! And make no mistake about it, as we will see, Daniel chapter 9 is along those same lines of intercessory prayer.

Now keep in mind that Daniel is living in a pagan society, immorality was rampant, wickedness prevailed, religiosity and pagan worship was at the forefront, hey, wait a minute, that's America!

Listen to what I mean from this article. We are told,

When foreigners immigrate to this society they are shocked by the immorality here. They are shocked by the sexual freedom and permissiveness of the society, by the total breakdown in morals. Be they Moslem, Buddhist, Hindu or whatever they are shocked and disgusted. They generally react by a strict supervision of their children, keeping them on a short leash, trying to keep them from all the evil influences of the society. And, down deep in their heart, they secretly dream of returning to their homeland (the absence of jobs there being what keeps them from doing so).

- <http://www.solitaryroad.com/a478.html>

Another article, from a sight I don't recommend but the statements about where we are in America today is right on. We are told,

No doubt *you* can see the depth to which sex permeates society. One can no longer turn on the television without finding a program that has sexual undertones. Magazines are filled with stories, photos and features that would shock those of past generations. There is now also the Internet, offering a veritable buffet of perversions.

But are these things really having an effect on society? Is this public fascination with sex actually changing how we act, think and live? What about children? Does the explosion of sex-related material taught in schools and presented by the media have positive or negative effects on them?

Psychologists have suggested that children need the “seeds of tolerance” planted in them at an early age, to allow them to blossom into well-rounded, tolerant adults. In this vein, many school curriculums have been altered to allow alternative lifestyles and viewpoints to be expressed, oftentimes without the parents’ knowledge.

Will such seeds of knowledge sprout into a better, more tolerant society? Or is there a price to be paid for the “re-education” of our children?

Society has embraced the concept of political correctness. It allows all people to live their lives however they choose as long as “it doesn’t hurt anyone else.” The “PC” attitude has spawned an era of tolerance that, before our time, was unknown. Everyone and everything is now tolerated - or is it?

Pleasure and betterment are the main goals and hopes of many. Some would argue that, if they are doing something to themselves, they should have the right to experiment and enjoy whatever they please. After all, they would theoretically hurt no one but themselves. But is self-pleasure actually leading toward betterment?

- <http://realtruth.org/articles/114-tie.html>

I think we understand how bad it is and for some Christians they are ready to throw in the towel, they are ready to give up. They are looking for the Lord to come back and take His Church home and that is great but that is all they are doing. They are not occupying or doing the work that God has called us to do until He comes.

I think that is why the Lord did not give us a date when He would return, we would be sitting around waiting for Him to come instead of serving Him by bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world.

I think Christians have become pessimistic about life. Let me show you what I mean. And again I don't recommend the web site because his eschatology is off, but he makes some very good points in regards to where Christians are at today. We are told,

The Bible is an optimistic book, but it is also very realistic. It recognizes the effects of sin upon the hearts of men and the works of the Devil in the world. The Bible acknowledges the reality of the powers of evil in the world, but it is equally certain that God has triumphed over sin and evil in Jesus. He is absolutely victorious. From beginning to end the Bible is full of hope.

In contrast, the church of our time is strangely pessimistic. Most Christians have lost all hope of victory over the world. They are so overcome by the evil at work in the world, that they no longer believe that total victory can be achieved. The church has taken on a defeatist attitude, and retreated from the world. This is really a loss of faith in Jesus. We have lost a sense of the greatness of what he has achieved.

There are three reasons for this loss of faith.

1. Newspaper Theology

Christians have tended to base their views on the course of history on what they read in their newspapers, rather than on what they read in the Bible. We certainly live in evil times, and our newspapers make rather dismal reading. But the Bible is quite realistic about evil. It warns us to expect times when evil will rise in power. However this realism is never allowed to detract from the certainty of Christ's victory. Despite the worst that Satan can do, Jesus and his church will eventually be victorious. It is time for the church to rediscover this important biblical message.

