



THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL

Lesson Number 28



TRANSLATION LEGEND: ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ESV=English Standard Version (2001), KJV=King James Version (1611), NKJV=New King James Version (1982), NAB=New American Bible, NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible, NLT=New Living Translation, NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862).

----- Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----

DANIEL'S INTERCESSORY PRAYER, #2

“ 9:12 And He hath confirmed His words, which He spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. ¹³ As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand Thy truth. ¹⁴ Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all His works which He doeth: for we obeyed not His voice. ¹⁵ And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought Thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten Thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly. ¹⁶ O Lord, according to all Thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let Thine anger and Thy fury be turned away from Thy city Jerusalem, Thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. ¹⁷ Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of Thy servant, and his supplications, and cause Thy face to shine upon Thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. ¹⁸ O my God, incline Thine ear, and hear; open Thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by Thy name: for we do not present our supplications before Thee for our righteousnesses, but for Thy great mercies. ¹⁹ O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for Thine own sake, O my God: for Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name.” ^{KJV} (Dan 9:12-19)

INTRODUCTION

Having understood through the writings of Jeremiah that the Babylonian captivity was about to conclude, Daniel has aggressively given his “*attention to the Lord God to seek Him.*”^{NASB} He does so through prayer, fasting, sackcloth, and ashes – in deep humility and contrition. This is not an effort to meet some criterion, of fulfill a demand. Rather, it is the result of his insight and understanding. **He has seen God as He really is, and that has cast light upon**

the nation to which Daniel belongs. His actions have been dictated by his awareness of God, which has been produced by his faith.

PROBABLY ALONE

There is no evidence that any real awakening had occurred to the captives of Judah while they were in the Babylonian captivity – at least no point is made of it. Notwithstanding, Daniel, through his study of the Scriptures, has calculated

that the captivity is coming to a close. At least sixty-eight years within the confines of heathen Babylon had not dulled the perception of this man of God. He was somewhere between eighty-one (if Daniel was captured when thirteen) and eighty-six (if Daniel was eighteen when captured) at the time of this prayer – and still his heart was tender and his mind keen.

I am going to assume that Daniel was relatively alone at this time. We know

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OUTLINE

- ▶ HE HAS CONFIRMED HIS WORD (9:12)
- ▶ AS IT IS WRITTEN (9:13)
- ▶ THE LORD WATCHED AND BROUGHT (9:14)
- ▶ BROUGHT OUT OF EGYPT (9:15)
- ▶ ACCORDING TO THY RIGHTEOUSNESS (9:16)
- ▶ HEAR OUR PRAYER (9:17)
- ▶ THY GREAT MERCIES (9:18)
- ▶ FORGIVE, HEARKEN, AND DEFER NOT (9:19)

that at the first, when the lives of the wise men of Babylon were threatened, Daniel conferred with his three associates, "Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah" (Dan 2:17). However, we have no record of anything like that taking place at the time of this text.

Daniel, however, has seen something that has moved him to come before God in the behalf of his people. **He does not go on a crusade to awaken his fellow countrymen. Rather, he engages in an effort to move God.**

A PRINCIPLE TO BE SEEN

There is a principle to be seen here, and it is confirmed throughout Scripture. **Those who perceive the real circumstances are the ones called to address them.** When Nehemiah perceived the real circumstances of Judah, Jerusalem, and the walls, he set out to do something about it. When Paul was moved with the gross idolatry in Athens, he engaged in an God-blessed initiative to address it. When David saw the truth of Goliath, he leaped forward to confidently engage him in battle. When Elijah saw the people of God halting between two opinions, he stepped in to rally them toward God.

Daniel has seen something of great significance – the end of one era, and the beginning of another. He does not run

through the streets trying to gather the people together for prayer. Rather, by faith, he enters into the activity himself. **His understanding was actually a call from God.**

I understand this cannot be formulated into a rigid code, and that is not my purpose for bringing it to your attention. **However, as saints of the most high God, you should be sensitive to the responsibility of spiritual vision.** When you correctly see circumstances about you, and they constitute a burden to you, **you are probably being called by God to be used to address them.** Be strong in faith, and confidently move into His will.

THE PREVALENCE OF DEITY

Daniel's prayer has a very apparent accent upon Deity. Note the references to God in this prayer – they reveal the nature of "prayer of a righteous man" (James 5:16).

- ▶ O Lord ⁴
- ▶ the great and dreadful God ⁴
- ▶ keeping covenant and mercy ⁴
- ▶ love Him ⁴
- ▶ His commandments ⁴
- ▶ Thy precepts ⁵
- ▶ Thy judgments ⁵
- ▶ Thy servants the Prophets ⁶
- ▶ Thy name ⁶
- ▶ O Lord ⁷
- ▶ righteousness belongeth to Thee ⁷
- ▶ Thou hast driven them ⁷
- ▶ trespassed against Thee ⁷
- ▶ O Lord ⁸
- ▶ sinned against Thee ⁸
- ▶ the Lord our God ⁹
- ▶ belong mercies and forgivenesses ⁹
- ▶ rebelled against Him ⁹
- ▶ the voice of the Lord ¹⁰
- ▶ our God ¹⁰
- ▶ His laws ¹⁰
- ▶ He set before us ¹⁰
- ▶ His servants the prophets ¹⁰

- ▶ Thy law ¹¹
 - ▶ Thy voice ¹¹
 - ▶ servant of God ¹¹
 - ▶ sinned against Him ¹¹
-
- ▶ He hath confirmed ¹²
 - ▶ His words ¹²
 - ▶ He spake ¹²
 - ▶ Thy truth ¹³
 - ▶ the LORD watched ¹⁴
 - ▶ The Lord brought it upon us ¹⁴
 - ▶ The Lord our God is righteous ¹⁴
 - ▶ His works ¹⁴
 - ▶ His voice ¹⁴
 - ▶ Lord our God ¹⁵
 - ▶ Thy people ¹⁵
 - ▶ hast gotten Thee renown ¹⁵
 - ▶ Thy righteousness ¹⁶
 - ▶ Thine anger ¹⁶
 - ▶ Thy city Jerusalem ¹⁶
 - ▶ Thy holy mountain ¹⁶
 - ▶ Thy people ¹⁶
 - ▶ Our God ¹⁷
 - ▶ Thy servant ¹⁷
 - ▶ Thy face ¹⁷
 - ▶ Thy sanctuary ¹⁷
 - ▶ the Lord's sake ¹⁷
 - ▶ My God ¹⁸
 - ▶ Thine ear ¹⁸
 - ▶ Thine eyes ¹⁸
 - ▶ Thy name ¹⁸
 - ▶ before Thee ¹⁸
 - ▶ Thy great mercies ¹⁸
 - ▶ O Lord hear ¹⁹
 - ▶ O Lord forgive ¹⁹
 - ▶ O Lord hearken ¹⁹
 - ▶ O Lord defer not ¹⁹
 - ▶ Thine own sake ¹⁹
 - ▶ My God ¹⁹
 - ▶ Thy city ¹⁹
 - ▶ Thy people ¹⁹
 - ▶ Thy name. ¹⁹

There are 64 direct references to God in this prayer: twenty seven in the first eleven verses (covered in the previous lesson), and thirty-seven in the text we are presently reviewing. You will find a similar

THERE IS A PRINCIPLE TO BE SEEN HERE, AND IT IS CONFIRMED THROUGHOUT SCRIPTURE. THOSE WHO PERCEIVE THE REAL CIRCUMSTANCES ARE THE ONES CALLED TO ADDRESS THEM.

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emphasis in all of the great prayers of Scripture.

EFFECTIVE PRAYER

Effective prayer is never self-centered. Rather, it flows out of an acute consciousness of the Person of God Himself. It is that awareness that has shed light upon the circumstance, and not vice versa. Some, for example, may be tempted to think as we ponder upon the circumstance, our thoughts of God will be greatly enhanced. Thus, beginning with situations, they make an effort to reason toward God. Whatever results are realized

by such an attempt will, at best, be minuscule. **It is far better to begin with God and Scripture, and in that light view the circumstance. It will appear quite different than if you begin with what can be seen and felt in this world.**

Although I have made frequent references to this fact, *“in Thy light SHALL WE see light”* (Psa 36:9). The glory of God’s Person – or the awareness of His Being and will – makes everything else more plain. In Fact, **there is no truly profitable understanding that**

is independent of the knowledge of God. Whatever value that is obtained from such knowledge is only temporary, and will tend to obscure both the Person and purpose of God.

Intellectual, moral, and spiritual darkness are always prevalent where God is not known. Men are confined to this state until God shines into their hearts with the light of the knowledge of His glory (2 Cor 4:6). There is no other way to acquire true wisdom and knowledge – the kind that leads to and instructs in the truth of God.

HE HAS CONFIRMED HIS WORD

“9:12 And He hath confirmed His words, which He spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a

against our rulers,”^{NIV} *“And he has given effect to his words which he said against us and against those who were our judges,”*^{BBE} and *“He has carried out the*

By *“confirming”* His words, the Lord made good on what He had declared.

It is God’s nature to confirm what He has said. As it is written, *“That confirmeth the word of His servant, and performeth the counsel of His messengers”* (Isa 44:26).

IT IS FASHIONABLE THESE DAYS FOR MEN TO SPEAK OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS, HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS, AND THE LIKES, AS “CONFIRMING” THE SCRIPTURES. BY THAT, THEY MEAN SUCH THINGS ATTEST TO THE TRUTH OF THE WORD OF THE LORD.

