



STANDING STRONG IN TRYING TIMES

The Book of Daniel

Exile Prayers

Key idea:

In light of the experience of the exile and his visions of the future, and built upon biblical teaching regarding God's covenant and the end of the exile, Daniel turns to God in an intense time of prayer - praising God, confessing the sin of God's people, and crying out for God's intervention.

Key text:

Daniel 9:1–19

In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom — 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. ³ So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. 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, ⁵ we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. 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. 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. 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. “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. 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. 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. ¹⁷ “Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, O Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary. 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.”

Key points:

1. When Persia came to power, Daniel realized by reading Scripture (Jeremiah 25, 29) that the exile was coming to a close.
2. Daniel does not presume upon God’s Sovereignty and promises but turns to God in intense prayer and fasting.
3. Daniel’s prayer is built upon God’s Word and covenant with His people.
4. Daniel’s prayer has three main themes:
 - a. He praises God for His awesomeness and character (v4; also verses 7, 9, 14, 18).
 - b. He confesses the sin of Israel, including himself as part of the sin of God’s people (verses 5-15).
 - c. He prays that God will restore His people for the glory of His Name and the good of His people (verses 16-19).

Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's teaching stood out most to me? Why?
2. Why would God record Daniel’s prayer in Scripture? What is it meant to teach me today?
3. Why should we pray for things God has already promised? Is it doubt to pray and ask God to do what He has promised, or is it a sign of faith?
4. What does it teach me about the development of the Bible that Daniel refers to Jeremiah’s prophecies as Scripture? How is this similar to 2 Peter 3:16? How did Daniel and Peter view the writings of Jeremiah and Paul?

5. How surprised was I to discover that the only place the covenant name of God (YHWH - Yahweh) occurs in the book of Daniel is here in Daniel 9? Why would the covenantal name appear here 7 times when it has not been used anywhere else in the book?
6. Why does Daniel include the detail that he prayed with sackcloth and ashes? What does this convey to the reader?
7. Why does Daniel spend so much time confessing sins in this prayer? How often do I confess my sins to God in prayer?
8. Why does Daniel confess the sins of previous generations as if they were his own sin? Can I think of other places in Scripture where the sin of previous generations has implications for later generations? In what sense is a person implicated in the sins of previous generations? What are the limits of this?
9. Why does Daniel bring up God's reputation and the glory of His name when asking God to end the exile and restore His people? How is God's name linked to the sin and state of His people? What does this teach me about prayer?
10. Daniel is praying for his nation, but the prayer is based on their status as God's covenant people. As God's exile people today, does this prayer relate to the Church or to our country, the land of our exile? Why does this matter?
11. Who will I call or see to encourage this week?

For Further Study:

[Strangers In A Strange Land](#) (June 20, 2021)

[Biblical Confession and Repentance](#) (August 26, 2018)

[UnCommon Confession In Prayer](#) (April 7, 2013)

[Praying for Our Forgiveness](#) (January 27, 2014)

[How Long, O Lord?](#) (January 15, 2017)

[Stand - Our Warfare With the Enemy](#) (September 22, 2019)

[Praying for God to Be Glorified and Known](#) (June 16, 2013)

Preview of next week: Daniel's 70 weeks (Daniel 9:20-27)