

Daniel's Prayer of Confession and Requests

If you were to turn to Matthew 6:9-13 in the Sermon on the Mount, you would find that Jesus tells His disciples how to pray. We call it the Lord's Prayer. Actually, it is the disciples' prayer. The prayer mentions sin and "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." That is not a prayer that Jesus would have prayed because He was a sinless person. It is really a prayer for us. It more appropriately should be called the Disciples' Prayer.

The prayer has four parts. The first part in verse 9 offers praise to God. We are to honor God for being a holy God. The second part is a request for the Father's will to be done. The third part is a personal request for God to provide for our needs. I think it is interesting that the way Jesus taught us to

pray was to honor God, ask that His will be done, and then our personal requests are made later. Many of us when we pray begin with our requests of God first. Would it not be nice if we followed what Jesus taught us to do when He taught His disciples to pray? Praise God first, honor Him first. Our

requests are secondary in importance to our need to praise our God and Creator. He is more important than we are. So, Jesus instructs us to praise God first, that the will of the Father is done, and then we are to ask our Father for the things we need. One of the things Jesus told us to ask is that He would meet our daily needs. God has never promised us that we would be wealthy and rich. He has promised to meet our needs. The

fourth and last section in the model prayer deals with sin.

Our study today is also about prayer. It is a prayer the prophet Daniel made. It began in chapter 9, verse 4. His prayer is an illustration or a model of how Jesus taught His disciples to pray. Daniel 9:4 began by praising God, just as Jesus told His disciples to do. He said,

I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said, "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God. . . Daniel 9:4a (NASB)

I just love that he said, "the great and awesome God." He praised God right up front.

Then in verses 5-10, Daniel confessed the sin of the nation and also his own sins. Jesus taught His disciples to pray about sin, but it was in the third place. Daniel puts it in the second place.

Then in verses 11-14, Daniel prays about God's will. Jesus taught His disciples to put that in the second place. Daniel puts it in the third place. In his prayer, he praises God

for having done His will. God was faithful in disciplining Israel for their sin. It is amazing to think about praising God for being faithful when the result of God's faithfulness is that He disciplined His people Israel. They suffered as a result of God's faithfulness. God had warned them that they needed to repent and be obedient. If they did God would bless them. If they continued sinning, then God would punish them. So



Daniel After Reading the Book of Jeremiah

God had already laid out the conditions for blessing and for suffering. Then God followed through based on how they responded or obeyed.

Verses 15 then to 27 are about requests. Daniel included all of the piece parts of the Lord's Prayer. He just put them in a different order. But the one thing that is constant is that the praises of God are at the very beginning in Jesus' model prayer and Daniel's prayer.

In our last study, it was incredible how much Daniel talked about sin. He repeatedly talked about sin again in this passage. Out of the fifteen verses, eleven of the verses were about his sin and the sins of Israel. When was the last time that you prayed and most of your prayer was about your sin? When was the last time you were so concerned about your sin that the vast majority of your prayer was about your sin? Many Christians do not deal with their sin correctly. Many professing Christians are not really concerned that much about sin. What we care about too often is what would please us. Daniel was consumed with the issue of sin.

YAHWEH IS WORTHY OF PRAISE. Our study begins with verse 15. This is part two of Daniel's prayer of confession. In it he makes two requests. The first request is in verses 15-19, and the second request is in verses 20-23. Verse 15 reads,

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. Daniel 9:15 (NASB)

Notice again that Daniel talked about the fact that they had sinned and had been wicked. He used two different words with different connotations of the seriousness of their sin. The first part of this verse is really interesting because Daniel reminded God of what the people of Israel had done when they were in the land of Egypt. He said, "God, do you remember, you brought your people up out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand." Do you know what he is doing? He is praising God once again. Daniel reminded God about the ten plagues. Moses came before Pharaoh and demanded that Pharaoh let the Israelites go. Pharaoh did not let Israel go. So the Egyptians suffered with the ten plagues: the plague of

blood, the plague of frogs, a plague of gnats, the plague of flies, the plague of dead cattle, the plague of boils, the plague of hail, the plague of locusts, the plague of darkness, the plague of the deaths of all the Egyptian firstborn. The last one was the one that finally motivated Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. The plagues were a contest between the true God and the false gods of Egypt that were actually demons.

