

## PRAYER FOR A NATION IN CAPTIVITY Daniel 9:1-19

Intro: In Daniel 9:3-19, we have a prayer filled with concern for Israel, passion for the right, and love for the Sovereign of the universe. Walvoord says: "No other portion of the Bible breaths with more devotion or greater spiritual content than this prayer of Daniel." This being true, it behooves us to carefully consider the words of the Holy Writ as given in this passage.

In his prayer, the Prophet exalts the righteousness of God and exposes the sinfulness of man. Today men try to excuse their sin and malign the name of the true and living God.

What had led to Israel's being led captive to a strange land? It is sin that caused the nation of Israel to be held hostage by heathen kings, and it is sin that is threatening to destroy America. All that we have fought for is in the balance.

There is a remedy; there is a cure. Nehemiah 9:2-3 gives to us the remedy for our situation and the cure for our national disease of sin. Proverbs 14:34 says, "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people."

When Daniel prayed, he did so with the knowledge of passages such as Deuteronomy 28:63-67 in mind.

- I. Vss. 1-2, THE DURATION OF THE DESOLATION OF JERUSALEM
  - A. Vs.1, Between chapters eight and nine, the events of Belshazzar's feast in chapter five took place.
  - B. Vs. 2, Daniel was not only a great prophet, he was a great student of the Word. He was one who studied to show himself approved unto God.
    1. Daniel, by studying the books of the Word of God that he had, was able to say with certainty that the desolation of Jerusalem would last for seventy years. The vision of chapter nine took place in 538 BC, around sixty seven years after Jerusalem had been captured and led away to Babylon in 605 BC.
    2. Jeremiah 25:11 says: "And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years."
    3. The question as to why the captivity was seventy years is found in 2 Chronicles 36:21. Every seventh year was to be a day of rest for the land. God sent the Israelites to

Babylon to let the ground rest. He collected what was owed.

## II. Vss. 3-4, THE DUE PROCESS OF DANIEL'S PRAYER

- A. Vs. 3, Daniel shut out other things to focus on prayer. This is what is meant by Daniel's words: "I set my face unto the Lord my God." This is how our prayer life should be, focused and not hindered.
  - 1. "To seek by prayer."
  - 2. Daniel seeks the Lord in "supplication" which means, "to entreat, to plead." Daniel also fasted; he did this as to not lose time needed to seek the Lord. "Sackcloth and ashes"— the sackcloth speaks of need, and the ashes speak of humility.
- B. Vs. 4, Daniel gives honor to the majesty and sovereignty of God. God's covenant to them that love Him and keep His commandments is kept. God desires to show mercy on us.

## III. Vss. 5-14, THE DISCLOSURE IN DANIEL'S PRAYER

- A. In verses 5-14, there are twenty references to sin and iniquity. Those two words may not always be used, but equivalent words certainly are.
- B. Vs. 5, By departing from God's precepts, God's people had: sinned, committed iniquity, done wickedly and rebelled.
  - 1. They had broken the Ten Commandments.
  - 2. They had acted wickedly and lewdly.
- C. Vs. 6, Disregard for the preacher leads to moral disorder.
  - 1. Many prophets were killed for heralding the truth. From the king down to the man on the street, the Word of God was hated.
  - 2. Even when revival broke out during the reign of Hezekiah, people, when urged by the messengers of the king, to go to Jerusalem for Passover: "laughed them to scorn and mocked them" (2 Chron. 30:10).
  - 3. In Hosea's day, people ignored God's Word. It is said of them: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hosea 4:6). What a terrible consequence for ignorance

of God's Word. In Hosea 4:11, the Bible says: "Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart." The Hebrew word for "heart" is *labe* meaning, "heart, mind, understanding, wisdom..." What a terrible situation for a people to be in, ignorant of the word of life.

- D. Vss. 7-8, In these verses, we have one of the results of sin, "confusion of faces."
  - 1. Confused because they were scattered. Why? "Because they have trespassed against thee."
  - 2. America is in confusion because we have sinned against God.
- E. Vs. 9, Why pray if God is not a God of mercy? Israel was guilty before God and needed to plead for mercy and for forgiveness. Aren't you thankful as Daniel was that our God is a God of mercy and forgiveness. Jonah said: "I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness" (Jonah 4:2).
- F. Vss. 10-11, In Exodus 20:5-12, there are five commandments that are tied together by the words, "the Lord thy God." These all pertain to man's duty to God. The Israelites had broken them all.
  - 1. In verse 11, the scripture says: "all Israel have transgressed thy law...therefore the curse is poured upon us." To transgress is to go beyond the line that God has drawn for us. When we go beyond, we can expect the judgment to fall as it did with Israel.
  - 2. America has surely transgressed and can expect the greater judgment of God if repentance does not come.
- G. Vs. 12, The words of God had been confirmed by the preaching of God's men: Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, Habakkuk, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. To ignore the Word of God is to bring on the judgment of God.
- H. Vs. 13, "Adding to the earlier sins, Israel in their extremity did turn to the Lord in prayer..." (Walvoord 210) Lack of prayer is America's sin today.
- I. Vs. 14, When we do not go to God for mercy, then judgment is coming.

#### IV. Vss. 15-19, THE DESIRE OF DANIEL FOR FORGIVENESS AND RESTORATION

- A. Vs. 15, During the Exodus of Israel out of Egypt, God had shown His mighty hand and had, as Daniel said, “gotten thee renown, as at this day.” But, Daniel confesses: “we have sinned, we have done wickedly.” In verses 4-14, Daniel addresses God as Jehovah. Now in verses 15-19, Daniel addresses God as Adonai and Elohim. The use of Adonai says that Daniel recognizes the absolute sovereignty of God over him.
- B. Vs. 16, We had better plead for America as did Daniel for Israel. We need to pray for Washington as he did for Jerusalem. We need to confess our sins and the sins of our fathers.
- C. Vs.17, Daniel prayed for the Temple in Jerusalem to be blessed and for the face of the Lord to shine once again upon it. Oh, that God would bless with the granting of repentance to the lost that the church may be blessed with newly born again ones. 2 Timothy 2:25, “In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.”
- D. Vs. 18, Daniel knew what they deserved, so he prayed for God’s mercies not justice. We need to take heed to the words of 2 Chronicles 7:14.
- E. Vs. 19, John Philips says that Daniel’s last plea, “is a series of exclamations of emotion and distress. He flung himself on God.” (143)

Conclusion: We need to pray as Daniel did. America is sinking and quickly as if in quicksand. We need mercy and we deserve judgment.

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