

Daniel's Prayer – 9:1-22

Daniel 9:1-22 – a Leader's Prayer Example for Intercession:

- This book written by the Prophet Daniel** between 539 and 530 BC is a combination of Prophetic and Apocalyptic writing. Prophecy speaks into the life of God's people showing the way they should live and act before God as His ambassadors in the world. Apocalyptic writings speak to the larger spiritual reality in which we live and points God's people to their place in eternity. While many books contain both prophetic and apocalyptic elements, Daniel is the Old Testament's most significant apocalyptic work. Prophetic works and apocalyptic works speak into the Spiritual reality that supports and confronts the material reality in which we exist. Along with the Apostle John's Revelation, these are the Bible's 2 major end-times writings.
- Textual background:**

^{Da 9:1} In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom—
^{Da 9:2} in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years.
^{Da 9:3} So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.
- Daniel's prayer:**

^{Da 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,
^{Da 9:5} we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws.
^{Da 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.
^{Da 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.
^{Da 9:8} O LORD, we and our kings, our princes and our fathers are covered with shame because we have sinned against you.
^{Da 9:9} The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him;
^{Da 9:10} we have not obeyed the LORD our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets.
^{Da 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.
^{Da 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.
^{Da 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.
^{Da 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.
^{Da 9:15} "Now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of Egypt with a mighty hand and who made for yourself a name that endures to this day, we have sinned, we have done wrong.
^{Da 9:16} O Lord, in keeping with all your righteous acts, turn away your anger and your wrath from Jerusalem, your city, your holy hill. Our sins and the iniquities of our fathers have made Jerusalem and your people an object of scorn to all those around us.
^{Da 9:17} "Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, O Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary.
^{Da 9:18} Give ear, O God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy.
^{Da 9:19} O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name."
- God's Response to Daniel's prayer:**

^{Da 9:20} While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the LORD my God for his holy hill—

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Da 9:21 while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice.

Da 9:22 He instructed me and said to me, "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding.

5. **PRIMARY OBSERVATION:** THIS PASSAGE IS A demonstration on how to pray as an intercessory for others as a spiritual leader.
 - a. Daniel prays before God as a representative for his people, much as Moses had prayer for Israel during their 40 year pilgrimage when God was prepared to destroy the people.
 - b. Notice the 1st person pronoun use of 'I', 'we/us' and 'all' in the text – the author makes pains to identify himself personally with the problem.

6. **IMPLICATIONS:**
 - a. "I observed the number of years revealed to Jeremiah..." 9:2
 - i. Daniel was studying the writings of the Prophet Jeremiah, when he saw the time for the exile to end. Intercessors need to be grounded and rely upon the Word of God.
 - ii. For effective intercessory I must identify completely with those for whom God has charged me to pray for. Daniel was obviously an exceptional person and he easily could have taken a more 'high and mighty' position, instead he clearly understood that we are all fallen & broken people. Not unlike the Apostle Paul identifying himself as the least of the apostles and a sinner when interceding for others.
 - b. The result of Daniel's observation was to give attention to God... to seek Him in prayer – with supplications, fasting, and humility [sackcloth & ashes]. 9:3
 - i. The ultimate goal is to keep focused on God... upon His purpose & His glory.
 - ii. Standing in the gap requires a sober appraisal of God's Greatness, and the magnitude of our human sin and frailty.
 - c. In prayer, Daniel identified personally with God's people who had sinned and failed [9:5] and who had ignored God's warnings through His prophet's preaching [9:6].
 - i. Daniel agreed that God's judgment resulting in the exile of God's people was the rightful result of their unrighteousness [9:7-12].
 - ii. The key here is for intercessors to recognize the situation and what God is doing in the present, then to deliberately align yourself with His perspective and His priorities.
 - iii. The key is to seek God's goal in ministry and calling... not merely doing stuff in His name.
 - d. God's calamity upon Israel was initiated and continued as a result of Israel's lack of repentance and their failure to return to the truth [9:13-14].
 - i. The key here for leaders is to pray into the circumstances from the perspective of God's heart.
 - ii. Intercessory is about being God's ambassador as His representative to His people and for the circumstances in which we live.
 - iii. This can only happen when we commit to identifying completely with Him, to the people He has sent us into.