Exodus 7:1-5 says,

Then the LORD said to Moses, "See, I make you as God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall speak to Pharaoh that he let the sons of Israel go out of his land. But I will harden Pharaoh's heart that I may multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. When Pharaoh does not listen to you, then I will lay My hand on Egypt and bring out My hosts, My people the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt by great judgments . . .

Plagues!

... The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst." Exodus 7:1-5 (NASB)

What was the purpose of the plagues? That the Egyptians and the Israelites might know that Yahweh is the true God. That was the reason for the plagues — that the Egyptians might know that God is the true God. God did it with a mighty hand.

Look at Exodus 8:1. This is an example. It is the plague of frogs. In verse 1 we read,

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. Exodus 8:1 (NASB)

We are all familiar with the phrase, "Let my people go." We get excited about that phrase. Verse 2 adds,

But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite your whole

territory with frogs. Exodus 8:2 (NASB)

True to his character, Pharaoh did not let them go. So what did God do? Look at verse 6.

So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. The magicians did the same with their secret arts, making frogs come up on the land of Egypt. Exodus 8:6-7 (NASB)

Now watch what happened.

Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, "Entreat the LORD that He remove the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to the LORD." Moses said to Pharaoh, "The honor is yours to tell me: when shall I entreat for you and your servants and your people, that the frogs be destroyed from you and your houses, that they may be left only in the Nile?"

Then he said, "Tomorrow." So he said, "May it be according to your word, that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God. Exodus 8:8-10 (NASB)

What was the purpose of the plagues? That they would know that Yahweh was the true God. That was the entire purpose. So God did it with a mighty hand. He brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt. Therefore, Daniel reminded God, "You did this. You brought the Israelites out, and You did it with a mighty hand." Then Daniel made this comment at the end of Daniel 9:15, "We have sinned, we have been wicked." In other words, he drew this contrast: "God is great, but we are not."

PLEA TO RESTORE JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE.
Verse 16 reads,

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. Daniel 9:16 (NASB)

Once again Daniel honored God. Did you notice Daniel said that God had acted righteously? God had just sent the Israelites into captivity to Babylon to suffer. What was Daniel's response? He said, "God, you have acted righteously. He did not say God had been wicked. Then Daniel asked, "God, please remove your anger from the city of Jerusalem and your holy mountain." Then he made this comment again about their sin: "Because of our sins and iniquities." He keeps bringing up the issue of sin, again and again throughout his prayer. He is preoccupied with the sins of the nation and with his own.

Verse 17:

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. Daniel 9:17 (NASB)

Now he mentioned the sanctuary. That is the temple. So in verse 16 he prayed for the city of Jerusalem. In verse 17 he prayed about the temple. He asked God to restore Jerusalem and the temple. But did you catch the little phrase "let Your face shine on your desolate sanctuary, let Your face shine"? Have you ever wondered what the phrase "let Your face shine" means? Numbers 6 is a blessing that the priests were to pronounce upon the people. In it the priest prayed that God's face would shine on them. It is an expression asking for God's blessing. So Daniel asked God to bless the sanctuary and to bless the city of Jerusalem.

Verse 18 states:

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. Daniel 9:18 (NASB)

This time he did not mention sin, but he implied that they were not worthy enough to ask for anything. He said, "but on account of Your great compassion."

