

DANIEL'S POWERFUL PRAYER

Daniel 9:1-23

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

When this chapter begins, the Babylonian Kingdom has just ended and Daniel has begun to live under the new rule of the Medo-Persians. Cyrus appointed Darius to rule over Babylon and the events of chapter nine occur during Darius' first year as king (538 BC). It appears that Darius had already chosen Daniel to be one of three presidents to assist him in ruling over 120 princes, but he had not yet been cast into the lions' den (Dan 6). Darius was impressed with Daniel's trustworthy and excellent spirit so he determined to place him over all the other officials. This is what caused the other two presidents and the princes to be jealous of Daniel so that they devised a scheme to get rid of Daniel by having him cast into the lions' den.

About thirteen years had elapsed since Daniel received the vision about the ram and male goat (Dan 8). God provided Daniel opportunities to serve in kings' courts and gave him several visions because he had an excellent spirit. The essential qualities of Daniel's life, which produced in him such a godly testimony, are brought to light in this chapter. Through the prayer of Daniel in this chapter three aspects of his godly character are seen, which are the basis for the godly life of any believer.

The chapter begins with his examination of the Word of God as it applies to the end of Israel's captivity in Babylon (9:1, 2). Then he expresses himself in prayer to God with deep contrition for his sin and the sin of Israel that caused Him to put them into captivity (9:3-19). Finally, Daniel experiences new information in the plan of God for his people when he is given Gabriel's message (9:20-27). These three insights into Daniel's life are helpful in comprehending the basis for his godly life, which can be the basis of a godly life for any believer.

Aim of the Lesson

Provide the foundation truths for a believer's godly life.

"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col 1:9, 10).

Outline of the Lesson (Use the Study Notes to add to this lesson plan as the Spirit leads you.)

I. Examining the Word of God (9:1, 2)

Daniel was a student of the Word of God. This was evident from his conduct in the previous chapters, but this chapter begins with a clear example of his knowledge of the Bible. Daniel had been studying the Word of the Lord that had been given to Jeremiah and through his study and meditation of God's Word, he had come to "understand" the significance of its message. He read in Jeremiah 25:11, 12 and in 29:10-14 that Israel's captivity in Babylon would continue for 70 years and then they would be able to return to their land. He read that he should call on the Lord, seek Him with all his heart and he would find the Lord. Then the Lord would bring His people back to their land. Daniel took these words in their literal sense and began to seek the Lord in prayer/ The Lord honored his faith as it is shown at the conclusion of this chapter. His knowledge of God's Word is also evident in his prayer of confession, which is the next part of this lesson.

We must build a godly life on the solid foundation of God's Word. We need to have a daily time to examine the Word of God, to meditate on it and apply it to our lives. Do you spend time each day in the Word of God? If not, you cannot hope to live a godly life. Our "output" of godliness is directly related to our "input" of God's Word. Have a plan to read through the entire Bible every year.

II. Expressing Himself the Worship of God (9:3-19)

Daniel expressed himself in prayer three times a day in his worship of God (Dan 6:10). This prayer is proof that Daniel was accustomed to meeting with God; he was a great man of prayer and had power with God. This was first seen when he was a young man being trained in Nebuchadnezzar's court to be a wise man. When Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that troubled him, he demanded that his wise men tell him what he had dreamed before they could tell what it meant. No one could do it except Daniel. Why? He went to God in prayer with his three friends and God gave Daniel the king's dream and its interpretation (Dan 2:17-19). Daniel knew how to pray effectively when he was a young man around 17 and he still knew how to pray when he was an old man around 82. He later prayed openly as he always did when he knew he would be cast into the lion's den for doing so (Dan 6:10). He did not pray a mere

repetition, but rather he prayed a sincere petition. His prayers were not empty words from his mouth, but earnest words from his heart. His prayers reached heaven and God sent His answers back to him. In this case God sent Gabriel to him with an astounding answer to his prayer.