A Word About Confirming the Word

It is fashionable these days for men to speak of archaeological finds, historical documents, and the likes, as *“confirming”* the Scriptures. By that, they mean such things attest to the truth of the Word of the Lord. **However, this is not how the Holy Spirit uses the word “confirm,” nor is it a valid spiritual concept.**

great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.”

threats which he made against us and the chief men who governed us.”^{NJB}

Daniel continues his insightful prayer. He has perceived and confessed the waywardness of his people. Now he will trace their misfortunes to the working of God Himself. That working is, he confesses, in perfect accord with what God said He would do. There are lessons to be learned here that are most needful in our time.

Judgments from God are never without due warning. He is not looking for an opportunity to pour out His wrath, judge sinners, or bring calamity upon people. For those in covenant with Him, He warns through His Word, as well as His prophets. For those who are not in covenant with Him, He warns through those who do fear him (as Lot with Sodom, Gen 19:9), and His prophets (As Jonah with Nineveh, Jonah 1:2). There are even shouts of warning from the conscience, as declared with the primitive Gentile world (Rom 2:15). Now, Daniel confesses that God has confirmed *“His words”* in bringing judgments upon the children of Judah and Israel.

In Scripture, the confirmation of God’s Word is **its fulfillment** – when it comes to pass, or when He does what He said He said He will do. Thus, the coming of Jesus was the confirmation of the promises made to the fathers (Rom 15:8). God’s promise to bless Abraham’s seed was *“confirmed”* when fulfilled to Jacob and his seed (Psa 105:10). This is also the way in which we have *“a more sure word of prophecy”* – a word that has been fulfilled, or has come to pass, in the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet 1:19). Thus the NRSV version reads, *“So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed”* (2 Pet 1:19).

CONFIRMED HIS WORD

“And He hath confirmed His words, which He spake against us, and against our judges that judged us . . . ” **Other versions read, “You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and**

This is the sense in which Daniel now prays. God’s promise to judge Israel

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if they departed from His ways was confirmed in the Babylonian captivity and the circumstances attending it.

The Confirmation

There are such a great number of these “words” that time allows the mention of only a few of them. Note, Daniel says these words were spoken “**against us, and against our judges that judged us.**”

Against Us

Both Moses and the Prophets spoke against Israel – Moses before they entered the promised land, and the Prophets following their entrance into the land. From their beginning as a covenanted nation, there were frequent and ample warnings concerning the result of departing from the Living God.

▣ **THROUGH MOSES.** “*And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them. Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us?*” (Deu 31:17).

▣ **THE PROPHETS. Through His servants the Prophets.** “*And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying . . . Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle . . . I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down. And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies*” (2 Ki 21:10-14). Again, **Through Solomon.** “*But if ye turn away, and forsake My statutes and My commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship*

them; then will I pluck them up by the roots out of My land which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for My name, will I cast out of My sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations” (2 Chr 7:20). **Through Jeremiah.** “*And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them. And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers*” (Jer 24:9-10).

Against Our Judges

The word “judges” is not confined

your rulers, the seers hath He covered” (Isa 29:10).

▣ “*And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim*” (1 Ki 18:17-18).

These warnings are only a sampling of the many words God delivered to Israel concerning the penalty for their sin. Other passages include the following: Leviticus 26:33-35; Deuteronomy 28:36-55; Isaiah 5:2; 39:6-7; Jeremiah 13:19; 20:4-5; 25:2-11; 29:17-20;

FROM THEIR BEGINNING AS A COVENANTED NATION, THERE WERE FREQUENT AND AMPLE WARNINGS CONCERNING THE RESULT OF DEPARTING FROM THE LIVING GOD.

to the period of the Judges. This word means “to judge, govern, vindicate, punish . . . to rule.” ^{STRONGS} **It refers to the civil leaders of Israel**, as reflected in some of the other versions: “*against our rulers who ruled us,*” ^{NASB} “*the chief men who governed us,*” ^{NJB} and “*our rulers.*” ^{NLT} The word “judges” accents that their rulers had led them astray by faulty judgments and decisions. Here are some of the judgments spoken against the rulers.

▣ “*Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols: therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle*” (2 Kgs 21:11-12).

▣ “*For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and*

32:28-29; Lamentations 1:3-5; Ezekiel 39:23-24.

BRINGING UPON US GREAT EVIL

“*. . . by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.*” Other versions read, “*by bringing upon us great disaster,*” ^{NKJV} and “*to bring on us great calamity.*” ^{NIV}

“*Evil,*” in this case, is not moral evil, or iniquity. Rather, it is affliction, adversity, and calamity. “*Great evil*” is grievous and sorrowful trouble and disaster.

Does God Cause Calamity?

It is not uncommon to hear religious sophists say that God does not cause disasters or calamities to happen. The unlearned tell us they come from the devil, and not from God – even though the devil is under God. But all such talk only betrays a fundamental ignorance of God Himself. It is particularly inexcusable because the Lord has abundantly revealed this aspect of His nature.

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- ▶ *“I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and **create evil** (calamity ^{NKJV}): I the LORD do all these things”* (Isa 45:7).
- ▶ *“So the LORD **sent a pestilence** upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men”* (2 Sam 24:15).
- ▶ *“Then God **sent an evil spirit** between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem*

the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the prophets” (2 Kgs 24:2).

- ▶ *“But **the LORD sent out a great wind** into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken”* (Jonah 1:4).

One wonders why such foolish doctrines are taught to the people of God, affirming that calamities do not come

killed (2 Kgs 25:7). The Temple was ravaged, and the holy vessels taken from it (2 Kgs 24:13). The city and its houses were burned, and its walls broken down (Jer 39:8).

The man of God views the Babylonian captivity, with all of the horrors and tragedies associated with it. He then confesses, **“You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing upon us great disaster.”**^{NIV}

Earlier in history, Zechariah acknowledged the same thing. *“But My words and My statutes, which I commanded My servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned and said, **Like as the LORD of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath He dealt with us”*** (Zech 1:6).

AN OBSERVATION

I have rarely heard any believer trace the present condition of the church to the judgment of God. **However, it seems to me that we are living in a period of time in which Divine judgment has been poured out upon the church itself.** The divisions within it, together with the inexcusable lack of interest in the things of God, and the presence of remarkable levels of sin, testify to this. If it is countered that the early church endured many hardships, it must also be acknowledged that when it was scattered the people went everywhere preaching the Word” (Acts 8:4). Too, sin was not dominant among those people.

It appears to me that the time has come for the professed church to acknowledge it has strayed from the Lord, thus bringing Divine judgment upon itself. Perhaps the closing of churches, that is so common in our time, is really Jesus taking away their candlestick (Rev 2:5). It is possible that the outbreak of iniquity within the church is the result of God turning it over to its own corrupt desires (Psa 81:11-12). The staggering divisions among believers may be the result of God scattering the people as He did at Babel (Gen 11:8), and with the covenanted people of Israel (Deut 30:3). O, that God would raise up a host of

HOWEVER, IT SEEMS TO ME THAT WE ARE LIVING IN A PERIOD OF TIME IN WHICH DIVINE JUDGMENT HAS BEEN POURED OUT UPON THE CHURCH ITSELF. THE DIVISIONS WITHIN IT, TOGETHER WITH THE INEXCUSABLE LACK OF INTEREST IN THE THINGS OF GOD, AND THE PRESENCE OF REMARKABLE LEVELS OF SIN, TESTIFY TO THIS.

dealt treacherously with Abimelech” (Judg 9:23).

- ▶ *“And God **sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the LORD beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite”*** (1 Chron 21:15).
- ▶ *“So the LORD **sent a pestilence** upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men”* (2 Sam 24:15).
- ▶ *“And so it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they feared not the LORD: therefore **the LORD sent lions among them, which slew some of them”*** (2 Kgs 17:25).
- ▶ *“And the LORD **sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of***

from the Lord. This is particularly true in view of the records of the flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the scattering at Babel. If it is countered that these were not God’s people, then let men recall the judgment of Israel in the Babylonian captivity, the smiting of Ananias and Sapphira, and the solemn warnings of judgment to the churches of Asia (Rev 2:5,16, 22-23; 3:3,16). Let them remember the tempest at Sinai (Heb 12:18), and the falling of an entire generation in the wilderness (1 Cor 10:5; Heb 3:10).

There is also the testimony of Job: *“What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? **In all this did not Job sin with his lips”*** (Job 2:10).

Daniel Confesses the Truth

In his *“confession,”* Daniel is speaking the truth. He looks at the grief of the Babylonian captivity, in which he himself was taken captive. He knew there were numbers of people who died in the onslaught of Jerusalem (Jer 39:6, and many were taken captive (2 Kgs 24:14). The king was blinded, and his sons were

sensitive souls like Daniel in this generation – souls that will stand in the

gap and acknowledge the true situation of the people. How sorely they are needed, in

order that recovery may be realized, and God duly glorified in the church!

AS IT IS WRITTEN

“¹³ As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand Thy truth.”

Now Daniel goes back to the Law of Moses – that is, the Law “*given by Moses*” (John 1:17). He will affirm that from the very beginning, even at Mount Sinai, the Lord made clear what would happen if the people departed from Him and thus failed to keep His Word. Thus he is not only acknowledging the waywardness of the people, but removing all excuses or explanations for it.

WRITTEN IN THE LAW

“As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us . . . ”

God spoke through Moses with remarkable specificity. *“But if ye will not hearken unto Me, and will not do all these commandments; and if ye shall despise My statutes, or if your soul abhor My judgments, so that ye will not do all My commandments, but that ye break My covenant: I also will do this unto you”* (Lev 26:15-16). The details of what He would do are staggering, striking fear into every humble heart.

