

Daniel 9 John Karmelich

There are 2 lessons for Daniel Chapter 9. This is lesson **1**.

1. A few days after “9-11”, of 2001, President Bush called for prayer and fasting for our nation.
 - a) For me personally, on that day, there was no other place to turn except Daniel 9.
 - b) There are several places in the Bible where one can find prayers for a nation.
 - i) Daniel Chapter 9 is one of those places.
 - ii) I consider this chapter the best of those prayers, mainly because it is the only one I know where God *interrupts* the prayer to answer it!
 - iii) To me you can’t find a better model for prayer for a nation than Daniel 9.
2. One of Billy Graham’s most famous quotes is, “If God doesn’t judge the United States of America, then God owes Sodom and Gomorrah an apology”.
 - a) The follow up question is why doesn’t God judge the United States?
 - i) Certainly, we are no more or less wicked than other places of the world.
 - b) The Bible is very clear on the fact that God will judge *nations* as well as individuals.
 - i) Jesus said, “All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate them as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.”
 - a) (Matthew 25:32, NIV)
 - ii) In the Old Testament Book of Zechariah, (Zech. 14:19) there is a strange prophecy that states that during the millennium, any nation that does not send a representative to Israel to celebrate the feast of tabernacles will be judged.
 - iii) The point is that God *does* judge us corporately, as well as individually.
 - c) I want to share with you a famous quote about the United States: “I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her commodious harbors and her ample rivers - and it was not there... in her fertile fields and boundless forests and it was not there... in her rich mines and her vast world commerce - and it was not there... in her democratic Congress and her matchless Constitution - and it was not there. Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because she is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, she will cease to be great.”
 - i) “Democracy in America” by Alexis de Tocqueville, written approx. 1830.
 - d) God has not judged America yet because America is still a “beacon of light” to the rest of the world. America has been spared God’s judgment because we continue to stand up for God and his righteousness even when other countries around us will not. We continue to go to church every Sunday. We finance missionaries around the world. As long as America continues to be a witness to the world for Jesus, America will be spared God’s judgment.
3. Gee John, this is all well and good, but what does it have to do with Daniel 9?
 - a) Just about everything. The majority of Chapter 9 is a prayer.
 - b) It is a prayer of repentance.
 - c) It is a prayer declaring that Daniel himself is a sinner before God as well as his nation.
 - d) I, as a Christian, am in right standing before God. This is only because I believe Jesus paid the price for all my sins, past, present and future.
 - i) I have no right to stand before God before any good deed that I do.
 - ii) Today, we’re going to see that same attitude in Daniel.

- iii) Given that fact, God expects us, as Christians, to be obedient to what God calls us to do in his Word.
 - a) God expects us to study that book and emulate it in our lifestyle.
 - b) The expression “you are what you eat” is true. So is the fact that you become what you emulate. That is why we pray to God and study his Word. We become what we worship.
 - e) Daniel life, particularly, the first six chapters, are models of how Daniel “stood up” for God. They are examples of how Daniel is a witness to the world. You can’t find any fault in any of Daniel’s actions anywhere in this book.
 - i) Yet, in this chapter, Daniel calls *himself* a sinner, as well as his fellow Israelites.
 - ii) Verse 20 says Daniel was: “confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel”
 - iii) In Chapter 9 God *answers* Daniel’s prayer. God calls Daniel “most beloved”.
 - a) To find out why Daniel is beloved, study again Chapters 1-6.
 - b) Daniel was willing to be a public witness for God, no matter what the cost to his life.
 - c) Among the rewards given to Daniel for his obedience was that God gave him the privilege of understanding the future. God gave Daniel visions using word-pictures relevant to the future of Israel.
- 4. In preparation for these studies, I listen and read lots of sermons and commentaries on Daniel.
 - a) Many of them focus heavily on the last 4 verses.
 - i) This is understandable, as those 4 verses are complex and difficult to explain.
 - ii) This is why I’m dedicating the *next* lesson just to those four verses.
 - iii) Prior to those 4 verses, are 23 other verses. That’s the issue for today.
 - b) I am amazed how many sermons glance over the 1st 23 verses and get to the final four.
 - i) It is as if they say, “Daniel prayed this prayer, and here’s the good stuff”.
 - ii) Don’t get me wrong. The last 4 verses are important.
 - iii) My point is to see this chapter in *perspective*. To break down Chapter 9:
 - a) Three (3) verses are an introduction:
 - b) Sixteen (16) verses are a prayer of repentance.
 - c) Four (4) verses are God responding to the prayer:
 - d) Four (4) verses are God giving an end-time revelation to Daniel.
 - e) Therefore, of the chapter, the vast majority is given over to this prayer.
 - f) If you measure the importance of the Bible based on how many verses are given on a certain topic, than we need to spend *more* time discussing the prayer itself than we do the prophecy given *after the prayer*.
- 5. For the remainder of this lesson I’m going to break down this prayer verse by verse.
 - a) The only problem with that method is that you can miss the big-picture.
 - b) Sometimes my commentaries are like analyzing every little brush stroke of a painting and not admire the painting as whole.
 - c) I would like to encourage you before you start to read the 19 verses as a whole before you read this commentary. From verses 3 through 19 is Daniel’s prayer.
 - i) What I want you notice is Daniel’s “momentum”. You can sense even-in-the English translation that Daniel is on a roll. The more he prays, the more he “gets into it”. It is as if the Holy Spirit is inspiring Daniel as he goes along, and the prayer gets better and better.
 - ii) Also notice that the prayer gets interrupted. Other than Daniel, I can’t think of any prayer in the Bible where a prayer itself is *interrupted* for an answer!
 - iii) Personally, I want God to answer all my prayers. I believe He does. The problem is that the answer is often “no” or “not yet”.