It is fitting, therefore, to examine the prayer of Daniel in this chapter. First, it is important to notice that Daniel humbled himself before God with fasting, sackcloth and ashes (9:3). This approach to God shows the sincerity of Daniel in his worship of God. He had nothing to offer to God to receive an answer from Him. He simply came to God as he read in Jeremiah 29:12-13: "Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find *me*, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." If believers humble themselves before God, He will lift them up, exalt them and hear their prayers (Jam 4:10; 1 Pet 5:6, 7).

Second, he continued in earnest prayer for three full weeks (9:2). He did not stop praying after one day or two days. He did not stop praying after one week or two weeks. He prayed for three full weeks before God sent Gabriel with His answer. Jesus encouraged believers to continue in earnest prayer until God answers them (Mt 7:7-8; Lk 18:1-8). God may wait with His answers to test our sincere desire for Him to grant our requests.

Third, he addressed God by three important names in his prayer. He called Him LORD (*Yahweh* or *Jehovah*), which specifically referred to the covenant name of God. Israel was to depend on the LORD for all of her blessings. Now Daniel depended on the LORD to redeem Israel from captivity. Daniel used this name seven times in this chapter. Daniel also called Him God (*Elohim*), which name emphasized His power and sovereignty. Daniel desired the power of God to deliver Israel from her captivity. Notice also that Daniel referred to Him as "my God." He had a personal relationship with God. Finally, Daniel called him Lord (only the first letter is capitalized to indicate it is *Adonai* in the Hebrew). When Daniel addressed Him as "Lord," he was thinking of His authority as the Master of His people. Daniel did not command God to answer his prayer. He simply claimed His promise. The Lord had the authority to make a promise that Israel would be in captivity for 70 years and Daniel was claiming that promise. Daniel's use of the different names of God in his prayer shows the maturity of his prayer life. We should learn to use the names of God appropriately in our prayers.

Fourth, Daniel magnified God for His faithfulness in keeping His covenant and showing mercy to them (9:4), in His righteousness to them (9:7) and in His mercies and forgiveness (9:9). It is wise to praise God for His grace to us. We must not limit our prayers to the requests we make of Him.

Fifth, he confessed his sins and the sins of his people, naming five different kinds (9:5): (1) **sin** – to fall short or miss the target; (2) **iniquity** – being crooked; (3) **wicked** – causing confusion and being restless; (4) **rebel** – defying God's authority; (5) **depart** – falling away from God. He continues to admit his shame against God's goodness (9:6-10). We need to be specific in naming our sins when we confess them to God.

Sixth, he justifies God in judging the sins of Israel's past (9:11-14). It is not right to blame God for the troubles that we suffer as a result of our sins. He has every right to judge us. We have offended His holiness.

Seventh, he entreats God according to His righteousness and great mercies to turn away His anger from the city of Jerusalem and to shine upon His sanctuary for His sake (9:15-18). We do not want His justice; we want His mercy and His gift of righteousness so we can escape His justice.

Eighth, he makes a final earnest plea for God to hear, forgive, do and not to postpone his request. He is urgent in his request for God's sake, because the city of Jerusalem and the people are called by His name (9:19). Our prayer requests should be for the glory of God more than for the comfort and blessings of man.

We can use this prayer as a model for our worship of God. We need to pour out our soul in confession to God and give evidence of true repentance of our sinfulness. We need to extol the holiness and justice of God and plead for His mercy, grace and forgiveness.

III. Experiencing the Will of God (9:20-27)

Daniel learned more of God's will for his people as a result of his earnest prayer. While he was praying, God sent Gabriel to reveal to him one of the most amazing prophecies in the Bible. Daniel was greatly loved of the Lord and as a result he received precious truth from the Lord. We will study this prophecy in the next lesson.

We need to seek God and be close to Him. Then He will draw close to us and reveal His will for our lives.

DRAW CLOSE TO GOD AND HE WILL DRAW CLOSE TO YOU