- ▶ Appoint over them sudden terror, consumption and fever that will; waste away the eyes and cause the soul to pine away. ^{16a}
- ▶ Cause them to sow seed uselessly, for their enemies would eat the fruit. ^{16b}
- ▶ Set His face against them so they would be struck down by their enemies. ^{17a}
- ▶ Those that hated them would rule over them. ^{17b}
- ▶ They would flee when no one was pursuing them. ^{17c}

- ▶ Break down their pride of power. ^{19a}
- ▶ Make the sky like iron and the earth

heap their remains on the remains of their idols. ³⁰

- ▶ Lay waste their cities, make their

HE WILL AFFIRM THAT FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, EVEN AT MOUNT SINAI, THE LORD MADE CLEAR WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE PEOPLE DEPARTED FROM HIM AND THUS FAILED TO KEEP HIS WORD. THUS HE IS NOT ONLY ACKNOWLEDGING THE WAYWARDNESS OF THE PEOPLE, BUT REMOVING ALL EXCUSES OR EXPLANATIONS FOR IT.

like brass, crushing them between. ^{19b}

- ▶ Their strength would be spent uselessly, for their land would not yield its produce to them, nor their trees their fruit. ²⁰
- ▶ Let loose upon them the beasts of the field that would rob them of their children, destroy their cattle, and reduce their number so their roads would be idle. ²²
- ▶ God would act with hostility against them. ²⁴
- ▶ He would bring the sword upon them, avenging His broken covenant. ²⁵
- ▶ When they gathered into their cities, He would send a pestilence among them so they would be delivered into their enemies hand. ²⁵
- ▶ God would break the staff of their bread, so ten women would bake in one oven and the bread would still have to be rationed. ²⁶
- ▶ They would eat the flesh of their sons and daughters. ²⁹
- ▶ He would destroy their high places, cut down their incense altars, and

sanctuaries desolate, and not smell their sacrificial odors. ³¹

- ▶ Make their land so desolate that the enemies who settled in it would be appalled. ³² (Leviticus 26)

In recapitulating the Law, Moses also spoke of the curses that would come upon them if they would “*not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day.*” These curses would be devastating, and the people would not be able to avoid them. The Lord said “*that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee.*” Ponder the magnitude of them.

- ▶ They would be cursed in the city and in the field. ¹⁶
- ▶ Their basket and kneading bowl would be cursed. ¹⁷
- ▶ The fruit of their body, the fruit of their land, the increase of their herds, and the young of the flocks would be cursed. ¹⁸
- ▶ They would be cursed coming in and going out as well. ¹⁹
- ▶ In everything they set their hand to

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THOSE WHO HAVE A PROPENSITY TO LAW OUGHT TO MEMORIZE THIS SECTION OF SCRIPTURE. IF YOU WANT TO COME TO GOD UPON THE BASIS OF DOING, THEN PONDER WHAT THE LORD REQUIRES UNDER SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT.

do, God would send upon them cursing, vexation, and rebuke, until they would be destroyed.²⁰

- ▶ He would cause pestilence to cling to them until they were consumed from the land.²¹
- ▶ He would smite them with consumption, fever, inflammation, fiery heat, the sword, blight, and mildew – which would pursue them until they perished.²²
- ▶ The heaven over them would be brass, and the earth beneath them would be iron.²³
- ▶ He would make the rain of their land powder and dust.²⁴
- ▶ He would cause them to be defeated by their enemies.²⁵
- ▶ Their carcasses would be food to all the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth, which would not be able to be frightened away.²⁶
- ▶ The Lord would smite them with the boils of Egypt, tumors, the scab, and the itch, from which they would not be able to be healed.²⁷
- ▶ He would smite them with madness, blindness, and bewilderment of heart.²⁸
- ▶ They would not prosper in their ways, but would be continually robbed and oppressed.²⁹
- ▶ They would betroth a wife, but another man would violate her.^{30a}
- ▶ They would build a house, and

another would live in it.^{30b}

- ▶ They would plant a vineyard, and another would eat of it.^{30c}
- ▶ Their oxen would be slaughtered before their eyes, but they would not be able to eat of it.^{31a}
- ▶ Their donkey would be torn away from them, and not given back.^{31b}
- ▶ Their sheep would be given to their enemies, and no one would be able to save them.^{31c}
- ▶ Their son and daughters would be given to another people, and their eyes would yearn after them, but they would not be able to do anything about it.³²
- ▶ A people they did not know would eat the produce of their ground, and the people would see nothing but oppression and crushing.³³
- ▶ They would be driven mad by what they would see.³⁴
- ▶ The Lord would strike them on the knees and legs with sore boils, from which they could not be healed – from the crown of their head to the soles of their feet.³⁵
- ▶ The Lord would bring them and their king to a nation they had never known, and there they would serve gods of wood and stone.³⁶
- ▶ They would become a horror, a proverb, and a taunt among the people where God would scatter them.³⁷

- ▶ They would sow much seed into the field, but would gather little, for the locust would consume it.³⁸
- ▶ They would plant and cultivate vineyards, but the worm would eat them.³⁹
- ▶ There would be olive trees throughout their land, but they would gain no benefit, for olives would drop off.⁴⁰
- ▶ They would have sons and daughters, but they would go into captivity.⁴¹
- ▶ Swarms of locusts would take over all of their trees and crops.⁴²
- ▶ The stranger among them would rise higher and higher, and they would sink lower and lower.⁴³
- ▶ The stranger among them would lend to them and be their head.⁴⁴

What of These Things?

And what will we say of all these warnings. Was there any lack of clarity in them? Were they not fearful to consider? Did they not confirm that God was absolutely serious in making these statements? Is there the slightest hint that they were just figures of speech, and that the people had nothing to fear?

Yet, in spite of all of these things, the people refused to hearken to the Lord or His Prophets. **If behavior can be corrected by threats, these ought to have been enough.**

Those who have a propensity to Law ought to memorize this section of Scripture. **If you want to come to God upon the basis of doing, then ponder what the Lord requires under such an arrangement.**

WE DID NOT PRAY

“ . . . yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God . . . ” Other versions read, *“yet we have not sought the favor of the Lord our God,”*^{NASB} and *“We did not entreat the favor of the Lord our God.”*^{NRSV}

There is a teaching among certain *Christians* that affirms it is not possible

to fall away from the Lord. This postulate is based upon the supposition that God will chasten the wayward soul back from its departure, and that His chastening will be effective. It all makes sense to those who are unacquainted with the ways of the Lord.

Here is a case in point – an actual incident that took place in revealed history, and was written for our admonition. Chastening of an unprecedented order took place, and yet the people did not turn back to the Lord. **Even though all manners of woes fell upon the children of Judah, yet they did not pray, seek the favor of God, or even plead for mercy.**

This is not the only place the Spirit draws this to our attention. Isaiah makes a powerful point of Israel's hard-heartedness. *"Therefore the LORD shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and join his enemies together; the Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still. For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the LORD of hosts. Therefore the LORD will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day"* (Isa 9:11-14).

Jeremiah makes the same point. *"And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto Me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the LORD. And the LORD said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah"* (Jer 3:10-11).

Hosea also declares this condition. *"Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not. And the pride of Israel testifieth to his face: and they do not return to the LORD their God, nor seek him for all this. Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart: they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria"* (Hosea 7:9-11).

Sin Hardens the Heart

We must learn from this that sin hardens the heart, making it more

difficult to return to the Lord – or even ask for mercy to return to Him. There are few doctrines as dangerous as those that cause people to suppose their sin has no effect upon them or their salvation. And yet, such doctrines are remarkably popular. **Even those who do not subscribe to such delusions often conduct their lives as though they were true.** They dabble in sin as if nothing will ever come from it. When the Lord deals with them, their hearts have become so calloused they credit their calamities to other things, refusing to seek the Lord even though He is laying

themselves from the iniquity that has enslaved them.

Other Testimonies

We are not shut up to reasoning on this matter. When Jeremiah besought the mercy of the Lord for His people, this is how he prayed. *"Turn Thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old. But thou hast utterly rejected us; thou art very wroth against us"* (Lam 5:21-22).

The Psalmist also prayed in this manner. *"Turn us again, O God, and*

THERE ARE FEW DOCTRINES AS DANGEROUS AS THOSE THAT CAUSE PEOPLE TO SUPPOSE THEIR SIN HAS NO EFFECT UPON THEM OR THEIR SALVATION. AND YET, SUCH DOCTRINES ARE REMARKABLY POPULAR.

the rod of chastisement upon them.

TURNING AND UNDERSTANDING

"... that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand Thy truth." Here there is not agreement in the various translations. Some say the people did not make their prayer to God, or entreat Him, IN ORDER that they *"might turn from the iniquities and understand His truth."* KJV/ASV/BBE/DARBY/DOUAY/GENEVA/SEPTUAGINT/WEBSTER/YLT Others read that they did not turn from their iniquities in order that they might entreat the Lord: *"yet we have not sought the favor of the Lord BY turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Thy truth,"* NASB/NIV/NJB/NLT

In my judgment, the latter view is a wholly improper one. Elsewhere we are told that those in Christ, who have access to more than those under the Old covenant, must be *"given repentance"* that leads to the *"acknowledging of the truth,"* BEFORE they can *"recover themselves out of the snare of the devil"* (2 Tim 2:25-26). **Men ought to know better than to imagine they can turn**

cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved" (Psa 80:3). And again, *"Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved"* (Psa 80:7). And again, *"Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved"* (Psa 80:19). Again he prayed, *"Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause Thine anger toward us to cease"* (Psa 85:4).

Through Jeremiah the Lord said, *"I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn Thou me, and I shall be turned; for Thou art the LORD my God"* (Jer 31:18).

Habaukkuk prayed, *"O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive Thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy"* (Hab 3:2).