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- e. Intercession – as people are rightly judged [9:15-16], and with a servant-leader purposefully engaged [9:17], prayer is not for temporary relief but for God's glory [9:18-19].
 - i. 'What' is "God's Glory"? Perhaps it is better to ask 'who' is God's Glory – for it is His people worshiping God in Spirit and Truth that Glorify God. It is His children doing His work.
 - ii. The proper result of identifying with God and His people is to confess the sins of others as one who is also guilty in complete dependence on God's Grace and love.
 - iii. Intercessory is much like the men who lowered the paraplegic through the roof of a home so that Jesus could heal him. Intercessors do what the person or people cannot do for themselves.
- f. God's response – Daniel placed himself in a spiritually dependent state in prayer before God... and God supernaturally answered [9:20-22].
 - i. Daniel deliberately placed himself in a situation and meditative state conducive to hearing God's response... like hitchhiking for the Spirit on the Supernatural highway.
 - ii. In the succeeding portion of the text we are given God's response to Daniel's intercession – 9:23-27 Daniel writes of God's specific response to him and to what Daniel can expect to pass along to God's people.
- 7. **APPLICATIONS:** Here is a great Biblical leader at the point of crisis... knowing what went wrong and where God is going, he sees the justice of God vindicated in His actions and then deliberately places himself in God's story. This is not a public prayer – this is a personal and private prayer. This is how you pray for redemption for those who should know better but are lost.
 - a. Realize your own failings and address your own failures first.
 - i. This needs to be done often... always begin by looking at yourself.
 - ii. Examine your thoughts and motives in light of God's Word... look for revelation [insight] and illumination [application] from the Spirit as Daniel did.
 - b. View others from beyond the surface... we all have junk in our life, there is no one who doesn't have a bunch of problems.
 - i. Leaders need to be seen as real people struggling along with everyone else in a fallen world and dealing with the sin that is common to all humanity.
 - ii. Be wary of leaders who preach from an attitude of Spiritual Superiority, rather than speaking and preaching from their own human weakness and desperate need of Grace.
 - iii. We need to be vulnerable enough to be real, but not so real that we place an unnecessary emphasis on sin... the emphasis needs to be God's Grace and love.
 - c. Avoid the self-serving prayers of the Pharisees – "thank you that I'm not like them..." [Luke 18:11] this is missing the mark... big time!
 - i. Too much ministry tends to place the leader on the pedestal rather than God.
 - ii. Check your motives and listen to your words – just because you say the right things doesn't mean you are truly honoring God in Spiritual dependence.
 - d. Daniel heard from God in a Supernatural fashion by doing the things necessary to remain receptive to God.

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- i. God doesn't always respond in such a wonderful manner, but unless we are in the proper state of receptivity and are open to God's Spirit connecting with us, we will likely never hear Him.
- ii. In our class sessions, we discussed what we should expect in terms of hearing from God.
 - 1. We concluded that it is questionable to expect to hear clearly from God **all** the time... and that God doesn't always show up in a spectacular manner. While we can expect God to show up in our lives every day, and if we remain spiritual sensitive to God we can also expect Him to guide us in decision making and in generally blessing us.
 - 2. God is so patient and gracious with us that He doesn't usually step into our life and force us to do something. For the most part, we estimated that God would change the trajectory of our life infrequently... perhaps this may happen 1-2% of the decisions we make in our walk with God. These would be significant decisions affecting life change like quitting work and entering seminary, or moving to a new ministry location, etc.
 - 3. The Indwelling Spirit is clearly always speaking to us and making intercession for us, and ready when we are open to lead and guide us on a more regular basis – this may happen say 20-25% of the time in the decisions we make.
 - 4. The balance of our choices are generally left for us to decide upon based on the transformation God has already worked in us through our mind and heart, our determination to follow Him, and the prodding of the Spirit.
 - 5. Instead of God always telling us what to do, He transforms our heart and mind so we do by nature what pleases Him. This is voluntary submission in partnership with the indwelling Spirit – this is what being a living sacrifice is all about.
- e. God doesn't answer prayer or bring blessing as a reward of our faith – rather it comes as the result of our heart and mind being aligned and conformed to His... it is where relational intimacy and personal transformation flourishes.
- f. It is not the amount of time spent in prayer that God is impressed with, but the love and faith we express in prayerful surrender to God.
- g. When you pray – pray until you have peace about the matter... the peace we feel is evidence that our heart/mind has been realigned to God's. Realize that the Spirit is already making supplication for you – agree with the Spirit within.
- h. Whenever you do not have peace ask God what He wants to reveal in us or what He wants us to pray about. Too often we miss opportunities to pray as God would have us.
- i. Prayer liberates the Spirit within me and energizes the Angelic beings that serve God's purposes. When we pray into something, or against something, or for something – this is part of the nature of Spiritual warfare where we align ourselves intentionally with God's purpose. God promises He will act – in His time and in His way, though not necessarily as we would expect or want, and often in ways we aren't even aware of. The more pressed into God we are Spiritually, the more we sense His will and action.