

Praying for a Nation

Daniel 9:1-19

Daniel was a man that could have been disillusioned and bitter. As a teenager, he saw his homeland destroyed; his people displaced. His own body was altered so that he could never have a family. The rest of his life would be spent in a pagan nation that seemed to be systematically reprogramming the Jewish people, so that they would forget their heritage and be absorbed into paganism. Instead, we see a man who is absorbed in the Scriptures, looking for explanations and promises that will guide his life and make him useful for God's purposes. He prays for Israel, loves his enemies and humbly serves during several political regimes without ever compromising his loyalty to God.

As this chapter opens (vs. 1-3), we see Daniel studying the prophet Jeremiah and pondering God's promises, faithfully seeking God for more understanding. The prophetic Word should move us to prayer and faithful living. Unfortunately, we see some folks read the prophetic Word and attempt to become prophets, exciting people as they set dates and make grand claims of the future

Here is an opportunity to sample Daniel's prayer life. This is the longest prayer in the Old Testament. For all of the earthly pressures we see Daniel enduring, it is the Scriptures that most motivate him to pray. Prayer is a way to release negative burdens that trouble our souls. Prayer helps us to have godly and productive attitudes towards the challenges and responsibilities of life. Prayer, motivated by Scripture, brings us to be burdened with things that are most important to God (transcending our own personal burdens). Before we consider Daniel's prayer, notice some things that Daniel does not pray. He does not complain about the Babylonian Empire, nor the Medes and Persians. His issues focus on God and the responsibilities of God's people. Now let's examine the prayer of Daniel and make it a model for us to follow.

Worship in Prayer – Daniel 9:1-4

To whom are we talking? (Matthew 6:9; Psalm 8:1-4; 46; 139; Isaiah 6:1-5)

We want Him to listen to us. Have we first listened to Him?

(Psalm 27:8; 119:1-8; Habakkuk 2:1; 3:2)

Confession in Prayer – Daniel 9:4-15

Do we agree with God? (Amos 3:3 - prayer is like walking with God)

- Agree with God's authority – Vs. 4
- Agree with God about sin – vs 5 (Note vs. 5-18, "we"/ "us"/ "our" cp. vs.20)
Our disobedience to Scripture – vs. 5

Our disregard for His messengers – vs. 6
Justify God for His actions – vs. 7-15

Further reading: II Chronicles 7:13-14; Psalm 38:18; 51; 130; Lamentations
3:22-41; Isaiah 64:6-8; 66:1-2; Matthew 23:29-39; James 4:1-12; I John 1:8-
10.

Purpose in Prayer – Daniel 9:16-19

It is wonderful that we can talk any time to the Lord. We can be spontaneous and candid with Him (Psalm 62:8; Romans 8:15; Hebrews 4:16). It is also important to ponder the mind and heart of God, so that we can speak to Him according to His will (Psalm 5:1-3; Hosea 14:2; Habakkuk 2:1; Ephesians 6:19; I John 5:14 cp. Matthew 6:10; 26:36-39).

- Seek God's Mercy
“...According to all your righteousness...Not...for our righteousness...” (vs. 16, 18)
“...For your great mercies.” (Vs. 18) – We don't deserve it!
“...For your own (name's) sake...” (vs 19) – Not ours!
See Psalm 103:8-14; 119:124; Habakkuk 3:2
- Desire God's Glory
“...For the Lord's sake.” (vs. 17)
“...For your own sake...your city and your people are called by your name.” (vs. 19)
See Psalm 79:9; 57:5; Matthew 6:13 cp. I Chronicles 29:10-13; I Corinthians 10:31; Ephesians 3:21; Colossians 3:12-17; I Timothy 1:17; Revelation 4:11.
See also Psalm 27:4; 29:1-2; 63:1-2; 90:16-17; 145.

Note: How do I pray for others? How do I pray within God's will?

We cannot suggest to God what He should do. However, we can pray according to the revealed will of God for man (i.e. the Scriptures – Deuteronomy 29:29).

Always pray for people's faith, character, attitude, and affections. Here are some great guidelines to use when praying for others (and yourself): Matthew 5:3-16; Galatians 5:22-23; II Peter 1:5-8.