- iv) Yet here is a prayer that is so inspirational, God won't even let Daniel *finish* the prayer to give him a response!
 - a) The response is "more than Daniel bargained for".
 - (1) He does get his prayer answered, but the scope of the answer is greater than the request made by Daniel.
 - (2) We'll get to that next week when we discuss the last 4 verses.
- 6. Daniel Chapter 9, Verse 1: In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom—
 - a) Daniel was a very old man at this point. It would to understand Daniel 9 if I gave a quick review of Daniel's life.
 - b) Daniel, as a teenager, was taken away captive from Israel to Babylon.
 - i) He may have never seen his parents again.
 - ii) Several hundred years earlier, the nation of Israel split into two nations, called (among other things) "The Northern Kingdom" and "The Southern Kingdom".
 - a) The Northern Kingdom was destroyed about 100 years earlier.
 - iii) The Babylonians conquered Israel ("the Southern kingdom") in 3 stages.
 - a) First was the initial conquering where the "best and brightest people" where taken away to Babylon, including Daniel himself.
 - (1) Imagine *that* as your childhood memory!
 - b) After some rebellion, there was a second great battle.
 - c) After a 3rd rebellion, King Nebuchadnezzar had "had it" with the Israelites. He utterly destroyed the land, leveled the Temple and deported everyone. Jerusalem was desolate.
 - c) Daniel lived the majority of his life in the City of Babylon, working as head administrator for King Nebuchadnezzar. God raised up Daniel to be the king's right hand man.
 - d) Daniel saw Nebuchadnezzar rise, fall and rise again. He eventually saw him die.
 - e) Next Daniel saw a succession of Babylonian kings, most or all of which were immoral. While Nebuchadnezzar repented and respected the God of Israel, his successors and children ignored those proclamations. Babylon declined morally at this time.
 - f) God told Daniel in a series of visions that the Babylonian kingdom would be conquered by the Medo-Persian Empire.
 - g) Now Daniel lived to see all of this come true. Here he was, alive, in the first year of this Medo-Persian king, ruling over the City of Babylon and its former Empire.
- 7. Verse 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.
 - a) I wondered how did Daniel get a hold of a copy of Jeremiah's scroll anyway?
 - i) I don't think there was a Jewish bookstore in downtown Babylon where Daniel could walk in and pick up a scroll. "Oh yes, we have Jeremiah scrolls. Would you like that in soft leather or hard back?" ☺
 - ii) Remember that Daniel was the #2 guy in Babylon. He had enough influence and power to travel all over the kingdom.
 - iii) Jeremiah probably died several decades ago. "Tradition" says he probably died as a martyr in the Jewish refugee colony at Tahpanhes, Egypt. (Source Expositor's Bible Encyclopedia, Zondervan Publication).
 - iv) Daniel may have visited that colony. He may have met Jeremiah.
 - a) That must have been an interesting meeting!