2. Retreat from the World

In the last two centuries, Christianity has increasingly become a spiritual and inward affair. Faith is seen as a very personal thing. There has been an emphasis on inner spiritual experience. As this style of faith has grown, Christians have felt that they should not be involved in worldly matters. They have tried to live good moral lives, but have given up trying to apply the lordship of Christ to all the world. They have not applied biblical principles to education, law, economics, politics, and government. Christians have actually retreated from these areas. Those who have remained have kept their faith private, and have not applied the principles of their faith to their work.

We have many Christian politicians who make their political decisions on the same philosophical bases as secular politicians. They live good Christian lives, but their faith has no impact on their politics. This has been true in many areas of life. There are Christian teachers who teach with humanistic methods. Christian economists will often teach secular economic principles. This retreat from the world can be seen at its worst in the United States. Although a majority of the population is Christian, and almost everyone believes in God, the public life of the nation is dominated by the philosophy of humanism.

As Christians have retreated, society has become increasingly secularized. This has allowed men without faith to determine the direction of society. The whole of western culture, although rooted in Christianity, is now dominated by secular humanism. Christians must rediscover the universality of the kingdom of God. Jesus is Lord over every area of life and not just spiritual things. The Bible sets out God's guidance for every decision that must be made. Christians must begin to extend the Kingdom into every area of life. Biblical principles must be applied to the way that Christians live in the world, and not just to spiritual matters. . . .

3. False Eschatology

Defeatism has developed from a false understanding of God's plan for history. God has got a plan, but it is set out in a way that is not always easy to understand. Some details of the plan are contained in the apocalyptic books of the Bible: Daniel, Joel, Zechariah, and Revelation. These books are written in a language that is hard to interpret. This has made many Christians frightened to read them. They have left the interpretation of these books to the prophecy buffs and "cranks". The result has been the propagation of many false ideas about the message of the Bible. The parts describing the growth of evil have been emphasized at the expense of those emphasizing the victory and sovereignty of Christ.

Many Christians have learnt all they know about God's plan for history by reading several novels about the end times, but have never read the Book of Revelation or Daniel. . . .

- http://www.kingwatch.co.nz/Times_Seasons/False_Teaching/pessimistic_christianity.htm

Daniel knew it was bad and yet, it did not stop him from repenting and praying for God's people as we shall see. And I think the same should be true of us, no matter how bad it may get, we are praying, we are on our knees interceding for this nation and the people!

Now as we look at this chapter this evening, we are going to cover five areas of prayer that will help us in our own relationship with the Lord as we come before Him.

In verse 2 we will look at the **PROMPTING OF PRAYER**.

In verse 3 we will look at the **PREPARATION FOR PRAYER**.

In verse 4 we will look at the **PREFACE TO PRAYER**.

In verses 5-15 we see the **PENANCE OF PRAYER**.

In verses 16-19 we see the **PETITION BY PRAYER**.

So with that as our background, let's begin reading in Daniel chapter 9, beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word this evening.

DANIEL 9

VERSES 1-2a

1. Daniel once again gives to us a timeframe in which these events took place. It was while Gubaru was governor over Babylon, placed there by Cyrus the King of the Medo-Persian Empire.

Now I know it says "**Darius**" but that is more of a title and not a name. It means, "holder of the scepter." So Darius ruled the kingdom that was formally known as Babylon and this was given to him by Cyrus immediately after the fall of Babylon, and he continued to rule for some 14 years, (539-525 B. C.). Keep in mind that Cyrus was in charge of the entire kingdom.

Also keep in mind that Ugaru captured Babylon for Cyrus but within three weeks of his victory he died. Gubaru was appointed governor of Babylon by Cyrus and this is most likely the Darius that is spoken of in Daniel chapter 6, for he was born in 601 B. C. which would make him 62 years old just as the Scriptures tell us in Daniel chapter 5!