So what did he do? He appealed to another characteristic

of God. I want you to notice something really important in this whole prayer. He keeps appealing to God's character. He keeps appealing to the fact that God is powerful. He is almighty. He appealed to the fact that He is righteous. He appealed to the fact that God is compassionate. He has appealed to the fact that God is great. God is awesome. God's character keeps being mentioned again and again. Daniel keeps honoring and praising God throughout the passage. At the same time he keeps demeaning himself. It is an incredible contrast between God and His people, and between God and Daniel. God is glorious, magnificent and holy. Daniel's people are sinful and unrighteous. He appealed for God to restore the city of Jerusalem and the temple.

Verse 19 states,

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. Daniel 9:19 (NASB)

In verse 19 it seems that Daniel was almost coming unglued. He seems to be very emotional. Notice what he said. He said, "O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay." Then he said, "Your people are called by Your name." Have you ever been that way when you were praying to God? You were praying to God, and you become very emotional. You were begging, and pleading with God. That was Daniel. I have been there; I have done that. I have prayed for some people, and became emotional. I just start begging God that He would act a certain way, that He would do something, that He would answer my request. That is what Daniel was doing. Daniel was begging. He said, "Lord, hear, forgive, listen, take action." Then he told Yahweh why, "For your city, and for your people, and for your name, for your own glory." Remember he just finished telling God, reminding God, that He had a great name because of what He had done for the Israelites. He had taken them out of the land of Egypt. Daniel was making the point that, "Your city is desolate, your temple is desolate."

Imagine living in the time of Daniel and believing that your nation was great because they had a great God. Then if your city was destroyed, what would that say about your God?

Your God was not very good, not very powerful and the gods of other nations were more powerful than the God of your nation and of your people. Daniel was saying, "Yahweh, you had a great name once, but now look at your city. Look at your temple. Take action for the sake of your name. That is what he was really doing. He said, "For your name, Lord. Come on, take action! Show compassion! Restore the city. Restore the temple!" He was begging God to restore.

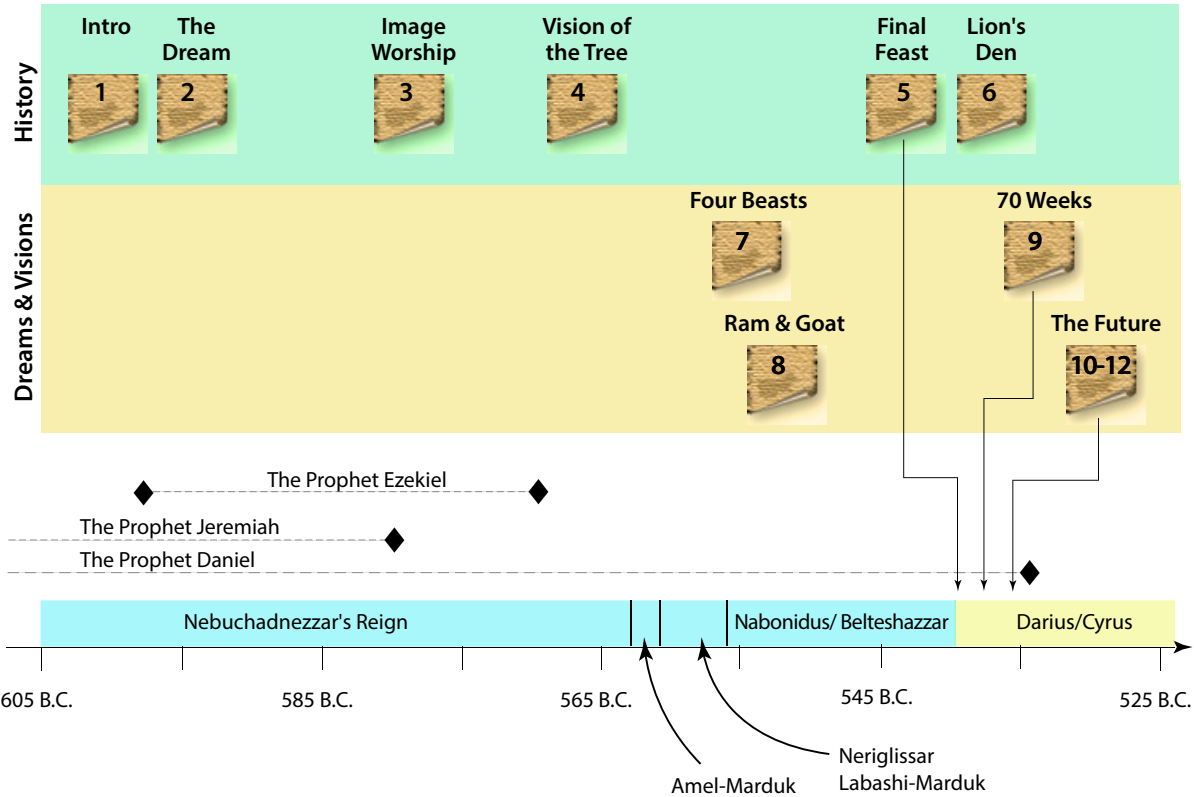
TWO BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES. This prayer reveals two very important biblical principles. One of them is that Daniel did not complain about God or criticize God in his prayer. Have you ever been tempted to criticize God when you were in a difficult situation? Have you ever been suffering, really down, and really discouraged? Your life seemed to be coming apart. Consequently, were you upset with God? What is interesting about this prayer is that Daniel never complained about God. Instead, he honored God. That is an important principle for us.