- b) The next thing to notice is that Daniel calls the Book of Jeremiah “scriptures”.
 - i) These two guys were contemporaries. Who made the decision to make Jeremiah part of Scripture? Was Daniel at the cannon committee meeting? ☺
 - ii) In Jeremiah, Chapter 1, Verse 2, it states “The Word of the Lord came”.
 - a) Jeremiah claimed to be a prophet of God. (Source: Jeremiah 1:2, et.al.)
 - b) Jeremiah predicted that the Southern kingdom of Judah would be taken into captivity by the Babylonians prior to it happening.
 - c) Predicting “out loud” that the Southern Kingdom would go into captivity put Jeremiah in jail and eventually cost him his life.
 - d) The *fact* of that prophecy coming true validated Jeremiah as a prophet.
- c) Back to the verse. Daniel says he was reading Jeremiah. I suspect, *now* that the Babylonian Empire no longer existed, Daniel was keenly interested in the Israelites *returning* to the land and rebuilding the Temple.
 - i) One of the primary purposes of the nation of Israel was that God needed a nation to be his witness of his existence and redemptive plan to the world. Further, he wanted a nation through which the Messiah would be brought in the world.
 - a) Religious Jews, to this day pray for the Messiah to come. We, as Christians believe Jesus is the Messiah. The classic joke is when he comes again, the religious Jews will ask, “just to make sure, is this your first visit or your second visit?” ☺
 - b) The same way it is our role to pray for Jesus return. This is what “thy kingdom come” refers to in the Lord’s prayer.
 - ii) In the prophet Isaiah, about 100 years earlier, predicted that one day the temple would be destroyed. Further, he predicted that a man named “Cyrus” would allow the temple to be rebuilt.
 - a) “Who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, “Let it be rebuilt,” and of the temple, “Let its foundations be laid.”’ (Isaiah 44:28, NIV)
 - iii) Jeremiah further predicted that Jerusalem would be rebuilt. I’ll discuss that in a few seconds. ☺
 - iv) Notice this historical commentary in the last verses of 2nd Chronicles.
 - a) In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing: ²³ “This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: “‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. (2nd Chronicles, 36:22-23a, NIV).
 - v) God said through the Bible that the Temple would be destroyed for Israel’s disobedience. God further stated said that one day the Temple would be rebuilt. It happened just as God said it would.
 - vi) Historically, The reason why the Southern Kingdom of Israel finally went into captivity is stated near the end of the historical records in 2nd Chronicles:
 - a) “The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. ¹⁶But they mocked God’s messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the LORD was aroused against his people and there was no remedy. (2nd Chronicles, Chapter 36, Verses 15-16 NIV)

- d) Jeremiah is a large book, by Bible standards. What *specifically* was it that Daniel was reading that inspired this prayer?
 - i) Most likely, it was Jeremiah 25:11:
 - a) “This whole country (Israel) will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.¹² “But when the seventy years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, the land of the Babylonians,” (Jeremiah 25:11-12a, NIV).
 - ii) That passage probably stopped Daniel dead in his tracks and caused him to go into prayer.
 - a) God wants the nation of Israel to be his witness to the world, just as he wants Christians today to be his witness.
 - b) When the nation went into idolatry *prior* to its destruction, God *had* to destroy the nation. *Obedience* is the key. God called Israel to be his witness. Israel had gone into idolatry. The surrounding world was *aware* that Israel had turned their collective backs on God. (Just as other people watch *your* behavior as Christians!). If this nation was to be God’s ambassador, then they *have* to represent God. Failure to do so means punishment.
 - c) Which leads us back to the United States. This nation was founded and established as a Christian nation. Failure to acknowledge that is a failure to read history. We do believe in freedom of religion. But it is freedom *of* religion not freedom *from* religion. The concept of “separation of church and state” was to prevent say, one colony from “just” being Episcopalians or Roman Catholics.
 - e) Back to Verse 2, Jeremiah said the captivity would last 70 years.
 - i) Notice Daniel did not say, “Well, you can’t take that literally. After all, we don’t know exactly what Jeremiah said. “Seventy” is a figurative number and is meant to be allegorical.” (I’m being sarcastic here!)
 - ii) Remember the Bible lesson “If the *plain text* makes perfect sense, seek no other sense”. The text says 70 years. That means 70 years, period!
 - iii) The reason I bring this up is the “millennium”.
 - a) Revelation Chapter 20 states six times that this period of time will be 1,000 years. Yet there are a large percentage of Roman Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants who do not take this literally. They “allegorize” this to be “forever”. Nonsense! The Bible says 70 years. It means 70 years. The Bible says 1,000 years it means 1,000 years.
 - b) OK, it is time for me to get off my soapbox and calm down. ☺
8. Verse 3. So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.
- a) Daniel knew the 70 years was almost up. Given Daniel’s age, and the Babylonian captivity, it was not yet 70 years from the first of 3 sieges against Jerusalem.
 - b) So why didn’t Daniel just say “Well, God said it will be over in 70 years, I’ll just hang around here, do my job and wait for the 70 years to finish?
 - i) After all, we should trust God’s promises, why should I pray further about it?
 - c) Time for another of John’s age-old Biblical proverbs: ☺
 - i) “Without God, we can’t. Without us, God *won’t*.”
 - ii) The point is that God wants to work *through* us. Yes, God’s promises will be fulfilled in His timing. Yes, we can count on that.
 - iii) But God still wants us to pray and pray hard for those promises.
 - iv) We do this, primarily, because we have terrible memories.

