

## **Biblical Prayers 3: Daniel's Prayer for Israel's Restoration**

(Dan. 9:1-19)

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Today I want to continue our study of **Biblical prayers** with our focus on Daniel's prayer for restoration offered on behalf of Israel who, along with Daniel, were in captivity in Babylon.
  - A. Israel was in captivity because of their sin and failure to repent despite all that the Lord had done to discipline them and turn their heart back to Him (Lev. 26:14-26).
  - B. At the point when Daniel prays this prayer, Israel had been in captivity for around 68 years, serving a heathen nation that had decimated their homeland and destroyed the temple.
  - C. Thus, we find that Daniel offered this prayer in anticipation of the Lord returning Israel to Jerusalem, the city and the temple being rebuilt, and worship to God in Israel being restored.
2. So, let's see what Daniel's prayer reveals concerning how we might be more effective in our prayers.
3. To do so I want to look at how Daniel's prayer was based on God's **word**, God's **character**, and God's **past**.

### **BODY:**

#### **• I. God's word and prayer**

- A. God's promise preceded Daniel's petition (Dan. 9:1-2 – "In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans—<sup>2</sup> in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, **observed** in the books **the number of the years** which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet **for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.**").
  - 1. The promise Daniel observed or read (Jer. 29:10-14 – "For thus says the LORD, '**When seventy years have been completed for Babylon**, I will visit you and **fulfill My good word** to you, to **bring you back to this place.**' <sup>11</sup> For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. <sup>12</sup> Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. <sup>13</sup> You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. <sup>14</sup> I will be found by you,' declares the LORD, 'and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,' declares the LORD, 'and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.'"). **So, Daniel learned that...**
    - a. After 70 years, which was nearing completion, God would bring Israel home (29:10, 14)!
    - b. Also, God had plans for Israel's good, giving them a future and hope in their restored relationship with Him (29:11-13).
  - 2. When Daniel **learned** of God's imminent mercy and grace **hope** was kindled in his heart!
    - a. Knowledge from God's word affected Daniel's heart and outlook on life for himself and his brethren and prompted him to action, as we shall see.
    - b. We should learn from Daniel to be people of the word, seeking out God's **promises** so that we will be encouraged to endure with **hope** renewed in our heart (Rom. 15:4 – "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, **so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures** we might **have hope.**").
- B. God's promise prompted prayer (9:3 – "**So** I gave my attention to the **Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications** [appeal, request], with fasting, sackcloth and ashes."").
  - 1. Daniel did not take a passive stance concerning God's promise, sitting back, and watching it all unfold, but sought with intensity (fasting, sackcloth, ashes) God's **action in prayer**.
  - 2. What Daniel sought was God's **faithful fulfillment** of His promises.
    - a. Daniel did not seek God's action because he had doubts concerning God's faithfulness to His word (e.g., 9:12-14).
    - b. Instead, Daniel's faith in God and love for his brethren compelled him to petition God!
      - i. God's word and its fulfillment were Israel's one and only hope!
      - ii. His prayer/petition said that he **believed the words** and that **God would fulfill them!**

iii. We need to make it a habit to do the same—to recant God’s promises and let God know that we **believe in them** and His **faithfulness** in fulfilling them.

• C. We should never assume a passive role in relationship to God’s promises.

1. Daniel did not assume this, nor was Israel to do so (Ezek. 36:37-38 – “Thus says the Lord God, “This also **I will let the house of Israel ask Me to do for them**: I will increase their men like a flock. <sup>38</sup> Like the flock for sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so will the waste cities be filled with flocks of men. Then they will know that I am the LORD.””).
2. As **Christians** we are to pray for **God’s revealed will** to be **done** in our lives (1 Jn. 5:14-15 – “This is the **confidence** which we have before Him, that, **if we ask anything according to His will**, He hears us. <sup>15</sup> And if we **know that He hears us** in whatever we ask, **we know** that we **have the requests** which we have asked from Him.”).
  - a. Praying for **God’s will** to be done, which **includes His promises**, provides the confidence we have concerning our prayers being answered.
  - b. So, we learn a valuable lesson: **God delights in His will being fulfilled in answer to our prayers**, as a parent delights in fulfilling their child’s requests!
3. Thus, as people of God, His word should always guide and motivate our petitions and concerns expressed in prayer.

