

1. Earlier I completed an analysis of Dan 9:1 and 2. Last week we finished an extensive study of the Doctrine of Prayer and now we are ready to continue our study of Dan 9:3-4.

2. Before we do however I want to give you an expanded translation of verses one and two.

Dan 9:1 It was now the first year of the reign of King Darius, about 538 B.C. Darius was the son of Ahasuerus the Mede; he became King of Babylon at the promulgation of Cyrus.
Dan 9:2 In the first year of Darius' reign I was pleased to read from the Scroll of Jeremiah where it clearly taught that our exile into Babylonia would last for only seventy years and with the desolation of Jerusalem occurring in stages beginning in 606 B.C., the time of our return was drawing near. It was equally clear to me that the King of Babylon had just been punished and since Jeremiah had said our return would not occur until after that punishment, I felt it appropriate to beseech the Lord to do what He promised and not to delay.

3. Now let's see what principles can be gleaned from Daniel 9:3 and 4:

KJV

Dan 9:3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

Dan 9:4 And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

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Dan 9:3 So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.

Dan 9:4 I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed: "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands,

Principles:

1. Encouraged by God's intention to restore Jerusalem, Daniel now seeks to make adequate preparation to present his confessions and petitions to the Lord.

2. Every possible preparation is included. First he declares in the KJV of Dan 9:3, "I set my face unto the Lord God."

2.1 In the Hebrew the "I set" is a translation from Nathan, a Kal imperfect meaning "I gave." Daniel in the imperfect means "He Daniel began to give himself over to God the Father."

2.2 Unto the Lord God is a translation from a prepositional phrase El Adonai Elohim literally translated "to the Lord of the Trinity."

3. This was a formal beginning by which Daniel turns away from other things to give himself intensely to prayer. It implies sincere faith, devotion and intense worship.

4. His activity in prayer has a specific end expressed by the word "to seek" from the verb Biqesh. It anticipates his hope that he will find an answer.

5. The attitude of mind and steadfastness of purpose is now supplemented by prayer and supplications, i. e. prayer in general and petition specifically.

5.1 David Jeremiah has written "Prayer needs to be preceded by Bible Study."

5.2 We have already studied that "the prayers of those who hate doctrine are an abomination to the Lord."

5.3 Daniel has read of the return and believes what Jeremiah the prophet transcribed.

Jer 25:11 And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

Jer 25:12 And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.

6. Daniel's prayer is accompanied by every known Old Testament auxiliary to prayer: namely, fasting, that he might not be diverted from prayer by food; sackcloth, a putting aside of ordinary garments in favor of rough cloth reminding him of his abject need; and ashes, the traditional symbol of grief and humility.

6.1 All of these auxiliaries were training aids like our Lord's Table or in our church the not passing of the plate etc.

7. In a phrase, Daniel left nothing undone. While God honors the briefest of prayers, as the experience of Nehemiah in Neh 2:4-5, effective prayer as we have just studied requires compliance with the Word of God.

Neh 2:4 The king said to me, "What is it you want?" Then I prayed to the God of heaven, Neh 2:5 and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it."

7.1 We also studied the prayer of the unbeliever which can be uniquely short but very effective "Lord, because of what Christ has done, save me now" or Father I command you save me based on your total satisfaction with the work of Christ." Luk 8:13

8. As a believer, following God's protocol will provide a proper attitude: i. e. privacy, confession and petition.

8.1 In summary, the protocol requires prayer be to the Father, in the name of the Son, in a confessed up state, from a mind that loves doctrine and in a spirit of thanksgiving.

9. Daniel's humility, reverence, and earnestness are the hallmarks of an effective Old Testament prayer warrior. Again in a phrase "he loved the Word and he sincerely wanted to know more."

10. In beginning his prayer to the Lord (Dan 9:4), Daniel relies upon the majesty of God's person and the greatness of His power.

Dan 9:4 I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed Yadah - meaning "I was caused to name cite or throw): "O Lord (Adonai), the great (Gadol) and awesome (better the One being awesome) God (El), who keeps (Shamar) his covenant (Barath) of mercy (Chesed) with all who love (Ahav) him and obey (Shamar) his commands (Tsavah),

10.1 Interestingly, Daniel also makes note of the fact that God keeps His covenant promises and manifests His grace to those who love Him and keep His instructions.

11. As Nelson Glueck has brought out in his study of the word ("mercy - Chesed)," ... "the word connotes not only forgiveness but a special loyalty in keeping His covenant with Israel. This loyalty on the part of God will be contrasted in verses five through fourteen with the inexcusable disloyalty of the people of Israel."