- v) We focus on our problems, and forget that God is in charge.
- vi) We need to remind ourselves that these promises come true.
 - a) “One reason is that God's promises invite, not exclude, our participation: “Nothing, therefore, can be better for us, than to ask for what he has promised.” (Calvin)”
- d) Let’s get back to the verse. Daniel prayed in 1) fasting, 2) wearing a sackcloth and 3) covered his head with ashes.
 - i) Personally, I’ve prayed in lots of positions and lots of methods. I haven’t tried this one yet. ☺ While I have fasted, I’ve never worn an uncomfortable sackcloth (probably made from camel hair), nor have I poured ashes over my head prior to prayer.
 - ii) This was a cultural sign of remorse. All three of these things make one uncomfortable. The sackcloth is rough and “itchy”.
 - a) The ashes are a reminder of our humanity.
 - b) “All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return.” (Ecclesiastes 3:20, NIV)
 - iii) The important point is that Daniel humbled himself before God. God wants an attitude of *humility*. This is for our benefit. To realize that we can do *nothing* without Him.
 - a) “For the LORD delights in his people; he crowns the humble with salvation.” (Psalm 149:4, NIV)
 - b) Jesus said, “For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” (Luke 14:11, NIV)
 - iv) I don’t believe it is necessary for Christians to wear “sack clothes and ashes”. There have been some Christians through history who take this *literally* in order to get prayers answered. You never read anywhere in Acts or the New Testament where Jesus or Paul called for the *Gentile* believers to literally use this method. This is a (not “the”) cultural method of humbling themselves. I believe the attitude is far more important than the method.
- 9. Verse 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,
 - a) Prayer is best begun with an acknowledgment of who God is.
 - b) There is a classic model for prayer using the acronym “A.C.T.S.”
 - i) It stands for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication
 - ii) Although not exact, Daniel’s prayer is close to this model.
 - iii) “To adore God is to worship and praise Him, to honor and exalt Him in our heart and mind and with our lips. Adoration expresses our complete trust in Him and reflects our confidence that He hears us. Adoration demonstrates our reverence, awe, love, and gratitude.” Bill Bright, Campus Crusade for Christ
- 10. Daniel continues, Verse 5: we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws.
 - a) Next, the prayer turns to confession.
 - i) “When our discipline of prayer begins with adoration, the Holy Spirit has opportunity to reveal any sin in our life that needs to be confessed. By seeing God in His purity, His holiness, and His love, we become aware of our own sinfulness and unworthiness. Confessing our sin and receiving His forgiveness restores us to fellowship with Him and clears the channel for God to hear and answer our prayers”. Bill Bright, Campus Crusade for Christ