Until Turned, Men Cannot Understand

Until Israel was turned from their

Daniel continues his confession of Israel's sin, finally making an appeal to God's mercy, by Given O. Blakely

iniquity, they would not be able to understand the truth of God. **Truth cannot be comprehended by a heart and mind that are given over to iniquity.** Also, Divine involvement in the awakening of souls is confirmed in the word given concerning Lydia: *“whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended*

unto the things which were spoken of Paul” (Acts 16:14). Other versions read, *“The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message,”*^{NIV} *“The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul.”*^{NRSV}

You cannot get a round it: men

cannot turn to God independently of Him. He must be involved in anything having to do with coming to Him..

Daniel confesses that although the people drifted from God, they still did not seek the Lord for strength to recover. Their hearts did not turn upward.

THE LORD WATCHED AND BROUGHT

“14 Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all His works which He doeth: for we obeyed not His voice.”

Daniel now traces the woes of

Lord. The idea conveyed by the word *“watched”* is this: **the Lord looked for the proper time to administer the chastening of reference.** We see in this the faithfulness of God’s word, whether for blessing or cursing, for deliverance or for judgment. Just as the

that judgment be ministered to them, and they reap what they had sowed. He did not judge them prematurely or without due cause. In this way, He proved Himself to be longsuffering, and not willing that they perish.

Second, He looked for the time that would yield the optimum benefit to the people, and glory for Himself. By dealing with them in a timely manner, both men and angels would behold His wisdom, even in the execution of His wrath. Also, after the judgment, godly men would be able to look back on the occasion and learn from the experience.

THE LORD HAS CAUSED ALL OF THIS TO HAPPEN, IN STRICT ACCORD WITH WHAT HE HAD SAID HE WOULD DO. THEIR PLIGHT HAD BEEN ORCHESTRATED BY THE GOD OF HEAVEN.

HE BROUGHT IT UPON US

“ . . . and brought it upon us . . . ”

The *“it”* is God’s promise to send the people into captivity if they refused to do what He commanded them.

Israel to the righteous working of the Lord. He has been faithful to His character and His Word, for *“He cannot deny Himself”* (2 Tim 2:13). Daniel’s faith has brought him into accord with God, and thus he does not speculate or philosophize about the circumstances of Israel. Rather, he is God-centered in his thinking, perceiving and confessing the reason for their affliction.

deliverance of the people from Egypt was precisely on time, so was their judgment for refusing to honor God’s Law.

Jeremiah expressed the thought Daniel is articulating. *“And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the LORD”* (Jer 32:28). And again, *“Behold, I will watch over them for evil, and not for good: and all the men of Judah that are in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by the famine, until there be an end of them”* (Jer 44:27).

A news analyst would look at the Babylonian captivity, with its associated sufferings, and conclude that Nebuchadnezzar was superior in military strategy, and that the Jews were weak and inferior to him. Their plight would be traced to military weakness, organizational inferiority, social deficiencies, or some other socioeconomic inadequacy. The prognosticator would trace it to fate, and the military strategist to the element of surprise.

WATCHED UPON THE EVIL

“Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil . . . ” Other versions read, *“the Lord kept the disaster in mind,”*^{NKJV} *“the Lord has kept the calamity in store,”*^{NASB} *“the Lord did not hesitate,”*^{NIV} *“the Lord has kept ready the calamity,”*^{RSV} *“the Lord has made ready the plague,”*^{GENEVA} and *“Yahweh has watched for the right moment.”*^{NJB}

The *“evil”* of reference is the affliction, or calamity, that was the appointed outcome of sinning against the

Reasons for Waiting

There are at least two reasons why the Lord *“watched”* to bring evil upon the people.

First, He looked for the cup of their iniquity to be filled, thus requiring

But none of this was true. With clarity of understanding, Daniel sees what has happened. God has *“brought”* all of these things upon them. **The Lord has CAUSED all of this to happen, in strict accord with what He had said He would do.** Their plight had been orchestrated by the God of heaven. He had called for Nebuchadnezzar to do His

Daniel continues his confession of Israel’s sin, finally making an appeal to God’s mercy, by Given O. Blakely

own work, and therefore referred to that king as “*My servant*” (Jer 27:6).

None of their disobedience had gone unnoticed, even though it had spanned a period of four hundred and ninety years. Patiently the Lord had waited for them. With staggering longsuffering He had endured their hardness of heart and disobedient spirits. But in due time, He visited their transgressions upon them, and fulfilled His word against them.

GOD IS RIGHTEOUS

“ . . . for the **LORD** our God is righteous in all His works which He doeth: for we obeyed not His voice.”

It is one thing to acknowledge the Lord has brought calamity and hardship upon His people. It is quite another to confess He was altogether righteous in doing so. God was righteous in bringing the people out of Egypt, and He was righteous in sending them into captivity to Babylon.

When the Jews of Nehemiah’s day made their confession, they said the same thing. “*Howbeit thou art just in all that is*

IT IS ONE THING TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE LORD HAS BROUGHT CALAMITY AND HARDSHIP UPON HIS PEOPLE. IT IS QUITE ANOTHER TO CONFESS HE WAS ALTOGETHER RIGHTEOUS IN DOING SO.

brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly” (Neh 9:33). Abraham said of God, “*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*” (Gen 18:25) – and he was reasoning with God concerning the fiery destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Psalmist confessed, “*The LORD is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all his works*” (Psa 145:17).

We Did Not Obey

Note, the reason for which Daniel declares the Lord was righteous in bringing evil upon them. It was not merely because the Lord did it – although that was reason enough. **Rather, Daniel confesses the Lord was righteous in executing this lengthy and far-reaching judgment “for we obeyed not His voice.”** Another version casts a

little different light on the confession. “. . . **yet we have not obeyed Him.**”^{NIV} That is, in spite of the judgment, we have still not obeyed – i.e., during the seventy-year captivity! **However, I do not think this is the meaning of the text.**

While I do not question this was the case, the statement is **one of contrast**. God was righteous in what He did, but they were disobedient and wicked in what they did.

Daniel’s expression is similar to the one made by the repentant people of Nehemiah’s day: “*Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for Thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly*” (Neh 9:33). The confession is that of being unlike God.

BROUGHT OUT OF EGYPT

“¹⁵ **And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought Thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten Thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly.**”

Daniel has stated the facts in the case, which his faith has given him to see. He has confessed that God has been righteous in all His doings, and the people have been sinful. This has been the introduction to his prayer. **He has paved his approach to God with the acknowledgment of the truth, and has done so with honesty and fervency.** However, Daniel is not praying only to confess to the situation. He is seeking a remedy for it. He does this because he knows the captivity is drawing to a close. He will now ask God to do what He has promised to do. As it is written,

“*Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them*” (Ezek 36:37).

AND NOW

“*And now . . .*” **Daniel now begins to reason with the Lord**, doing so in accord with the word of Isaiah: “*Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool*” (Isa 1:18). He is going to present, or “order,” his “cause” before the Lord, and “fill” his “mouth with arguments.” Job had desired to do this when he felt as though he had no access to God: “*Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would*

answer me, and understand what he would say unto me” (Job 23:3-5).

Daniel is now keenly aware of God, and his mind has been shaped by His Word. He has lived by faith, and has an understanding of God. He will now plead the case for the people.

LORD OUR GOD

“*O Lord our God . . .*” When Daniel first mentioned this prayer, he said he was praying to “*the Lord my God*” (9:4a). In this, he was emphasizing his own personal relationship to the Lord. In the prayer itself, he addressed the “*Lord, the great and dreadful God*” (9:4b). In this he was acknowledging the Sovereignty and greatness of the Lord. Now Daniel refers to “*our God.*” **In this he is appealing to the One who is in covenant with Israel.** Although they

Daniel continues his confession of Israel’s sin, finally making an appeal to God’s mercy, by Given O. Blakely

have proven to be unfaithful, Daniel now entreats the God who had made a covenant with them, and is faithful to that covenant.

BROUGHT THY PEOPLE FORTH

“ . . . that hast brought Thy people forth out of the land of Egypt . . . ”

Here is a strong appeal to the God

A Principle to Be Seen

When an individual or a group comes before God, **the most effective approach is an appeal to what He has done.** Those who, like the Pharisee who prayed *“with himself,”* cite their own achievements are not coming in a proper spirit to the Lord (Lk 18:11). Far better to come in recognition of the Lord’s works and faithfulness, than to attempt to find

devoted to those who are in Him (Eph 1:19-20).

GOTTEN THEE RENOWN

“ . . . and hast gotten Thee renown, as at this day . . . ” Other versions read, *“made Yourself a name, as it is this day,”* ^{NKJV} *“made for Yourself a name that endures to this day,”* ^{NIV} and *“the renown you won then endures to this day.”* ^{NJB}

DANIEL NOW MAKES HIS APPEAL UPON THE BASIS OF THE GREATNESS OF GOD’S NAME. HE HAS A MIND FOR THE GLORY OF GOD, AND DESIRES FOR HIS GREAT NAME TO AGAIN BE PROCLAIMED AND VINDICATED.

While Israel’s deliverance from *“the iron furnace”* (Deut 4:20) brought great benefits to them, it brought even greater glory to God. Even though Israel became well known because of the deliverance, the Lord became known to an even greater degree. Israel’s benefit was great, but God’s gain was greater.

When the Lord sent Moses to Pharaoh, he told him to demand that Pharaoh let HIS people go (Ex 5:1;7:16; 8:1,20; 9:1,13;10:3). Yet, over and above the deliverance of the people was the exposure to the true God that would result from that glorious event. The Lord told Pharaoh this was the case. *“And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee My power; and that My name may be declared throughout all the earth”* (Ex 9:16).

who keeps *“covenant and mercy with them that love Him”* (9:4). In his prayer, Daniel has confessed there is no reason in the people themselves that will justify receiving mercy from the Lord. He has acknowledged, *“we have sinned . . . committed iniquity . . . done wickedly . . . rebelled . . . departed from Thy precepts and from Thy judgments . . . neither have we hearkened to Thy servants the prophets . . . they have trespassed against Thee . . . we have sinned against Thee”* (9:5-8). **There is no cause in them to expect mercy from the Lord. If Daniel comes to God with the merit of the people in mind, everything will be hopeless.**

a reason to receive goodness from Him in our own miserable achievements.