So the year was around 539 B. C. and the Babylonian Empire had just fallen to the Medo-Persian army. That means that Daniel and the Jewish people have been in captivity for some 67 years, the first captivity occurring in 606 B. C. and the final assault in 586 B. C. And as we are going to see, Daniel recognized that the time of the captivity was about over. How did he know? Let's read on and see.

VERSE 2

1. Here we see the first point in regards to prayer; we see that Daniel was **PROMPTED TO PRAY**. Now that is interesting to me. What prompted Daniel to pray? Daniel was reading the Word of God, specifically the writings of Jeremiah or the scroll of Jeremiah and as he was reading he was, **PROMPTED TO PRAY**.

God's Word was the thing that not only stimulated him to pray but it showed him what he should be praying for! The same is true in our own life. As you are reading the Word of God the Holy Spirit will speak to your heart, encouraging you to pray for an area of your own life or for others or for a given situation, and-so-on. So the **PROMPTING TO PRAYER IS READING THE WORD OF GOD!**

I like what Spurgeon wrote regarding prayer, "Oh! That you studied your Bibles more! Oh! That we all did! How we could plead the promises! How often we should prevail with God when we could hold him to his word, and say, 'Fulfill this word unto thy servant, whereon thou hast caused me to hope.' Oh! It is grand praying when our mouth is full of God's word, for there is no word that can prevail with him like his own."

2. Remember what the Lord said to Jeremiah in Jeremiah 29:10-15, **“For thus says the Lord: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.”**

You see, as Daniel read the words of Jeremiah he recognized that their captivity was about over. It was almost the end of those 70 years of captivity, only 3 or 4 to go and the Lord would bring His people back to Jerusalem.

Keep in mind that it was some 90 years earlier, before they were even taken into captivity, that Jeremiah spoke these words. And once again listen carefully to what he has to say.

In Jeremiah chapter 25, beginning in verse 11 we read **“And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. ‘Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,’ says the LORD; ‘and I will make it a perpetual desolation. So I will bring on that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied concerning all the nations.’”** Jeremiah 25:11-13.

That is what has taken place; God has punished the Babylonians for their wickedness but prior to that God used the Babylonians to bring judgment upon the Southern Kingdom of Judah! But why do we see 70 years of captivity for the Jewish people in Babylon?

We are told in II Chronicles that as the city is destroyed by the Babylonians, which occurred in 586 B. C., that **“Then they burned the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious possessions. And those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.”** II Chronicles 36:19-21.

You see, the reason for their 70 years of captivity is because they failed to give the land its rest. Every 7th year, according to Leviticus chapter 25, they were not allowed to sow the field or prune the vineyard but there was to be a Sabbath’s rest for the land.

For some reason the nation disobeyed this command for 490 years and thus, they now owed the Lord 70 years which He did receive from them. That was not the reason they went into captivity, the 70 years is what they owed the Lord. The reason they went into captivity was their idolatry, their sinfulness, and their refusal to turn back to the Lord. They refused to heed His warnings and His judgment came upon them.

3. Daniel not only read the Words of God, but he also believed them! How about you? Do you believe what God says in His Word that He will never leave you or forsake you? That He will complete the work He has started in you? Do you believe that He is coming back?

God has warned us ahead of time of what is coming to pass and we are seeing these things occurring. We see the apostasy in the church, the movement towards a one-world government, a one-world religion, we are moving towards a cashless society, we see that we can be tracked by the government wherever we go and-so-on.

God has warned us and thus, we should not be shocked by these things but it should cause us to pray, we should be prompted to pray. As Spurgeon said, “Do not, I pray you, get into the habit of neglecting the assembling of yourselves together for prayer. How often have I said, ‘All our strength lies in prayer’! When we were very few, God multiplied us in answer to prayer.”

DANIEL BELIEVED IN WHAT GOD SAID IN HIS WORD AND BECAUSE OF THAT IT PROMPTED HIM TO PRAY!