- b) Daniel's prayer doesn't "exactly" follow this model of "A.C.T.S." for the remainder of the prayer, so let me complete the model and touch on the last two.
 - i) Thanksgiving is simply giving thanks to God for all he has done *and all he is going to do*. I often pray by thanking God in advance not only for the blessings of my life but for the things *he promised* he would do through his word.
 - ii) Supplication is what we normally think of as prayer. This is where we give God our requests of what is on our heart.
 - a) It is only *after* we realize God's goodness and power (Adoration), *after* we confess our sins, *after* we thank him that we approach him with our supplications, which are our requests.
 - (1) There are times and situations where we need to "get to the point". It is also an important discipline in our life to make time every day for a more detailed prayer structure like this.
 - (2) This model is *not* a requirement. It is simply a good model to use in prayer and to approach God.
 - c) Getting back to Daniel, notice the "we's" of this prayer. It isn't just Daniel, it is Israel.
 - d) Notice it is just Daniel praying. It is not a large group of Israelites confessing their sins. This is one guy, praying for nation and confessing on behalf of the nation. Daniel is interceding on behalf of Israel.
 - i) Remember that this prayer is interrupted to God's response!
 - ii) Therefore, it is "Biblical" for one person to pray on a nation's behalf!
 - a) God listens and respects that prayer.
 - b) Going back to "9-11", this is a reason why I picked Daniel 9 as a model for my prayer when praying for the United States.
 - c) God is looking for men and women to intercede by prayer and action.
 - d) Yes Jesus is our intercessor between God and man. (Hebrews 7:25)
 - (1) Given that, God is looking for people to "stand up" for him to be his witnesses, his "ambassadors" for Jesus in this world.
 - (2) "So I (God) sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one." (Ezek. 22:30, NKJV).
11. Verse 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.
- a) God holds us accountable for what we know.
 - b) God sent prophets to the land of Israel. He held the people accountable for their knowledge of his messages and warnings. This is what Daniel is confessing.
 - c) Remember that the Israelites were "kicked out" of the land for disobedience.
 - i) They failed to obey God's laws. They did not heed the warnings of the prophets.
 - ii) Right before the final destruction of Jerusalem, the prophet Ezekiel was warning the Southern Kingdom how bad their sin was: ("Samaria" in this passage is the Northern Kingdom that was destroyed 100 years earlier.)
 - a) "Even Samaria did not commit half your sins. You (Southern Kingdom) have done far more loathsome things than your sisters ever did. They seem righteous compared to you! ⁵²You should be deeply ashamed because your sins are so terrible. In comparison, you make your sisters seem innocent! (Ezekiel 16:51, New Living Translation)

- d) Which leads us back to the United States.
 - i) If you think they had no excuse, think about us:
 - a) We live in an “information age”. Anybody with access to a Bible can get for free God’s word. One can go to almost any church or a hotel or motel and get a free Bible. There are ministries that give away free Bibles and often do so at county and state fairs.
 - b) We have all of this history to study and learn from.
 - c) Further, one just has to go back and study the history of our country. There were *incredible* miracles that happened during the Revolutionary War. Studying it, you become aware of God’s presence over the creation of this country.
 - d) Daniel was right. The nation of Israel had sinned greatly and had no excuse. Sadly, America can now say the same thing.
12. Verse 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. ⁸ O LORD, we and our kings, our princes and our fathers are covered with shame because we have sinned against you.
- a) The confession continues in these two verses. Daniel prays by himself, on behalf of all the Israelites, from the greatest to the smallest, who have sinned against God.
 - b) Remember that God is *aware* of all of this. This is not “news” to God.
 - c) The purpose of this prayer is for God to act and intercede on the nations behalf.
 - d) God wants us to humble ourselves and confess our sins, both individually and corporately before him. This is how we get God to act.
 - e) It is almost as if God is saying “Come on, I *want* to help. I *want* to make things better. I have wonderful plans for your life. But I need to get you “involved”. I just need you to acknowledge your sins. I am *so ready* to forgive you at the first inclination of sorrow, and repentance.
 - i) To apply this application to Daniel, God is saying in effect: “Yes the Temple will be rebuilt, because I know all things, I know you are confessing and asking for intercession, and *because* of my future knowledge, it *will* happen.”
13. Daniel continues, Verse 9: The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him; ¹⁰ we have not obeyed the LORD our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets. ¹¹ All Israel has transgressed your law and turned away, refusing to obey you.
- a) Notice Verse 9 says, “God is merciful and forgiving”. One of the things I love about the aspect of God is that he 1) cannot lie (Titus 1:2), and 2) cannot change (Malachi 3:6).
 - i) Therefore, when the Bible says God is “merciful and forgiving”, we can count on that aspect being true in all situations. God doesn’t say “Well, I can forgive this, but not *that*. God doesn’t change.
 - ii) We *pray* for God’s mercy and forgiveness because he tells us to and to remind ourselves that God does forgive us when we confess our sins.
14. Verse 11: "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. ¹² You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing upon us great disaster.
- a) In the Book of Deuteronomy, God lays out “Blessings and Curses”.
 - i) There are lots of promised blessings if they follow God’s commandments.
 - ii) There are lots of promised curses if they fail to be obedient to God.