A MIGHTY HAND

“ . . . with a mighty hand . . . ” The deliverance of Israel from Egypt was a display of Divine power. God’s *“mighty hand”* achieves what He sets out to do. There is no personality that can withstand His *“mighty hand,”* which is devoted to executing His own will.

Daniel now makes his appeal upon the basis of the greatness of God’s name. He has a mind for the glory of God, and desires for His great name to again be proclaimed and vindicated. There can be no doubt about the effectiveness of this approach to the Living God. It is one that is driven by faith and perception.

WE HAVE SINNED AND DONE WICKEDLY

“ . . . we have sinned, we have done wickedly.” Once again, the aged prophet acknowledges that no justification for mercy can be found in the people. They have conducted themselves sinfully and wickedly, with no regard for the name of the Lord.

However, the man of God has a sound mind, and he knows how to approach to the Lord. He will **not** move God to consider His people by citing their miserable condition, or calling to remembrance how they have reacted toward Him. **Instead, He will appeal to the Lord’s working with this people.** In faith, he will point out how the Lord delivered this people, taking them back to their noble beginning. In so doing, he is following the same approach employed by Moses (Ex 32:11; Deut 9:26), Jeremiah (Jer 32:21), David (Psa 136:11-12), and Nehemiah (Neh 9:9-12).

The expression *“mighty hand”* emphasizes what the Lord can do, which is beyond human comprehension. Frequent references are made to the Lord bringing Israel out of Egypt with *“a mighty hand”* (Ex 32:11; Deut 5:15; 6:21; 7:8,19; 9:26; 26:8). Note also that it was GOD’S own people who were brought out with *“a mighty hand”* – a covenanted people who were the offspring of Abraham, to whom *“the promises were made”* (Gal 3:18).

A New Covenant expression that depicts the same truth is this: *“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think”* (Eph 3:20). **In Christ, that power is actually localized in the believer:** *“according to the power that worketh in us.”* That is, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, is now

Thus Daniel begins his plea by a strong appeal to the exaltation of the name of the Lord. God will have to act in accord with His own nature, and in the interest of His own glory. He will have to

show mercy upon the people in spite of their deplorable conduct, and not because they have done any good.

THE DOOR OF HOPE

Daniel has entered into the door of hope – one which God Himself has opened. Hosea, who lived over one hundred years before Daniel, spoke of a door of hope being opened in the very valley where wrath had been experienced. There was a valley named “*the valley of Achor*.” It was a place associated with Divine judgment, being where covetous Achan and his family were stoned to death, and burned, together with all of their possessions. After the stoning had

taken place, the people “*raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day*” (Josh 7:26).

Hosea spoke of a time when hope would again rise in the valley of chastening. “*And I will give her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt*” (Hosea 2:15). **That hope would not rise because of any goodness on the part of Israel, but because of the**

character of God Himself.

By displaying that character in showing mercy upon wayward Israel, the Lord would gain for Himself an even greater name. **Because of that, throughout all history, wherever sinners are driven to despair, the door of hope will be opened to all who look toward the Lord, confess their sins, and seek His mercy.** Those who have been chastened severely can come to the Lord again!

It is surely true, “*But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared*” (Psa 130:4). O that power would be given to us to proclaim this!

ACCORDING TO THY RIGHTEOUSNESS

“¹⁶ O Lord, according to all Thy righteousness, I beseech Thee, let Thine anger and Thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, Thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.”

Daniel continues to produce his cause, and bring forth his strong arguments. Remember, all of this has been prompted by two things. First, his knowledge of God, and second, his understanding of the Scriptures, which have indicated the Babylonian captivity was about to conclude.

Daniel does not assume that the end of the captivity automatically meant a return of blessing and prominence. Indeed, both Scriptural and worldly history confirm that did **not** take place. Faith trusts, but it does not assume things not revealed. The prophet’s knowledge of the nature of God, and the greatness of Israel’s sin compel him to pray in this manner. He will make his appeal upon the basis of God’s righteousness, not the sorrow and oppression of the Israelites. In so doing, he is reflecting the general perception of acceptable prayer that is reflected throughout Scripture. Such prayer is always God-centered.

ACCORDING TO ALL THY RIGHTEOUSNESS

“O Lord, according to all Thy righteousness . . .” Other versions read, “*in accordance with all Thy righteous acts,*” ^{NASB} “*in keeping with all Your righteous acts,*” ^{NIV} “*in view of all Your righteous acts,*” ^{NRSV} and “*because of Your righteousness.*” ^{BBE}

Daniel has just confessed that God was “*righteous*” in pouring forth evil upon the Israelites for their disobedience, rebellion, and refusal to hear His prophets. However, this beloved man knows well that God’s righteous works are not limited to judgments against sinners. **God is also righteous when He shows mercy.** He has revealed Himself to be “*merciful and gracious,*

sin.”

It is true that He will also “*by no means clearing the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation*” (Ex 34:6-7). Daniel knows all too well that his people have tasted of that aspect of the Divine nature. He will now make his appeal to the former and foremost Divine quality that God Himself has accentuated.

There is no doubt that Daniel recalls the Lord’s word to Moses, “*I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy*” (Ex 33:19).

THE “GOODNESS” OF GOD IS AN ASPECT OF HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS. THIS QUALITY, WHICH WE SO SORELY NEED, IS DISPLAYED WHEN GOD WANTS TO BE GRACIOUS TO SOMEONE, AND DESIRES TO SHOW THEM MERCY.

longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and

The “*goodness*” of God is an aspect of His righteousness. **This quality, which we so sorely need, is**

Daniel continues his confession of Israel’s sin, finally making an appeal to God’s mercy, by Given O. Blakely

displayed when God wants to be gracious to someone, and desires to show them mercy. Having an understanding of God, Daniel will now appeal to God to want to be gracious, and to show mercy, to the offspring of Abraham, to whom the promises were given.

An Application

Faith makes strong appeals to the will of the Lord – not only His revealed will, but to His revealed propensity to bless. Thus a certain leper said to Jesus, “Lord, if Thou wilt, thou canst make me clean” (Matt 8:2). The Lord replied, “I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed”

circumstances or personal achievement have been less than is desired or required, recovery will be realized in the fervent seeking for mercy and grace – just as exhibited in Daniel, the “greatly beloved.”

I BESEECH THEE

“ . . . I beseech Thee . . . ” The word “beseech” emphasizes entreaty – a strong appeal, or prayer, to the Lord. Other versions read “I pray,”^{NKJV} and “Lord, please.”^{NLT} The word is not even translated in the other versions (NASB, NIV, RSV, BBE, ESV, and NJB).

Daniel is not ashamed, but is rather bold, to urge the Lord to show mercy upon His people. He is going to

the people to put away their strange wives “until the fierce wrath of our God for this matter be turned from us” (Ezra 10:14). David also appealed to this Divine tendency: “But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned He His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath” (Psa 78:38).

Daniel’s acquaintance with Scripture, and his familiarity with God Himself, moved him to pray in such a manner. Words cannot fully convey the power of such an approach to God.

An Application

I feel compelled to draw attention to the some of the penalties for a fundamental ignorance of the Word of the Lord. When men are unacquainted with what is “contained in Scripture” (1 Pet 2:6), it directly impacts upon how they pray. Such people cannot properly assess the conditions in which they find themselves, nor can they make petitions for what is actually needed. I do not doubt that much of the deficiency within the professed church is directly traceable to this situation. There are precious few Daniels in this day who can approach the throne of all grace with a proper frame of mind. Prayer, particularly public prayer, tends to be too self centered, with too few appeals for grace and mercy.

THE CITY AND THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

“ . . . from thy city Jerusalem, Thy holy mountain . . . ” Other versions read, “from Thy city Jerusalem, Thy holy mountain,”^{NASB} and “from Jerusalem. Your city, Your holy hill.”^{NIV}

Here again, Daniel rises to spiritual heights. First he approaches to obtain grace, appealing to the Lord’s nature to grant mercy. Now, however, he does not plead for the people, but for the city of Jerusalem – the place where God had placed His name (1 Kgs 11:36). As a whole, the people have not occupied the city for seventy years. It has remained under the dominion of the heathen, with no Jewish king. Also, the situation was the same as it was during the days of king Asa: “Now for a long season Israel hath

FAITH MAKES STRONG APPEALS TO THE WILL OF THE LORD – NOT ONLY HIS REVEALED WILL, BUT TO HIS REVEALED PROPENSITY TO BLESS.

(Matt 8:3).

There were also two blind men who sensed the Savior’s inclination to show mercy. Therefore they cried out, “Thou Son of David, have mercy upon us.” Their request was honored (Matt 9:27-29).

And who can forget the cry of the publican: “God be merciful to me a sinner.” Jesus said “he went down to his house justified” (Lk 18:13-14). In fact, the New Covenant, fully ratified by the blood of Jesus, contains this promise, “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Heb 8:12). What a marvelous pillar upon which to build the covenant.

Believers are urged to seek God’s mercy and grace – and to do so boldly, or confidently. “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb 4:16). If

plead with the Lord as Moses did on the summit of Sinai.

THE TURNING OF ANGER AND FURY

“ . . . let Thine anger and Thy fury be turned away . . . ”

Here is a most powerful appeal! There are those who feel the anger and fury of God cannot be turned toward those whom He has blessed. But what will such sophists do with this prayer, for God had blessed Israel, making them a nation, delivering them from Egypt, and giving them the promised land.