VERSE 3

1. Here is the second aspect of prayer, the ***PREPARATION FOR PRAYER***. Daniel set his face towards God, he was determined to pray. He was not going to let anything or anyone get in his way.

Now don't think that Daniel was being arrogant or prideful in what he was doing, he was just determined and he knew that his prayer was in the will of God. How could he be so sure? Because he was praying according to the Word of God and God's Word and will are united together!

2. Maybe you have experienced this before, where you have this determination to pray and what happens? The doorbell rings, the phone rings, you get a text message, the kids go crazy, or whatever and that determination ends, we never get to praying!

Daniel fasted and fasting is just denying your bodily appetites, food! And what that does is it gets you focused upon God, Daniel did not want anything to distract him from praying.

He also prayed in sackcloth and ashes because he knew that the only reason they were in captivity was because of their sin. He was mourning over the sinfulness of the people of God. Thus, he humbly comes before God with his petition!

3. As often as prayer is interrupted in our lives it just tells me that prayer is important and the Devil wants us off our knees doing other things. Thus, we need to prepare for prayer, determine that nothing or no one is going to stop us, as Daniel did.

And please notice that the prayer is not an hour long or 15 minutes long, it is at the most 2 to 3 minutes long! And yet, look at how powerful it was as Daniel came before God with faith that what God had promised He was more than able to bring to pass! He prayed as we are told in verse 4, **“O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments.”**

May we have that kind of faith that just trusts in the promises of God knowing that in His time and according to His plan He will bring them to pass!

As we see here and will see in this prayer of Daniel that he repented before the Lord and then asked God to restore them back into the land once again.

***THE PREPARATION FOR PRAYER IS TO SET YOUR FACE TOWARDS GOD,
DANIEL WAS DETERMINED TO PRAY!***

VERSE 4

1. We have moved from the **PROMPTING OF PRAYER** which was the Word of God, to the **PREPARATION FOR PRAYER** which was to set your face or make a strong determination to pray, and now to the **PREFACE OF PRAYER**, which is remembering who he is talking to, God!

Daniel is going to focus on God's faithfulness to the covenant, putting things into perspective that it was not God's failure that brought them into captivity but their breaking of the covenant which placed them into the hands of the Babylonians. And so the **PREFACE TO PRAYER IS REMEMBERING THAT GOD IS GOD!**

I know, that sounds funny but the reality is, we forget at times. We pray and seek our will, not asking the Lord that His will be done. We do things that are contrary to God's Word and we wonder why God is not blessing and we get mad at God! He is Holy, He is righteous, and He wants us to listen and obey what He has said. Not because He is being mean or harsh but because it is what is best for our lives.

God warned the Southern Kingdom of Judah for years, sending them prophet after prophet, warning after warning and they refused to listen and they went into captivity because of it! A great lesson for us to learn!

2. Now the great thing here, and we will also see, is Daniel comes before God and is going to seek mercy, to restore the covenant which they broke. You see, even though they broke the covenant, God was waiting for them to come back, to search for Him, to seek Him. He was waiting for their confession of sin so that He could extend His mercy, His grace, His forgiveness to them. Daniel was the man ready to intercede for the nation of Israel and the land as we shall see.

The same is true in our life. But before we can receive God's mercy, His grace, His forgiveness we must come to Him and acknowledge that we are sinners separated from God and that we want Jesus to be our Lord and Savior, to come into our lives and forgive us our sins, and it is then we see the mercy, the grace and the forgiveness of God come into our lives.

3. In the next 11 verses we will be looking at this evening we will see the sins of Israel spoken of, confessing those sins before the Lord, God's righteous judgment and God's awesome mercy! There is a lot of intercession that Daniel is bringing before the Lord in these verses and the basis is Daniel wants the nation healed, restored, not because they are so great but because God is so great!