- iii) Among the curses is the following: “Just as it pleased the LORD to make you prosper and increase in number, so it will please him to ruin and destroy you. You will be uprooted from the land you are entering to possess.” (Deut. 28:63, NIV).
 - iv) The point is Daniel is quoting God’s promise to uproot the Israelites out of the Promised Land for failure to be obedient.
 - b) The question becomes “Will America have the same fate?”
 - i) There have been the rise and fall of many nations that were once *very* obedient to God and his commandments. Those nations and Empires no longer exist. Many of them still exist, but their “beacon of light” has gone out. They have simply become “irrelevant”.
 - a) England comes to mind. During the 19th Century, during the time of Charles Spurgeon, England had a great world empire and was a beacon of light for Christianity. (Grant it, they made the mistake of “forcing” Christianity on people versus trying to change people’s hearts.)
 - b) Today there are more Islamic mosques in England than Christian churches. “Spiritually” England has become irrelevant.
 - (1) Although England has not been “uprooted” from the land, they are no longer a dominant world force. This is a good example today of how God can turn his back on a nation. (The emphasis is on corporate punishment, not individual. There are many “saved” people in England today.)
15. Verse 12, continued: Under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem. 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. 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.
- a) Daniel is continuing the same point. The promise of destruction as laid out in Deuteronomy has come true.
 - b) Daniel states in Verse 12 that “nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem”.
 - i) Obviously, many cities have been destroyed in history, before and after this event about Jerusalem.
 - ii) Daniel is referring specifically to God *forming* a nation born in slavery and moving them into a different land. The nation was born through dramatic miracles in Egypt. The conquering of the Promised Land was done through more miracles. Yet despite all of this effort by God, the people failed to learn from history.
 - a) God said in effect, “All right, I’ve had enough. You’ve tried my patience. I need to uproot you *out* of the land, as promised for disobedience. My word *must* remain true as a witness to future generations. Just as you my people are my witnesses by the blessings I give you, so you will be my witnesses *by* the curses poured upon you.
 - b) The good news is that curses can come to an end. The effect of sin in our life causes those curses. I don’t see it so much as punishment by God as it is the direct consequences of our sins by willfully turning away from God.
 - c) The good news is like Daniel, we can confess it. God is *more than willing* to forgive us of our sins and start anew.

16. Verse 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. 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.
- a) Daniel is pleading for God to intercede and bring the people back to Jerusalem.
 - b) Remember Daniel *knows* about the 70 year prophecy, yet is still making this request.
 - c) Further, I suspect Daniel did the math, and figured there are still a few years to go. Yet that doesn't stop him from praying *now* for future action.
 - d) The emphasis of this prayer is on "God's righteousness".
 - i) In effect it is saying "God, please act because your reputation is on the line. Don't act because of our goodness. We have sinned before a perfect God who can stand no wrongdoing. Please act Lord, for *your* sake, because *you* are merciful and *you* are forgiving.
 - ii) Moses' had the same attitude in his prayers for the people. Moses intercedes for the people and begs forgiveness not on the goodness of the people, but simply because God's "reputation" is on the line. (See Exodus 33:11-14).
17. Verse 17: "Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, O Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary.
- a) Daniel is pleading for God to rebuild the now-nonexistent Temple/Sanctuary for the sake of His reputation.
 - b) God wanted the Nation of Israel to be his witness to the world as to what God expects of people and how people should be obedient to God.
 - i) If you ever look at the location of Israel, it is a "land-bridge" between three continents. It is a perfect location for a nation to be his witness.
 - ii) The "center" of this location is the Temple site. Here, travelers can observe how God is to be worshipped. Here, one can see the "shedding of blood as forgiveness of sin." One can see how *seriously* God takes sin and requires the blood of innocent animals to remind us how seriously God takes sin.
 - iii) The people's rebellion caused the destruction of the Temple.
 - a) The danger was reliance on the "real estate" and not God himself.
 - (1) They thought that as long as the temple existed, they could "do whatever they wanted, as God wouldn't destroy it".
 - b) God destroyed the temple to remind the Israelites that 1) they trust is in God himself and *not* the Temple and 2) to be his witnesses to the world as to what would happen *if and when* they collectively turned from God.
18. Verse 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. 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."
- a) We are now at the end of the prayer. You can almost hear Daniel yelling by the time he gets to Verse 19. He is *pleading* with God to help and help *now*.
 - b) Remember that this is not a nation repenting, this is one man repenting *for* the nation.

