

Theme: 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.

I. Intro - A real change of pace

- A. Daniel 1-6 is full of famous hair raising stories
- B. Daniel 7-8 are full of strange apocalyptic visions
- C. Daniel 9 - a prayer?? Where did this come from?
- D. This prayer is intimately connected with all that has come before and is in response to what Daniel knows lies in the future for his people
- E. What can we learn from the exile prayer?

II. The Time and Basis of Daniel's Prayer

- A. This prayer happens at a critical moment for Israel
In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom — Daniel 9:1
 - 1. The first year of Darius (Cyrus?) - 539BC
 - 2. The second kingdom of Daniel 2, 7, 8 has arrived
 - 3. Cyrus of Persia will allow Israel to return from exile according to Isaiah 44:28; 45:1; 45:13
 - 4. This all has Daniel thinking and seeking God
- B. This prayer is based on the Word of God
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.** Daniel 9:2

- 1. Daniel turned to the Word of God to understand
- 2. This whole prayer arises from Scripture and it is filled with Scriptural phrases, allusions, and theology
- 3. Specifically, he knew the exile was to last 70 years
“This whole country 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, for their guilt,” declares the Lord, “and will make it desolate forever. Jeremiah 25:11–12
 - a. You will serve Babylon 70 years
 - b. This prophecy was given in 606/605 BC
 - c. This meant exiles would be back by 536BC
 - d. Also see Ezra 1:1; 2 Chronicles 36:20-23
- 4. Daniel knew that the time for the end of the exile had come, and this prompted him to turn to God in prayer.

C. A covenantal prayer

- 1. This prayer was not just vaguely Scriptural - it was all based on God's covenant with Israel - 2 keys
- 2. The exile was the result of the covenantal curse
I will scatter you among the nations and will draw out my sword and pursue you. Your land will be laid waste, and your cities will lie in ruins. ³⁴ Then the land will enjoy its sabbath years all the time that it lies desolate and you are in the country of your enemies; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. Leviticus 26:33–34

- a. God warned them of exile if they continually broke the covenant
- b. They broke Sabbath years, one of the covenant signs, and so the land got its Sabbath rest during the exile.
- c. I spoke about this a lot more in the first teaching in this series - see the further resources section of the discussion guide.

3. The use of Yahweh - God's covenant name

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... ⁴ I prayed to the **Lord** my God and confessed ... Daniel 9:2, 4

- a. Word of the LORD, prayer to the LORD - Yahweh
- b. This is the name God revealed to Moses and gave as His covenant Name for Israel
- c. The Name appears 7x in Daniel 9 - and nowhere else in the entire book of Daniel!
- d. Daniel's entire prayer is a prayer based on God's covenant with His people Israel.

D. A response of intense prayer

So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. Daniel 9:3

- 1. We would think that since He has God's Word regarding the end of the exile and also the covenant, there is no reason for prayer - but we would be wrong!
- 2. God's Sovereignty and covenant are never a basis for human presumption, inactivity, or apathy, but are rather an invitation to intense prayer and faith-filled activity!

- 3. Daniel does not offer some half-hearted prayer, but rather intensely prays with fasting and sackcloth and ashes to indicate his desire for God to hear and change Israel's circumstances.

- 4. This is a great example for Christian exiles today!

III. Daniel's Exile Prayer

A. A prayer of praise for God's awesomeness & character

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..." Daniel 9:4

- 1. Daniel begins his prayer by professing the awesomeness of God
- 2. Prayer should always recognize the greatness of God - otherwise, why should we even pray?
- 3. As exiles profess the awesomeness of God in prayer it stirs up faith in the midst of trying circumstances.
- 4. Daniel also proclaims the character of God in prayer
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...** Daniel 9:4
 - a. Daniel recognizes that God is faithful - Israel's problems are not due to unfaithfulness on God's part
 - b. The word love is hesed - covenant faithfulness/love
 - c. This declaration of the character of God is sprinkled throughout the prayer
 - 1. v7 - LORD, You are righteous

2. v9 - The LORD is merciful and forgiving
3. v14 - The LORD is righteous in everything He does
4. v18 - God has great mercy