THE PREFACE TO PRAYER IS REMEMBERING THAT GOD IS GOD!

VERSES 5-15

1. Here we see the ***PENANCE OF PRAYER*** where Daniel is interceding for the sins of the people and his own sins. Now we love to blame others for our actions, it was their fault, the reason I responded like that is because what they said or did and the list goes on. And thus, we pray for God to change them when in reality, we are really no better and we need to change!

Daniel recognized that it was not only the sins of the nation but his own sin that caused these things to come upon the nation. The interesting thing is that there is no sin mentioned regarding Daniel, so why was he confessing his sin?

Daniel was a man and he realized he too was a sinner before a holy and righteous God.

We are told Romans 3:10-18, **“As it is written: ‘There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.’ ‘Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit’; ‘The poison of asps is under their lips’; ‘Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.’ ‘Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace they have not known.’ There is no fear of God before their eyes.”**

There are none who are good before a holy and righteous God, we may be better than someone else but that is not the standard. The standard is perfection and we all miss that mark by a million, billion, trillion miles! Daniel recognized his sin and that he could not stand before God and thus, we see him used the first person pronouns **“I,” “we,”** and **“our”** over 40 times in verses 5-19 of Daniel chapter 9.

That tells me Daniel didn’t see himself better than the people but he identified himself with the people. What happens many times is that we as Christians think we are better than others, and when that happens we begin looking down upon them, they are only getting what they deserved is the idea when things happen in their lives. We need to identify with people instead of elevating ourselves above others, for we are all sinners saved by grace!

I like the way that Spurgeon put it as he wrote, “I firmly believe that, the better a man’s own character becomes, and the more joy in the Lord he has in his own heart, the more capable is he of sympathetic sorrow; and, probably, the more of it he will have. If thou hast room in thy soul for sacred joy, thou hast equal room for holy grief.” That was Daniel and may that flow from our own lives towards others!

2. Here we see the tragic story of what can happen to a nation that was chosen by God who then turned their backs on God. You see, God's covenant with the nation of Israel was not only based on God's faithfulness to act but on Israel's obedience to God's Law.

Listen to what we are told in Exodus chapter 24 as Moses is ratifying the covenant before the people. In Exodus 24:7 we read "**Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, 'All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient.'**"

The nation agreed to the Laws of God and the regulations of the covenant, thus Moses seals the covenant with blood which bound them to it. We read in Exodus 24:8, "**And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, 'This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words.'**"

The problem was they broke the covenant they promised to keep and that is what we see Daniel confessing before God, repenting before the Lord, their unfaithfulness, that they were doing wickedly before the Lord, living a godless lifestyle. They rebelled against God or turned away from God's commands, His Laws. They ignored God's Word and the prophets God sent them to warn them of their evil ways! They had sinned against God; they missed the mark and wandered from the ways of God. And because of that they have been scattered and brought into captivity. That is the result of that kind of attitude, that kind of living before a holy and righteous God. Judgment came upon them and God is no different today!

3. So we have seen the sin of the nation and out of that we see God's righteous judgment.

Starting in verse 11 of Daniel chapter 9 listen again to what Daniel says regarding this judgment of God that has come upon them, **“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. 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. 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. 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. 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!”**

Daniel 9:11-15.

God had warned them but they refused to listen and thus, judgment came. And make no mistake about it, God's judgment is fair, it is righteous. You see, what was written in the Law of Moses should have warned them of what would happen if they rebelled against God.

In Deuteronomy chapter 28 we read of what God will do if they disobey His covenant. The land would be cursed, there would be famine, cannibalism, disease, drought, captivity, there would be confusion among the people, women raped, incest, infestations, poverty, their numbers would decrease and they would be scattered. And after all these warnings they still turned away from the Lord.

When we read of what happened to Israel we can't understand how they can be so foolish, so rebellious against God. Before we get too prideful, as a nation and as a people, we have done the same. We are not Israel but we were a nation founded under God, not perfect men but people who wanted to serve God. Now look at how far from God we are and God will judge us accordingly for much was given to us and much is thus required!