Daniel pleads, as I have said, in the same manner as Moses, who said, “Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people . . . And the LORD repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people” (Ex 32:14). He no doubt also knew of the time of Joshua, when the Lord “turned the fierceness of His anger” away from the people (Josh 7:26). Ezra also knew of this approach to God and therefore counseled

been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law” (2 Chron 15:3).

How can such a condition be rectified? **Daniel cannot plead upon the basis of the people’s longing for the blessing of the Lord, for no such longing has been evidenced.** As a people, they had not even sought the Lord, as Daniel has already confessed. But the prophet does not conclude the

Jerusalem’s sake which I have chosen” (1 Kgs 11:13). Now Daniel appeals to God upon the basis of this city.

God’s Holy Mountain

The Psalmist associated Jerusalem with *“the holy mountains”* (Psa 87:1-2), saying it was *“beautiful for situation”* (Psa 48:2). In Joel God also referred to Jerusalem as *“Zion, My holy mountain”* (Joel 3:17). In one of his prophecies, Zechariah also spoke in this manner.

further revealed Himself.

God had placed His name upon Jerusalem, and filled the Temple with His glory (1 Kgs 8:11). Now Daniel makes these epochs key points in his prayer. **He reasons with God upon the basis of what He Himself has done.**

Once again, I want emphasize the impact of the knowledge of Scripture and personal familiarity with God upon acceptable prayer. It should be exceedingly apparent from this text that Daniel’s prayer was shaped by the hammer of the Word and the chisel of knowing Him. **These indispensable factors moved him to frame his prayer with faith and hope, and couch it in acceptable words.** There is power in his prayer because of the truth expressed in it by faith.

WHEN PEOPLE BECOME A REPROACH

“ . . . because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.”

The man of God can go no further until he again acknowledges the condition and unworthiness of the people in an iniquity that had been willingly among them for some time – *“our sins,”* and *“the iniquities of our fathers.”* As a result, the place and the people who had been chosen to bring glory to God had become *“a reproach to all that were about”* them. When people saw the holy city, they did not think of a mighty God. When they saw the chastened and defeated people of Judah, they did not think about a people with a great and mighty God. **Both Jerusalem and the people had become occasions for reproach.** How this must have saddened the sensitive heart of Daniel!

AN APPLICATION

The similarities between Jerusalem and the people, and the church of the Western world are staggering. The city God set on a hill has become a reproach, and the people who wear His name have become an occasion for shame. Somebody needs to confess it, and seek mercy from the Lord. The degeneration has gone too far! The scattering of the

I WANT EMPHASIZE THE IMPACT OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF SCRIPTURE AND PERSONAL FAMILIARITY WITH GOD UPON ACCEPTABLE PRAYER. IT SHOULD BE EXCEEDINGLY APPARENT FROM THIS TEXT THAT DANIEL’S PRAYER WAS SHAPED BY THE HAMMER OF THE WORD AND THE CHISEL OF KNOWING HIM.

situation is hopeless because of the miserable deficiency of the people. Thus he makes a higher and more effective appeal. He has already reminded the Lord that He is a covenant keeping God (v 4), that He has been righteous in punishing them (v 7,14), that *“mercies and forgivenesses”* belong to Him (v 9), and that He delivered the people from Egypt (v 15). **Now he adds another consideration in his powerful intercession. It is the city of God!**

God’s City

Daniel does not refer to Jerusalem as **their** capital or chief city, but **God’s city** – His *“holy mountain.”* It belonged to Him because He had chosen to put His name there – that is, to associate Himself with that city. It was for the sake of this city that God had not pulled the kingdom away from Solomon. As it is written, *“Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant’s sake, and for*

“Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain” (Zech 8:3). Other references to God’s *“holy mountain”* include the following: Isa 11:9; 56:7; 57:13; 65:11,25; 66:20; Ezek 20:40; Joel 2:1; Obadiah 1:16; Zeph 3:11.

The Temple in Jerusalem was actually built upon a mountain. We are told that Solomon built the temple on Mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared to David. Some have conjectured that it was also the place where Abraham was commanded to offer Isaac. *“Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite”* 2 Chron 3:1). That is what made Jerusalem the *“holy mountain”* – the presence of the Temple in which God

people is too extensive. The powerlessness of the professed church is too evident. O,

for men who can discern the times, and stand in the gap for the people,

powerfully pleading with the Lord! How sorely they are needed!

HEAR OUR PRAYER!

“¹⁷ Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of Thy servant, and his supplications, and cause Thy face to shine upon Thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord’s sake.”

Daniel knows the situation can only change by means of a Divine initiative. The people will not be able to work their way back into the favor of God. They have been too weakened by their sin to recover themselves. They will need the favor of God – the kind disposition and outpouring of a gracious God. Therefore, Daniel pleads with the Lord, beseeching or entreating Him to look favorably upon both Jerusalem and the people. **He knows the people are powerless without Jerusalem, and Jerusalem is pointless without the people.** If the city is not blessed, the people will not be able to benefit by a return to it. If the people are not blessed, there will be no reason to return to the Jerusalem.

HEAR THE PRAYER!

“Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of Thy servant, and his supplications . . .”

The man of God does not take answered prayer for granted. It is true, *“The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry”* (Psa 34:15). However, Daniel does not assume an answer to his prayer. He rather pleads that God will hear his prayer and supplications.

The surface thinker might imagine this to be an evidence of unbelief. Instead, it is the proof of faith. He is producing his cause to the Lord, and part of the presentation is a strong appeal to the Lord to hear his prayer intently and with a mind to answer it. Daniel longs for his prayer and supplications to be honored in heaven.

Five times David, a man after God’s own heart, cried out, *“hear my prayer!”* (Psa 4:1; 39:12; 54:2; 84:8; 102:1;

143:1). In praying for Jerusalem and the scattered people, Nehemiah also prayed, *“hear the prayer of Thy servant”* (Neh 1:6). Elijah also cried out on Mount Carmel, *“O Lord, hear me!”* (1 Kgs 18:37).

Solomon’s Prayer

In Solomon’s dedicatory prayer, he called upon the Lord to hear the prayers of His people when they went out to battle, and to maintain their cause: *“If thy people go out to battle against their enemy, whithersoever thou shalt send them, and shall pray unto the LORD toward the city which thou hast chosen,*

the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name: Then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause” (1 Kgs 8:46-49).

Now Daniel is living in a foreign land, into which the people had been carried because they had sinned. He is doing exactly what Solomon said, in precisely the manner he described. **Yet,**

SIMPLY PUT, IT IS BECAUSE SIN CREATES A VAST GULF BETWEEN GOD AND MAN. THE MORE SIN DOMINATES, THE LARGER THE GAP. SIN DESENSITIZES THE HEART OF MAN, AND REPELS THE HEART OF GOD. THE HEAVENS TEND TO BECOME LIKE BRASS WHEN A COVENANTED PEOPLE INDULGE IN SIN.

and toward the house that I have built for thy name: then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause” (1 Kgs 8:44-45). He also prayed concerning the time the people sinned and were consequently carried away captives into the land of the enemy. *“If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near; yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; and so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in*

the prophet does not take for granted that God will hear his prayer. He pleads with God to hear him. He knows his prayer has been evoked by a humble and trusting heart, and motivated by an understanding of the Word of God. He realizes God has promised to hear such prayers. Still, he beseeches the Lord as David did, *“Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer”* (Psa 4:1). Why is it necessary for him to speak in such a manner?

Sin Creates A Gap

There is a reason for this kind of fervency. Simply put, it is because **sin creates a vast gulf between God and man.** The more sin dominates, the larger

Daniel continues his confession of Israel’s sin, finally making an appeal to God’s mercy, by Given O. Blakely

the gap. **Sin desensitizes the heart of man, and repels the heart of God.** The heavens tend to become like brass when a covenanted people indulge in sin. The approach to God is still open to contrite hearts under such conditions, but it remains narrow, indeed. **It is not possible to have a keen awareness of the dominance of sin, and yet casually approach the Lord.** The condition requires the merging of faith and fervency, else the vast chasm cannot be traversed.

When sin has been dominant, men must approach the Lord in all humility. Although faith is able to overcome all fear and doubt, the keen

tender mercies? Selah" (Psa 77:7-9).

The spirit of the eighty-ninth Psalm had been realized by the entire nation. *"But Thou hast cast off and abhorred, Thou hast been wroth with thine anointed. Thou hast made void the covenant of Thy servant: Thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground. Thou hast broken down all his hedges; Thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin. All that pass by the way spoil him: he is a reproach to his neighbors. Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries; thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice. Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword, and hast not made him to stand in the battle. Thou*

written, *"I will hide My face from them . . . I will surely hide My face in that day for all the evils which they have wrought . . . He will even hide His face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings"* (Deut 31:17,18; Micah 3:4). From this point of view, causing His face to shine is the same as no longer hiding His face (Psa 27:9; 69:17; 102:2; 143:17).

His Presence Becomes Conspicuous
Wherever God causes His face to shine, His presence and favor become conspicuous, thereby inducing hope and enabling recovery.

David's Prayers

David prayed for this blessing: *"Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant: save me for Thy mercies' sake"* (Psa 31:16). He taught the people to use such words in their songs: *"To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm or Song: God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause His face to shine upon us; Selah"* (Psa 67:1). This Divine posture was also associated with turning the people back to God: *"Turn us again, O God, and cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved"* (Psa 80:3,7,19). It is the means whereby understanding is imparted to the sons of men: *"Make Thy face to shine upon thy servant; and teach me thy statutes"* (Psa 119:135).