11.1 Chesed means the uncompromising love of God or a love based solely upon Whom and what God is, a good definition of grace. Grace recall is all that God is free to do for you and for me on the basis of the cross without in any way compromising His character.

11.2 Part of that wonderful grace plan as we have studied is the grace provision of confession or as the psalmist cautions "not to regard iniquity in your heart" but rather - to simply name or cite that sin.

Psa 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

12. Walvoord has written, "In beginning his prayer, Daniel thus is assured of the greatness of God and the goodness of God. His problem is that the children of Israel have sinned, broken their covenant, and have made themselves liable to the divine judgment which the faithfulness of God must inflict according to His promises.

13. Daniel has however plenty of doctrine in his soul; he knows confession clears the decks for effective prayer.

14. Before we move to Daniel's prayer of confession I want to give you an expanded translation of Dan 9:3-4.

Dan 9:3 And then I gave myself totally over to the Lord God and prayed, I also fasted in order not to be distracted, I wore sack cloths and covered my body with ashes to demonstrate my state of abject humility and reliance on His grace.

Dan 9:4 I then began "O Lord, you are great and awesome for you always fulfill your promises of uncompromising love to those who keep your protocol.

15. Now for verses five through fourteen.

DANIEL'S PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Dan 9:5 we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws.

Dan 9:6 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.

Dan 9:7 "Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame-- the men of Judah and people of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far, in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to you.

Dan 9:8 O LORD, we and our kings, our princes and our fathers are covered with shame because we have sinned against you.

Dan 9:9 The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him;

Dan 9:10 we have not obeyed the LORD our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets.

Dan 9:11 All Israel has transgressed your law and turned away, refusing to obey you.

"Therefore the curses and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against you.

Dan 9:12 You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing upon us great disaster. Under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem.

Dan 9:13 Just as it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us, yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth.

Dan 9:14 The LORD did not hesitate to bring the disaster upon us, for the LORD our God is righteous in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him.

1. Having reminded himself of God's covenant and uncompromising love, Daniel begins his prayer of confession.

1.1 Daniel himself is one of the few major characters of the Old Testament to whom some sin is not ascribed. This is not to say he didn't miss the mark of God from time to time but in God's wisdom He chose not to show us the weaker side of Daniel.

2. This is not about his personal sins, but his identification with the sin of the nation and the collective responsibility which Daniel shares both in promises of blessing and warnings of divine judgment. Daniel does not however spare himself or his people in his confession.

2.1 Daniel has a place of responsibility like those holding the office of prophet in both the northern and southern kingdoms.

3. As John Calvin points out in his exposition, there is a four-fold description of the extent of Israel's sin:

3.1 "first, they have sinned, meaning a serious crime or offense;

3.2 second, they have committed iniquity, that is, "acted unjustly;"

3.3 third, they have done wickedly, or "conducted themselves wickedly;" and

3.4 fourth, sinning in this way, they have rebelled even by departing from thy precepts, that is, "become rebellious and declined from the statutes and commandments of God."

4. Moses Stuart writes,

"The climactic construction of the sentence is palpable. To turn back from obedience to the divine statutes, in the frame of mind which belongs to rebels, is the consummation of wickedness, and so Daniel rightly considers it. The variety of verbs employed here, indicates the design of the speaker to confess all sin of every kind in its full extent."

4.1 Much of the sin named involves what we would call "reversionism."

5. The heinousness of Israel's sin is amplified in verse 6 by the fact that they have disregarded the prophets which God sent to them.

Dan 9:6 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.

5.1 Jeremiah was the most notable of all the prophets though their disobedience connected with their dispersion to Babylon starts back in time during the reign of Hezekiah (B.C. 727-698).

2Ki 20:12 At that time Berodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick.

2Ki 20:13 And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and shewed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.

2Ki 20:14 Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, even from Babylon.

2Ki 20:15 And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All the things that are in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them.

2Ki 20:16 And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD.

2Ki 20:17 Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.

2Ki 20:18 And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

5.2. Even in such times of revival as during the reign of Hezekiah when the king's messengers went throughout the land calling people to the Passover at Jerusalem, the Scriptures record that many "laughed them to scorn, and mocked them" (2Ch 30:10-11).

2Ch 30:10 The couriers went from town to town in Ephraim and Manasseh, as far as Zebulun, but the people scorned and ridiculed them.

2Ch 30:11 Nevertheless, some men of Asher, Manasseh and Zebulun humbled themselves and went to Jerusalem.

6. This disrespect and disobedience to the prophet's message characterized all classes of Israel, including their kings, their princes, other leaders referred to as "our fathers," and finally "all the people of the land."

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