4. Now as I have said, God is a righteous judge who must issue forth a sentence upon those who transgress His Law. In Psalm 19:9-11 we read **“The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them Your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward.”**

And in Revelation 19:2a we read **“For true and righteous are His judgments . . .”** You see, God must deal with sin, it can't be ignored. That is why we were all sentenced to death because of our sin and it was only through the substitutionary death of Christ for which we have life. He paid the price for our sins. Thus, Israel was placed into captivity and many hardships for their disobedience, for their turning from the Lord and now Daniel is interceding for the people and the nation!

5. As you read of this judgment you can also read of God's love, that God always gave them a chance to return to Him. Even in Deuteronomy chapter 4 God said that they would rebel but He also tells them to ***TURN BACK!*** God also tells them to ***RETURN TO HIM!*** Look at these verses in II Chronicles chapter 6 and see the love, the grace, the mercy of God. It is the same love, the same grace, the same mercy that Daniel fell upon here in Daniel chapter 9 that Solomon spoke of in II Chronicles 6:36-40.

We read, **“When they sin against You (for there is no one who does not sin), and You become angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they take them captive to a land far or near; yet when they come to themselves in the land where they were carried captive, and repent, and make supplication to You in the land of their captivity, saying, ‘We have sinned, we have done wrong, and have committed wickedness’; and when they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, where they have been carried captive, and pray toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen, and toward the temple which I have built for Your name: then hear from heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive Your people who have sinned against You. Now, my God, I pray, let Your eyes be open and let Your ears be attentive to the prayer made in this place.”**

Here in the Old Testament we see Solomon speak like Paul spoke in Romans 3:23, **“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”** Solomon put it like this, **“When they sin against You (for there is no one who does not sin) . . .”** II Chronicles 6:36.

I wish more people would understand this and apply it to their lives, that there is no one who is righteous, there is no one who has not sinned and even if you didn't, which is impossible, you still have that sin nature from Adam! Thus, you are guilty and like Solomon said, you must repent and return to the Lord and He will hear your prayer!

The problem for many is they compare themselves to others and when they do they don't pick the best nor the worst but someone in the middle and someone that they feel they are doing better in their actions. Thus, that is their ticket to Heaven but that is not the ticket to Heaven because the standard is perfection like I have said and there is only one person who has done that and it is not you, it is Jesus! And I don't care how close you come to perfection, you still miss the mark and you will not enter in. The only way you can enter in is through Jesus and thus, you must repent, you must turn to Him!

Solomon also speaks of their captivity, which is interesting because it is still a few hundred years down the road, some 400 years and yet he is praying for when it happens what they are to do, **REPENT!** When the Southern Kingdom of Judah fell into sin and turned from the Lord God brought judgment on them by the hands of the Babylonians, who took away many people captive in their first invasion in 606 B. C., including Daniel and his 3 friends.

And then in 586 B. C. King Nebuchadnezzar lead his third and final assault upon Jerusalem, destroying the city and the Temple and taking away the people captive, leaving only a few to care for the land.

This young man named Daniel, taken to a foreign land, continued to pray 3 times a day, facing towards the holy city of Jerusalem. Daniel was doing what Solomon had said back here in II Chronicles. Listen to what is said of Daniel in Daniel 6:10, **“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.”** You see, he was doing what Solomon had said here!

And as we have seen here in Daniel chapter 9, this awesome prayer of Daniel as he intercedes for the nation, his people, as he confesses his own sin before God, asking God to hear, to forgive, to listen and act upon his requests. That God would not delay in pouring out His mercy upon His people. And God did answer Daniel’s prayer as we have seen in our study of the Old Testament.