In this expression grace, mercy, and blessing are prominent. It is more than forgiveness – it is restoration to Divine favor. The spirit of the experience is found in David's penitential prayer: *"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free spirit"* (Psa 51:7-12). **That is the experience of God's face shining upon someone.** That Divine posture – the shining of His face upon a person – enables recovery from both sin and the chastening incurred by it.

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO HAVE A KEEN AWARENESS OF THE DOMINANCE OF SIN, AND YET CASUALLY APPROACH THE LORD. THE CONDITION REQUIRES THE MERGING OF FAITH AND FERVENCY, ELSE THE VAST CHASM CANNOT BE TRAVERSED.

awareness of God's hatred of sin moves the godly to pray in such a manner. Not enough is being said about this in our day.

CAUSE THY FACE TO SHINE

" . . . and cause Thy face to shine upon Thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake." Other versions read, *"and for Thy sake, O Lord, let Thy face shine on Thy desolate sanctuary,"* ^{NASB} *"For your sake, O Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary."* ^{NIV}

Mark it well, for nearly seventy years, the Lord's anger had been abiding upon Judah and Jerusalem. The city and Temple associated with His great name had been made desolate because of that anger. The heart of the people must have often breathed the words of the psalmist, *"Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will He be favorable no more? Is His mercy clean gone for ever? doth His promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath He in anger shut up His*

hast made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground" (Psa 89:38-44). **Such a condition would have utterly devastated the ordinary man – but Daniel is no ordinary man!** He knows how to approach the Lord in such times.

Cause Thy Face to Shine

This is the language of favor and blessing. It is the opposite of God setting His face *"against"* someone (Lev 26:7; Jer 44:11). When God causes His face to shine upon something or someone, He looks with pity, and mercy, with the intention to bless and benefit. Thus the Aaronic blessing included these marvelous words, *"The LORD make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace"* (Num 6:25-26).

Opposite of Hiding His Face

This is the opposite of God hiding His face, which is His reaction to deliberate and continued sin. As it is

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The Ultimate Experience

The ultimate fulfillment of this experience takes place in the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. As it is written, *“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, **hath shined in our hearts**, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”* (2 Cor 4:6).

By causing His face to shine, the Lord breaks through the barrier created by sin. **All obstacles are overcome, and the penetrating favor of the God of heaven comes to rest upon the object of His attention.** Malachi described it in these words: *“But unto you that fear my name shall **the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings**; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall”* (Mal 4:2).

Upon Thy Sanctuary

Notice how carefully Daniel frames his prayer. He has already mentioned the total unworthiness of the people. He knows their conduct has provoked the Lord of glory. Therefore, he centers upon God’s *“sanctuary.”*

The Temple. The *“sanctuary”* is the Temple in particular, which is often so identified (1 Chron 22:19; Psa 74:7; Isa 63:18; Lam 2:17; Dan 8:11).

The Holy of Holies. The holy of holies, the heart of the Temple, was also referred to as *“the Sanctuary”* (Ex 15:17; Lev 4:6).

Judah. Judah, within which the Temple was situated, is also called *“His sanctuary”* (Psa 114:2).

What Made It the Sanctuary?

The word *“sanctuary”* means something that is sacred, consecrated or hallowed – a holy place. It was the presence of the Lord that made the sanctuary a *“sanctuary.”* When the tabernacle was built, the glory of the Lord *“filled the tabernacle,”* and no man was able to enter into it (Ex 40:34-35). When the Temple was completed, *“the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord,”* so that even the priests could not stand to minister in it (1 Kgs 8:11).

The dominating glory that

dedicated the Temple is what caused it to be called *“the sanctuary.”* It is also what caused Jerusalem to have God’s name placed in it, and Judah to be a place and people associated with God. Men cannot make anything a *“sanctuary.”* Only the Presence of the Lord can accomplish that.

“That Is Desolate”

The desolation of the Temple involved more than Nebuchadnezzar removing its sacred vessels (2 Chron 36:7), and the burning down of the Temple itself (2 Kgs 25:9). **The**

and the consequent Babylonian captivity, were the confirmation that God’s glory had departed from the sanctuary. The same thing had happened as took place when the Philistines took the ark of the covenant and placed it in Ashdod. At that time, the daughter-in-law of Eli gave birth to a son. The scriptures say of the naming of that child, *“And she named the child **Ichabod**, saying, **The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken**, and because of her father in law and her husband. And she said, **The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God***

NOTICE HOW CAREFULLY DANIEL FRAMES HIS PRAYER. HE HAS ALREADY MENTIONED THE TOTAL UNWORTHINESS OF THE PEOPLE. HE KNOWS THEIR CONDUCT HAS PROVOKED THE LORD OF GLORY. THEREFORE, HE CENTERS UPON GOD’S “SANCTUARY.”

“desolation” was caused more by the withdrawal of God than the devastation of the enemies.

Actually, the *“desolation”* began after the death of Solomon, who built the Temple. Ten of the twelve tribes forsook the Temple, or sanctuary, altogether. Jeroboam moved the centers of worship for the ten tribes from Jerusalem to Bethel and Dan. Of this move it is written, *“the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, **It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi”*** (1 Kgs 12:28-31).

Even the tribe of Judah desecrated the Temple by putting idols in and around it (2 Kgs 21:5; 23:12). **Thus, the sacking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar,**

is taken” (1 Sam 4:21-22).

The departure of the Divine glory from the sanctuary was the particular *“desolation”* of which Daniel spoke. Its outward destruction was subordinate desolation, brought on by the primary one. **Now Daniel asks God to again shine upon His sanctuary, filling it with His glory.** He is praying for the presence and blessing of the Lord to again be restored.

For the Lord’s Sake

Daniel does not ask for Divine favor for his own sake, or the sake of Judah. He pleads with the Lord to shine with favor upon them *“for the Lord’s sake.”* **By this, Daniel pleads for the Lord to consider His own reputation and glory.** He thus moves the attention from the devastated people and sanctuary to the reproach brought upon the name of the Lord Himself. He knew God was motivated by a concern for His own glory. Through Isaiah the Lord had spoken in this way: *“For Mine own sake, even for Mine own sake, will I do it: for how should My name be polluted? and I will not give*

My glory unto another" (Isa 48:11).

Israel had been duly punished for their sin by the fulfilling of the seventy years prophesied by Jeremiah. **Daniel considers that the prolonged desecration of the Temple would dishonor the Lord, and give too much credit to the enemies of the covenanted people.**

This is the same reasoning employed by Moses when he asked the Lord not to destroy the people he was leading. He did not want the Lord to have a bad name.

Moses' Prayer

"And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth Thy wrath wax hot against Thy people,

which Thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did He bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from Thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against Thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Thy servants, to whom Thou swarest by Thine own Self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever" (Ex 32:11-13).

Powerful Reasoning

This is powerful reasoning, having the honor and glory of God in mind. In

the New Covenant, believers are admonished to keep the Lord in mind in even mundane responsibilities. *"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme"* (1 Pet 2:13). Just as surely as God regarded the prayers of Moses and Daniel, such consideration will not be overlooked.

Prayers that earnestly seek the honor of the Lord, and the promotion of His glory, are powerful ones. **The public display of a gracious God is of infinitely greater worth than our personal welfare.** Of course, it is to be understood that such a display will bring great advantages to those who seek such glory and honor for the Lord. They will be caught in the flood-tide of Divine glory, and made the better for it.

FOR THY GREAT MERCIES

"¹⁸ O my God, incline Thine ear, and hear; open Thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by Thy name: for we do not present our supplications before Thee for our righteousnesses, but for Thy great mercies."

Daniel continues to pray with great fervency. He has already besought the Lord to "hear" (v 17) – now he does it again. He has asked the Lord to turn away his anger and fury from Jerusalem (v 16) and cause His face to shine upon His sanctuary (v 17) – now he pleads for the Lord to look upon their desolations, and upon His own city. He has also asked

the Lord to do this for His own sake (v 17) – now he pleads for this to be done for His great mercies' sake.

There is some redundancy in this prayer, but it is far from being "vain repetition," against which Jesus warned (Matt 6:7). There are some who affirm that repeating something in prayer is a sign of unbelief. Here it is evidence of faith – great faith. Jesus repeated one of His prayers three times (Matt 26:44). Paul made the same request three times (2 Cor 12:8). Elijah prayed the same prayer seven times (1 Kgs 18:42-44). Jesus spoke of effective prayer as making the same petition repeatedly – importunity (Luke 11:5-8; 18:3-7). **It is uncomely for**

the people of God to entertain foolish and juvenile views of Scripture. Men *"should always pray and not give up"* (Lk 18:1).^{NIV} This is precisely what Daniel is doing.

INCLINE THINE EAR

"O my God, incline Thine ear, and hear. . ." Other versions read, *"Give ear, O God, and hear,"*^{NIV} *"let your ear be turned and give hearing,"*^{BBE} and *"Listen, my God, listen to us."*^{NJB}

There is a sense in which all words are heard by the Lord, even if they are idle. When the Israelites complained, *"the Lord heard it"* (Num 11:1). When Aaron and Miriam spoke against Moses, *"the Lord heard it"* (Num 12:2). When the unbelieving spies discouraged the people by saying they were incapable of taking the promised land, Moses told them *"the Lord heard the voice of your words"* (Deut 1:34).

Daniel is not praying with academic words. He knew he could say nothing that the Lord would not hear. But he is not praying that the sound of his words would be heard in heaven. **Rather, He is asking the Lord to listen intently to what he is saying, and be**

THIS RAISES PRAYER BEYOND MERE OBLIGATION OR ROUTINE. SUCH PRAYERS CANNOT BE OFFERED PERFUNCTORILY. IN MY OPINION, LIFELESS RELIGION, OR A FORM OF GODLINESS THAT DENIES THE POWER THEREOF (2 TIM 3:5), HAS ROBBED THE PEOPLE OF THIS PERSPECTIVE OF PRAYER.