5. Exiles approach God in prayer, not based on our righteousness but based on His character

B. A prayer of deep confession of sin

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. Daniel 9:5–6

1. Daniel's response to the exile and all he and Israel have suffered, even in light of the visions of Daniel 7-8 and the coming persecutions, is not prayers against the enemies of God, but rather for confession and repentance on the part of God's people.
2. Daniel uses 6 different words to describe Israel's sin
3. Israel has broken God's covenant and law and then refused to listen to the prophets who called them back to covenant faithfulness.
4. Every stratum of Israel was guilty of sin - kings, princes, fathers, people of the land - everyone!
5. Notice that Daniel includes himself in the confession - even though the sins leading to exile were committed many years before he was alive!
6. Daniel admits that Israel's problems are due to her sin and not other causes

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. Daniel 9:7–8

- a. The exile ultimately happened because of Israel's sin, not because of the desire of other nations.
 - b. When God's people are ashamed before the enemies of the Gospel, it is a call to confess and repent of our sin and cry out for God's mercy.
7. The great danger of not repenting when God's discipline comes upon His people
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. Daniel 9:13
- a. God had warned and disciplined them, but they had refused to listen and respond (see v6,10)
 - b. Because of their continual waywardness, they were sent into exile, which was designed to wake them so they would seek God.
 - c. But Daniel fears the people have not really returned to God with their whole heart - and the coming centuries would prove him right!
8. Daniel recognizes that the greatest enemy to God's people is not those who are set against God and His Gospel, but rather their own sin!
 9. After Hours will talk about the relationship between lament, imprecation, and confession

C. A prayer for God to bring **glory to His Name** & **restore His people**

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**. Daniel 9:17–19

1. Daniel asks God to act for the glory of His own name!
2. Even at this point the glory and honor of God are paramount!
3. Daniel also asks for God to look with favor on His desolate sanctuary - make His face shine upon it
The Lord bless you and keep you;
²⁵ the Lord **make his face shine upon you** and be gracious to you;
²⁶ the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. Numbers 6:24–26
 - a. Daniel is calling the blessing of Numbers 6 to mind
 - b. The great prayer for God to bless His people, to let His face shine upon them so they may experience shalom!
 - c. This is the ultimate blessing! It is better to experience difficulties in this world and have God's face shining upon us rather than to experience temporal blessings and have God's face turned away from us!
4. Note the intensity of the prayer!

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. Daniel 9:19

- a. Short, intense requests - listen, forgive, hear & act!
- b. We also saw the intensity in v3 - pleaded with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.
- c. Exile prayers should never be boring - especially when we consider the constant temptations to compromise, our ever-present sin, and the constant dangers of the beastly kingdoms of this world!

IV. Applying the Word

A. How is my prayer life?

1. This chapter certainly strikes us as strange at first!
2. But when Daniel faced the struggles of exile and concerns regarding the future, he turned to prayer!
3. How is my prayer life?
 - a. Do I regularly pray - or only randomly and when in trouble?
 - b. Do my prayers reflect Biblical concerns like confessing my sin, praying for the glory of God, praying for the prosperity of God's people?
 - c. Are my prayers sleepy or filled with an intensity befitting my status as an exile?
 - d. Prayerlessness is often a sign that I have too much confidence in my abilities or the abilities of other people or avenues such as politics, social media, or technology, and not enough confidence in God and His power and promises.
4. How can I grow in my life of prayer?

- a. I have been writing tips in our blog to help do this!
- b. Have a plan to pray - or you will not pray!

5. Exiles - we MUST be people of prayer!

B. The Table of Confession: Our Sin and Forgiveness in Christ

1. The Lord's Table is a place for the regular confession of sin
2. The Lord's Table is also a place for the regular confession of God's forgiveness of sin in Christ!
3. A confession of sin and forgiveness (1 John 1:5-2:2)
4. The Table of Confession

Exile Prayers

Daniel 9:1-19
October 17, 2021
Communion
Numbers 6:24-26

Teaching keywords: Prayer; Word of God; confession and repentance; praise; God's character; covenant; Old Covenant

The Lord bless you and keep you; ²⁵ the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; ²⁶ the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.” Numbers 6:24–26

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.”
Daniel 9:1–19