6. As Christians may we remember that you can’t get away with anything and if you could, you still will lose. God will chasten you to get you back on track, to draw you close to Him. On the other hand, the enemy will condemn you and cause you to move away from God and our brothers and sisters in the Lord telling you that you are no good and God doesn’t love you.

He is half right, we aren’t good but God is and He loves us and has given to us His righteousness through Jesus Christ. Be wise. Allow God’s chastening to draw you closer to Him. Don’t hold onto your sin it will only bring you down. Give it to the Lord and let Him lift you up!

THE PENANCE OF PRAYER IS CONFESSING YOUR SINS BEFORE GOD!

VERSES 16-19

1. Now in these verses we see Daniel make his *PETITION BY PRAYER*. And what we see is that Daniel speaks of God's mercy, that we never get fully what we deserve. You see, Daniel is not calling upon God to react or respond because of their righteousness, because he knew how unrighteous they were. He is falling upon the mercy of God, not to get what they deserve! And we should never ask God to give to us what we deserve, for that would be death, eternal separation from Him. Only a fool would ask God to give them what they deserve!

So Daniel is calling upon God to respond or act according to His great mercies! And if He does it would bring glory to His name. You see, to the Gentile world God's name was built upon the mighty work He did in Egypt by delivering the nation of Israel from bondage. How God brought them into the land of Canaan, driving out the giants that were in the land, the Canaanites, and establishing the nation of Israel as a mighty nation. Israel was a witness to the Gentile nations of the awesomeness of God!

And now, by their disobedience, God's name is tarnished in the minds of the Gentiles. Thus, Daniel is calling upon God to do a mighty work again and free them from captivity and return them to their land so that He could once again be glorified through them.

And again, the main point is that Daniel is not calling upon God's justice for them for they would be destroyed for they were guilty of turning from Him, but he was calling upon God's great mercy which is rich and deep!

We are no different. We call out for God's mercy in our own life. We don't want to receive what we deserve if we truly understand who we are and what we are like. We seek His grace, getting what we don't deserve.

I think Jeremiah put it correctly when he said in Lamentations 3:22-24, **“Through the LORD’S mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. ‘The LORD is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘Therefore I hope in Him!’”**

We may blow it and we do blow it, and yet tomorrow is a new day with the Lord. His mercy is new every morning, He doesn’t run out, and I thank God for that! Thus, I don’t trust in my own strength, my own ability, my own wisdom, but the Lord. In Him I place my hope, my life!

And when we do blow it the world is ready to hold us down, mock God. First of all, don’t give them an opportunity to do that. But if you do, if you blow it, ask God to restore you and the work He was doing in you so that through your good works He may be glorified! It is as Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:16, **“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”**

DANIEL MADE HIS PETITION BY PRAYER!

2. Let me share this story with you on prayer because many times I think we believe in prayer until we are faced with a situation. We need to rest in the promises of God and the key is to rest, trust in Him. It is not always easy but if it was then we wouldn’t need God. Daniel read God’s Word and believed God’s Word and interceded for the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem based on God’s Word and so should we.

We are told,

In 1980 Peggy MacDonald walked around a piece of property in St. Louis County while it was still undeveloped ground – twenty-two acres of trees, rocks, and weeds. But she prayed that God would one day plant a church there, and years later Twin Oaks Presbyterian Church built on that very site. At that time she wrote in her diary:

First, I asked God to do something powerful with numbers to make this land financially accessible to his people to do his work. As I walked the land, I talked with God and dreamed a little. I asked God to make this church a place where people could come and be made strong. A place where they didn't need to feel like they had everything together. The third part of my prayer was that this church not just be a refuge, but also a people who would reach out to the community with concern and say, "I'm coming to your house." Like Jesus when he found Zaccheus up a tree and said, "Come down, for I am going to your house." I prayed that this would be a church willing to reach out to people who were up a tree, perplexed and searching; they would not be too busy, but would be willing to say, "If you cannot come here, we will go to where you are."