• **II. God’s character and prayer:**

• A. Prayer should include praise and profession.

- 1. God’s **faithfulness** (9:4-6 – “I prayed to the LORD my God and **confessed** and said, “Alas, **O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments**, <sup>5</sup> we have **sinned**, committed **iniquity**, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances. <sup>6</sup> Moreover, we have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes, our fathers and all the people of the land.”).
  - a. **Praise** for God’s character of unfaltering **faithfulness** (9:4).
    - i. God is great and awesome, being the God who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love and obey Him.
    - ii. None of the “gods” (little “g”) of the others nation made covenants and kept them, because they were the product of men’s thoughts and basest desires and were, therefore, base, and untrustworthy!
  - b. **Profession** of Israel’s **faithlessness** (9:5-6).
    - i. The honest reality was that the character of Israel was the very opposite of God’s, which is so often true in our own lives!
    - ii. Daniel professing this magnified and glorified the greatness and awesomeness of God’s faithfulness, as well as expressing knowledge of his own place before.
    - iii. This is where every one of us finds ourself before God—praise His faithfulness in contrast to our unfaithfulness.
- 2. God’s **righteousness** (9:7-8 – “**Righteousness belongs to You, O Lord, but to us open shame**, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of **their unfaithful deeds** which they have committed against You. <sup>8</sup> **Open shame belongs to us**, O Lord, to our kings, our princes and our fathers, because we have **sinned** against You.”).
  - a. **Praise** for God’s **righteousness**.
    - i. God is praised because He is right, just, virtuous.
    - ii. Daniel did this because from the beginning this characteristic was revealed by God’s word and proven to be true by His dealings with Israel and the world.
  - b. **Profession** of Israel’s **shame** in **unrighteousness**.

- i. Despite being a nation formed by God, and having God as their Father, Israel had neither appreciated nor taken on the character of God their Father.
  - ii. Rather than seeking to follow in their Father's footsteps, as a loved child seeks to do, they chose a path of **shame** by their unfaithful, rebellious acts!
- c. Again, we find ourselves here with Daniel concerning God's righteousness and ours!
- 3. God's **mercy and grace** (9:9-11 – "To the Lord our God **belong compassion and forgiveness**, for we have **rebelled against Him**; <sup>10</sup> **nor have we obeyed** the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His teachings which He set before us through His servants the prophets. <sup>11</sup> Indeed all Israel has transgressed Your law and turned aside, not obeying Your voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have **sinned against Him**.").
- a. **Praise** for God's mercy and grace seen in His **compassion and forgiveness** (9:9).
  - i. These are characteristics God had declared of Himself, and proven, in His relationship with Israel from their beginning (Ex. 34:6-7 – "Then the Lord passed by in front of him [Moses] and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, **compassionate and gracious**, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; <sup>7</sup> who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, **who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin**; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations."").
  - ii. Everything about that passage had come true of Israel as was seen in that day!
- b. **Profession** of Israel's **rebellion and sin** (9:10-11).
  - i. Daniel's contrast of Israel's actions to God's compassion and forgiveness magnified and glorified God's wonderful mercy and grace!
  - ii. For, despite God's extensive efforts to make Himself and His will known through Moses and the prophets, Israel had *not obeyed* or *listened*, but had *turned aside*!
  - iii. So, that God would still see Israel as His people and intended to show kindness toward them proved beyond doubt that He is compassionate and forgives!
- c. Again, is there any of us here who do not find ourselves in Daniel's shoes concerning the wonders of God's mercy and grace?
- B. This is a pattern of prayer we should follow today (Mt. 6:9-13 – "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, **hallowed** be Your name. <sup>10</sup> 'Your kingdom come. **Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.** <sup>11</sup> 'Give us this day our daily bread. <sup>12</sup> 'And **forgive us our debts**, as we also have forgiven our debtors. <sup>13</sup> 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'].")
  - 1. For, this example of prayer addresses:
    - a. Praise of God's righteousness/holiness (6:9 – "Hallowed by Your name").
    - b. Petition that God's will be done (6:10 – "Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven").
    - c. Profession of our dependance on God's faithfulness (6:11 – "Give us this day our daily bread.")
    - d. Profession of our sin and need for God's great grace (6:12-13 – "And **forgive us our debts**, as we also have forgiven our debtors. <sup>13</sup> 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.'")
  - 2. So, an acceptable and powerful prayer should always acknowledge and praise God glorious character and humble profession of the reality of who we are as His people.
- III. God's past actions should push our petitions:
  - A. Daniel acknowledged God's past actions:
    - 1. Israel's **punishment** proved God's **trustworthiness** (9:12-14 – "**Thus He has confirmed His words which He had spoken** against us and against our rulers who ruled us, **to bring on us great calamity**; for under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what was done to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup> **As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come**

on us; yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth. <sup>14</sup> Therefore the LORD has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us; **for the LORD our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done**, but we have not obeyed His voice.”).