19. Verse 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-- 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.
- a) The prayer gets interrupted. Before Daniel could finish the prayer, the Angel Gabriel shows up for an announcement.
 - b) I was thinking about the written-aspect of this prayer. Personally, I don't think Daniel wrote the prayer down as he went along. I think Daniel prayed the way we do, thinking or speaking out loud to God. Later, after the vision was given to Daniel, he, inspired by the Holy Spirit, recalled the words he was praying until the interruption.
 - c) One more technical point. Gabriel came at the "time of the evening sacrifice".
 - i) This could either refer to the "morning and evening sacrifice" that *should* be happening *if* the temple existed.
 - ii) Or, religious Jews have a "meal offering" where they offer unleavened bread to God as part of the evening ritual.
20. Verse 22: He (Gabriel) instructed me and said to me, "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. ²³ As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision:
- a) Next week we will get the answer to Daniel's prayer. It requires another lesson to explain it!
 - b) This verse says that the angel was "dispatched" when Daniel begun his prayer. It is amazing to think about how fast angels can travel.
 - i) God was ready to answer the prayer *as soon as Daniel began*. Personally, I don't see the delay as "angel travel time" between God's throne and Daniel. ☺
 - a) I don't believe heaven as a location billions of miles from here.
 - b) I believe the "world" is more than 3 dimensions (height, width, length).
 - c) God created the world. Therefore, he must exist *outside* of it.
 - d) This is how God can be everywhere at once.
 - e) This is how God can hear millions of prayers at once and respond to each one *carefully and precisely*.
 - f) I don't see this verse as saying "Hey Gabriel, Daniel is praying. Give him this message. He's billions of miles from here, so get going." ☺
 - (1) Jesus "hints" at this: "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, ²¹nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:20b-21, NIV)
 - ii) The point is I believe God wanted Daniel to finish "most" of the prayer for *our* sake. He wanted Daniel to remember and record the prayer as a model for us to learn and pray when we need to pray in repentance for *our* nation. - c) One of the most beautiful parts of Chapter 9 is when Gabriel tells Daniel "for you are highly esteemed." What did Gabriel mean by that?
 - i) If you study Daniel carefully, you can't find any reference of any sin.
 - a) Not that Daniel was perfect. He selected certain parts of his life where Daniel (or his 3 friends) were excellent witnesses for God.

- ii) Most commentators suspect that the unique characteristic of Daniel, among most, if not all the Old Testament characters, is you never read of Daniel ever taking revenge for the wrongs committed against him. He let God fight his battles for him.
 - a) Daniel is a wonderful example for us as to how to be an example for God without “going overboard” and taking vengeance for the wrongs committed against us by others.
 - b) God *choose* Daniel to reveal all of these prophecies. He is a wonderful example of how we are to live the Christian life. That is how the 1st six chapters tie to the latter six chapters.
 - (1) The first six (mostly) tell stories about Daniel’s life.
 - (2) The last six (mostly) tell prophecy revelations given to Daniel.
 - (3) Daniel’s *character* is the reason he is chosen for this revelation.

21. Let’s us pray for our nation: Oh Sovereign Lord, who created the heavens and the earth, who knows all things, who controls the destiny of individuals and nations, we beseech you as a people. We do not appeal to you based on our good deeds, nor on the good deeds of the generations before us. We openly confess that we have collectively turned our back on you. You have provided wonderful resources for our generation to learn about you and your word. Yet despite all of this knowledge, we have failed to be your witness.

- a) Now we beg you, not on our righteousness standing before you, but because of your reputation, that you heal our nation. We want to be your shining beacon to a lost and dying world. Fill us with your Spirit so we can go boldly and stand up for what are your laws, to act differently from those around us. To let others *see* God working through us, to make ourselves *available* for your will. Heal our nation. It appears to be beyond hope. You, oh Lord, are a God of miracles. You, oh Lord, are a God of healing. We beseech you, based on the work Jesus did for us on the cross, Amen.