She cried out to the Lord in that prayer in 1980 as she walked around and around that property. For the next ten years she drove by that property many times, but very little happened to that property in those ten years. I'm sure Peggy shrugged her shoulders more than once and thought, *Oh well, I guess it wasn't God's will to have a church built on this property.* Little did she know what Heaven was up to.

- Rodney Stortz, Daniel, the Triumph of God's Kingdom, pp. 145-146

May we not limit what God can do! Remember what Paul said in Ephesians 3:20-21, **"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."** May we not forget that!

3. Now I do want to take a minute and focus on Daniel 9:19 once again. Daniel cried out to God and said, **“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.”**

As you read that verse you see an increase in the intensity of the verbs that are being used. And you can see that Daniel is pouring out his heart before God. He says, ***“LORD HEAR, LORD FORGIVE, LORD LISTEN, LORD ACT, LORD DO NOT DELAY!”***

It is as James says **“... The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”** James 5:16. And we will see next time the wonderful revelation that God gives to Daniel regarding the people of Israel and the holy city of Jerusalem for which Daniel was praying for.

We will see Daniel’s prayers answered far above all he could ask or think and God is wanting to do the same with us, just ask, keep asking in His will, and He will bless, He will speak to your heart and guide you. It is as the Psalmist said **“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.”** That is what God desires to do, to guide us with His eye, and that means we need to be looking at Him! May we do that, and seek His will for our lives!

Spurgeon put it like this, “Oh, that we might learn how to pray so that God should be the subject as well as the object of our supplications! O God, thy Church needs thee above everything else! A poor, little, sick, neglected child needs fifty things; but you can put all those needs into one if you say that the child needs its mother. So, the Church, of God needs a thousand things, but you can put them all into one if you say, ‘The Church of God needs her God.’”

4. As I close this evening look at these five points regarding this prayer of Daniel once again.

We have seen the ***PROMPTING OF PRAYER WHICH WAS THE WORD OF GOD!***

Then we saw the ***PREPARATION FOR PRAYER BY SETTING OUR FACE TOWARDS GOD, BEING DETERMINED TO PRAY!***

Next we saw the ***PREFACE OF PRAYER OR REMEMBERING WHO GOD IS, THAT OUR PROBLEMS ARE NOTHING TO THE CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH!***

And we then looked at the ***PENANCE OF PRAYER WHEN WE INTERCEDE BEFORE GOD FOR OURS SINS AND THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE, THAT GOD WOULD RESTORE THIS LAND ONCE AGAIN!***

And lastly we looked at the ***PETITION BY PRAYER AS DANIEL SEEKS THE MERCY OF GOD!***

Remember what John said in I John 5, **“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.”**

I John 5:14-15.

In other words, as long as we pray for things that are in the will of God and not to satisfy our own fleshly desires, God will answer them! The key of course, and John speaks of this, that God is sovereign and will do what is best for us, and you wouldn't want it any other way. Daniel was praying according to God's will and God answered his prayer and we will see how powerful that answer is next time.

I realize that we see people abuse prayer in the sense they are naming it and claiming it, blabbing it and grabbing it, but that is not what prayer is all about. That is what we saw in what John said in I John chapter 5.

And listen to what Jesus said in John 16:24, **“Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.”** Jesus wants us to pray, He wants to bless us abundantly, He wants our joy to be full, to be overflowing!

And I will close with this. Prayer, simply speaking, is communicating with our heavenly Father. And what is communication? It is not only speaking but listening! You see, God desires a dialogue with Him that He may guide us. There are no special formulas or positions for prayer, but just come before Him and speak with Him and let Him speak to your heart through His Word, allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you, and that means you also have to do some listening! It is not the position of prayer but an attitude of prayer, having the right heart as we pray.

Thus, may we intercede for the people of this nation and as we are told in II Chronicles 7:14, **“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”** May we be men and women of prayer, interceding for this nation, for the people of this nation to come to saving faith so that this land can be healed once again!