a. God had clearly promised exile to be the punishment if Israel sinned with impenitence (Lev. 26:27-28, 32-35 – “Yet if in spite of **this** [discipline – 26:14-26] you do not obey Me, but act with hostility against Me, <sup>28</sup> **then I will act with wrathful hostility against you**, and I, even **I**, **will punish you** seven times for your sins...<sup>32</sup> I will make the land desolate so that your enemies who settle in it will be appalled over it. <sup>33</sup> **You, however, I will scatter among the nations** and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste.”).

b. Sometimes, maybe far more often than we do, we should acknowledge God’s trustworthiness as evidenced by our undone, sorrowful, and depressed condition!

i. Prov. 13:15 – “Good understanding produces favor, but **the way of the treacherous** [transgressor, unfaithful] is **hard**.”

ii. 1 Pet. 3:12 [quoting Psa. 34:15-16] – “For the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and His ears attend to their prayer, but **the face of the Lord is against those who do evil**.”

iii. When we sin and face the misery of its consequences, does that not prove that God is trustworthy and His word to be true?

• 2. Israel’s deliverance proved God’s willingness to use His might for Israel’s good ...despite their sin evident then and now (9:15 – “And now, O Lord our God, who have **brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand** and have made a name for Yourself, as it is this day—**we have sinned, we have been wicked**.”).

3. Daniel acknowledged God’s past actions as praise to God’s faithfulness and care for His people, which was what Daniel was seeking now!

• B. God’s **past** actions **pushed** Daniel **petition**.

• 1. It **pushed** Daniel’s plea for:

a. God’s removal of His anger and Israel’s reproach in His grace (9:16-19 – “O Lord, **in accordance with all Your righteous acts**, let now **Your anger and Your wrath turn away from Your city Jerusalem**, Your holy mountain; for because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and **Your people have become a reproach** to all those around us. <sup>17</sup> So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, and **for Your sake**, O Lord, **let Your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary**. <sup>18</sup> 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 are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on **account of Your great compassion**. <sup>19</sup> O Lord, hear! O Lord, **forgive!** O Lord, **listen and take action!** For **Your own sake**, O my God, **do not delay**, because **Your city and Your people are called by Your name**.”).

b. Note also how **God’s righteous glory being exalted** in the world was Daniel’s motive behind removal of Israel’s reproach through God’s grace to forgive! This should be our motive as well.

• 2. God’s past actions should push our petitions today (1 Tim. 2:1-6 – “First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, <sup>2</sup> for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. <sup>3</sup> This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who **desires all men to be saved** and to come to the knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup> For there is one God, and **one mediator** also between God and men, **the man Christ Jesus**, <sup>6</sup> **who gave Himself as a ransom for all**, the testimony given at the proper time.”).

- a. **Petitions:** Entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings being made for **all men** so that we might live a tranquil, godly, and dignified life (2:1-2).
- b. **Push:** God's **expressed desire** to save all people as **proven** by the **act** of sending Jesus who sacrificed Himself as a ransom for all (2:3-6).
- 3. We need to be attuned to God's faithful acts of the past because they give us the foundation upon which we can confidently petition God's action today!

CONCLUSION:

1. I hope this prayer has enlightened you and encouraged you concerning ways by which your prayer life can grow and be of greater benefit for you and your brethren.
2. For our God has made many wonderful promises to those who are faithful to Him, and his past actions prove that He is trustworthy and will do all that he has said!
3. So, have you entrusted your life to Jesus, submitting to Him as your Lord and Savior, which all begins at F-R-C-BP?
4. Of course, it continues throughout our life through faith and obedience. If you have not been faithful, the great blessings of prayer await you if you will repent and return to God.
5. If you desire salvation and hope of eternal life, will you come today?