I can remember on one occasion when I was very discouraged. I just wanted to say, "God, you are not helping me! What is wrong with you?!" But I bit my tongue. I did not do that. Daniel praised and honored God. He humbled himself through his entire prayer. An important biblical principle here is that we must never complain about our Creator in our prayer. God is perfect in all that He does!

The second biblical principle is that Daniel prayed according to God's will. Did you notice he asked for something that had already been promised? Do you remember in the first part of our previous study that Daniel discovered the Israelites were going to return to the land of Israel, to the city of Jerusalem after seventy years of captivity? Daniel discovered that Jeremiah had predicted that they would return after seventy years. So now Daniel praying that they would return! Why is Daniel praying that the city would be restored and the temple rebuilt? Because God had already said that it is going to happen. Is it not interesting that he is praying that God would do something that had already been predicted through the prophet Jeremiah? Daniel had read and studied Scripture and now prayed according to God's will that had been predicted by the prophet Jeremiah. He prayed for God's will to be done.

Have you ever prayed that Jesus would come quickly— the

Outline of Daniel



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second coming of Christ? May I ask you an important question? Has that been promised? Yes, it has been promised! And have we been encouraged in Scripture to pray for Jesus to return? Yes! That is what Daniel did. Daniel read that they were going to return to Jerusalem, and now Daniel was praying, “O Lord, please let us go back and rebuild your city and your temple.” Is that not interesting?

Do you remember in the Lord’s Prayer, He said that we are to pray that the Father’s will is done here on earth as it is in heaven. Why are we supposed to pray that way? The Father’s will is the Father’s will. It is going to happen because He is sovereign and all-powerful, He can do whatever He wants to do. So why do we need to pray that way? There is an important principle for us to remember. When we know God’s will, we are to pray that it will happen. Just because He has promised that something will occur does not mean you should not pray

about it.

May I ask another question? How about praying for God to meet our daily needs? That is part of the Lord’s Prayer, yet later on in the chapter He promised to meet our daily needs. He talks about how God cares for the lilies of the field. Jesus made the point that God knows what the Gentiles need. God is going to be taking care of you too. So why should you be praying about your daily needs? Why should you pray if it has already been promised? The principle is that He has asked us to pray consistent with His revealed will.

Now in verses 20-21, Daniel’s prayer was interrupted. We are told,

Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my

God, while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. Daniel 9:20-21 (NASB)

There are three things I want you to see here. First of all, we are told that this is the man Gabriel. Gabriel is an angel. Remember in Hebrews 13:2 that it tells us that some of us have entertained angels unaware? I believe that on at least one occasion my wife and I have had an encounter with an angel who appeared as a man. That is exactly what Daniel said. This angel Gabriel looked like a man. No wings! His appearance was no different than that of a man. When Daniel said, “the visions previously,” it means “at the beginning.” It could either be that he is referring to Daniel 7:16 or to Daniel 8:16. We are not sure which one.

The next point I want you to notice is that Daniel said, Gabriel “came to me in my extreme weariness.” When it says extreme weariness, some of your Bibles might actually say “swift flight.” The idea is that the angel flew fast. Okay? But the Hebrew text is actually not clear. Good scholars on both sides struggle with how to interpret the Hebrew words. But “swift flight” is probably the best interpretation. That is, Gabriel came quickly. You will soon discover why in verse 23.

The last thing I want you to notice is that it says the “evening sacrifice.” When is that? It was about three to four pm or late in the afternoon. If we combine that with the first part of verse 23, “at the beginning of your supplication,” it reveals that when Daniel began his prayer, this angel was sent to him. Now his prayer gets interrupted when Gabriel shows up.

SIGNS OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN. Verse 22 says,

He gave me instruction and talked with me and said, “O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding. Daniel 9:22 (NASB)

So that tells us Daniel’s prayer deals with or was about the seventy weeks. Verse 23 adds,

At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed;

so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision. Daniel 9:23 (NASB)

Did you catch the little phrase the angel said? “For you are highly esteemed.” Do you want your prayer answered? Daniel was highly esteemed. Do you know what the phrase “highly esteemed” means? The Hebrew actually also means “treasure” or “precious.” Note the last word in Daniel 11:38. There the same Hebrew word is translated as “treasure.” Do you understand Daniel’s position with God? Daniel was precious to God. Daniel was a treasure to God. You might ask, “Why?” Ezekiel 14:20 says,

Even though Noah, Daniel and Job were in its midst, as I live,” declares the Lord GOD, “they could not deliver either their son or their daughter. They would deliver only themselves by their righteousness.” Ezekiel 14:20 (NASB)

We are told that Daniel was a righteous man. That is why he was a precious man.

Turn now to James 5:16. It adds,

Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man accomplishes ...

How much? ... a little bit? No! It says,

... can accomplish much. James 5:16 (NASB)

Daniel was a righteous man and his prayer is an example of an effective prayer. He kept talking about sin. He hammered the issue verse after verse. This righteous man was emotional and he was persistent. But not demanding! He was humble and energized. The Greek word for “effective” in James 5:16 actually has the idea of energy. So, how did God respond?

1 John 3:22 says,

And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. 1 John 3:22 (NASB)

What is described here? A righteous man! A righteous man asks according to God's will and receives whatever he or she asks because it is according to God's will. Daniel was a righteous man. He kept the commandments and did what was pleasing before God. That is why he was a treasure. Do you see the connection? He was pleasing to God. He was a treasure. He was precious. That is why God responded.

We tend to think that we can live our life the way we want and go to God in prayer at the moment of crisis and always receive help. We never stop to realize that God may not view us as being precious. We forget Mark 11:25 which provides a condition for answered prayer. It says,

Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions. Mark 11:25 (NASB)

So, if we do not forgive others are we a righteous person? A righteous man forgives and forgets.

Daniel was an example of somebody who was not false (Daniel 6). He was a humble man (Daniel 2, Daniel 4). Do you remember when King Nebuchadnezzar wanted an interpretation of a dream, what Daniel did? Daniel admitted that the interpretation came from God. In chapter 1, Daniel did not want to eat forbidden food. He was obedient. He was humble. In Daniel 2 and 4 we are told that Daniel prayed after being told he could not pray. He did not hide his faith. Now here in Daniel 9, he confessed his own sins along with the sins of his own people. He was a precious man.

We also learned some valuable principles about answered prayer. The first principle was that Daniel praised God and did not complain about Him. The second principle is that Daniel prayed according to God's will. The third principle was that Daniel was a righteous man.

Let us pray.