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inclined to answer his request. Five times David also prayed, *“incline Thine ear”* (Psa 17:6; 45:10; 71:2; 88:2; 102:2). When confronted with the threat of Sennacherib, Hezekiah prayed, *“Incline Thine ear, O Lord, and hear”* (Isa 37:17).

An Application

This raises prayer beyond mere obligation or routine. Such prayers cannot be offered perfunctorily. In my opinion, lifeless religion, or a form of godliness that denies the power thereof (2 Tim 3:5), has robbed the people of this perspective of prayer. Even though there is a serious deficiency in the American church, yet it is not noted for frequent and fervent prayer. **Until such prayer surfaces among those with tender hearts, there is no hope of the situation changing.**

OPEN THINE EYES

“ . . . open Thine eyes . . . ” Daniel besought the Lord to open His eyes and behold their desolations. Hezekiah asked Him to open His eyes and see the letter Sennacherib had boastfully written (Isa 37:17).

Again, there is a sense in which the Lord sees everything, for *“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do”* (Heb 4:13). **Daniel desires the Lord to concentrate on their dilemma** – to look upon it with pity and mercy, and with a regard for His own name and glory.

BEHOLD OUR DESOLATIONS

“ . . . and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by Thy name . . . ” The NIV reads, *“see the desolation of the city that bears Your name.”* The phrase *“our desolations”* may have a general reference to the people, **but the particular point of Daniel’s emphasis is the city of Jerusalem itself.** That is where God had placed His name. That is, He had, in a special way, associated Himself with that city. Thus it is called *“Jerusalem the holy city”* (Neh 11:1; Isa 52:1).

Daniel’s Reckoning

Daniel knows that God will have regard for His city if He looks upon it. It

will awaken His pity and mercy, for it was a place precious to Him. That is precisely why Jeremiah said to those who would survive Nebuchadnezzar’s onslaught, *“Ye that have escaped the sword, go away, stand not still: remember the LORD afar off, and let Jerusalem come into your mind”* (Jer 51:50). Daniel is allowing Jerusalem to come into his mind, and he knows God is also inclined to think of it.

Those who can, through

THOSE WHO CAN, THROUGH PRAYER, MOVE THE LORD TO LOOK UPON THEM, WILL RECEIVE MERCY FROM HIM.

prayer, move the Lord to look upon them, will receive mercy from Him.

That is why David prayed, *“Have mercy upon me, O LORD; consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me, Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death”* (Psa 9:13). Again he prayed, *“Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins”* (Psa 25:18). And again, *“Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of Thine anointed”* (Psa 84:9).

This is something you do not want to miss. **Those who earnestly plead for the Lord to look upon or consider them, will not fail to be mercifully considered by Him.** This is because *“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise”* (Psa 51:17). Of those who see their plight with spiritual clarity, and call upon the name of the Lord, this is written: *“He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer”* (Psa 102:17).

Those who live by faith will never arrive at a point where this is not a most precious consideration. The people of God must be encouraged to seek the Lord in this manner.

NOT FOR OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

“ . . . for we do not present our supplications before Thee for our righteousnesses, but for Thy great mercies.”

Now, Daniel is praying in the behalf of the people: *“we . . . our.”* As a true intercessor he identifies with those for whom he prays. If it is said of God Himself, *“In all their affliction he was afflicted”* (Isa 63:9), will not those who fellowship with Him participate in such

feelings?

Here is a prayer that is not based upon the merit of the people. In one of David’s deliverances he prayed, *“The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness: according to the cleanness of my hands hath He recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all His judgments were before me: and as for His statutes, I did not depart from them. I was also upright before Him, and have kept myself from mine iniquity”* (2 Sam 22:21-24). He also spoke of his integrity as a reason for God’s consideration of him (Psa 26:1,11; 41:12). Job also cried out, *“Let me be weighed in an even balance that God may know mine integrity”* (Job 31:6).

However, Daniel knows that the children of Judah can make no such claim. If they receive consideration from God, it cannot be upon the basis of their diligence, faithfulness, or integrity.

This does not mean, however, that no mercy can be received. Therefore, instead of appealing to their righteousness, the man of God appeals to God’s righteousness – **for He IS righteous in granting mercy.** As I

have already dealt with this aspect of the Divine nature, here it will suffice to say only a few words on the subject. God is gracious to those toward whom He wants to be gracious. He is also shows

mercy toward all to whom He wants to show mercy (Ex 33:19; Rom 9:15,18).

However, showing grace and mercy are not the result of heartless

and arbitrary choice. His preference, love, and inclination enters into it. God is “righteous” in such bestowals, as the day of judgment will confirm.

FORGIVE, HEARKEN, AND DEFER NOT

“¹⁹ O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for Thine own sake, O my God: for Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name.”

Now Daniel comes to the matter of forgiveness. The sin of the people has been great, and therefore the forgiveness must also be great. There is such a thing as “much” being forgiven. As the Lord Jesus Himself said, “Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little” (Lk 7:47). Of course, no person of understanding has ever considered the Lord’s forgiveness of them to have been “little.” Paul, whose external moral infractions of the Law were far less than

the heathen.

FORGIVE

“O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do . . .” Other versions read, “O Lord hear! O Lord forgive!”^{NASB} “O Lord listen! O Lord forgive!”^{NIV} “O Lord, give ear; O Lord, have forgiveness.”^{BBE}

Here is a plea of unusual strength. The awareness of the holiness of God and the heinousness of sin moves Daniel to pray in this manner. **For him, sin was a most serious thing, for the closer to, or more conscious of, the Lord the individual is, the greater sin appears.** Those who are casual, or even indifferent, about sin, by that every attitude, acknowledge they are aloof from the Lord. Such people are more interested

when they had made an end of eating the grass of the land, then I said, **O Lord GOD, forgive, I beseech Thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small**” (Amos 7:2).

In the cases of both Moses and Amos, the Lord responded favorably. To Moses He said, “I have pardoned **according to thy word**” (Num 14:20). To Amos He said, “**The LORD repented for this: It shall not be, saith the LORD**” (Amos 7:3).

Now Daniel stands for the people, seeking forgiveness for them, even though they are undeserving of such mercy. He does not ask casually, or in a superficial manner. His heart is in his prayer, and his prayer is in his heart. What is even more, He is appealing to God’s nature, for He is “good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon” Him (Psa 86:5). He revealed Himself to Moses as One who is “keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin” (Ex 34:7). Through Joel He revealed “He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil. Who knoweth if He will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind Him . . .” (Joel 2:13-14). Through Micah He declared, “Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy” (Micah 7:18). Isaiah said the Lord would “abundantly pardon” (Isa 55:7).

Daniel knew these things, believing them with his heart. That is why he prayed in this manner. Like Moses, he was familiar with the “ways” of the Lord.

DEFER NOT

“ . . . defer not, for Thine own

IN THE CASE OF JUDAH, THEIR SIN WAS LARGE BECAUSE MUCH HAD BEEN GIVEN TO THEM – FOR SIN IS CONSIDERED IN DIRECT PROPORTION TO THE LIGHT AND DIVINE CONSIDERATION THAT HAS BEEN GIVEN. THAT IS WHY SIN IN THE CHURCH IS INFINITELY WORSE THAN WHEN IT IS FOUND AMONG THE HEATHEN.

than the sinful woman from the city. Yet, when he assessed his own condition prior to Christ, he said he was “chief,” or “worst,” among “sinners” (1 Tim 1:15).

In the case of Judah, their sin was large because much had been given to them – for sin is considered in direct proportion to the light and Divine consideration that has been given. **That is why sin in the church is infinitely worse than when it is found among**

in their own will, than in obtaining the forgiveness of the Lord.

Holy men have always pled for forgiveness. Hear Moses as he beseeches the Lord. “**Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now**” (Num 14:19). When the Lord showed Amos a vision of grasshoppers devouring the land, the prophet prayed, “And it came to pass, that

Daniel continues his confession of Israel’s sin, finally making an appeal to God’s mercy, by Given O. Blakely

sake, O my God . . . ” Other versions read, “Do not delay for Your own sake,”^{NKJV} “For Thine own sake, O my God, do not delay,”^{NASB} and “let there be no more waiting; for the honor of Your name.”^{BBE}

Those who seek forgiveness do not want delay. The conviction of sin moves the individual to plead for immediate forgiveness, whether it be for a man or for a nation. **A haphazard approach to receiving forgiveness from God is sure evidence of unbelief and hardness of heart.**

The Psalmist prayed similarly for the people. “Wilt Thou be angry with us for ever? wilt Thou draw out thine anger to all generations? Wilt Thou not revive us again: that Thy people may rejoice in Thee? Show us Thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us Thy salvation” (Psa 85:5-7).

Sin is of such a nature that forgiveness must not be delayed. Until iniquity is forgiven, it continues to harden the heart, sear the conscience, and blind the mind. **This is not a common perception.** That is why there has been a sudden rise in counseling, the propagation of perfunctory routines, and other various patterns of thought that are classified as “*the rudiments of the world*” (Col 2:8). **All such things allow for a delay in forgiveness and the purging of the conscience. However, the conviction of the Spirit makes no such allowance.** When people can wait to be forgiven, it is only because they are not stricken with the magnitude of their sin.

CALLED BY THY NAME

“ . . . for Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name.” Other versions read, “because Your city and Your people bear Your name,”^{NIV} “because thy name is invoked upon thy city, and upon thy people,”^{DOUAY} “for Your name is attached to Your city and Your people!”^{TNK}

The righteous always take seriously anything or anyone that is associated with the Living God. Whether it is a person, a city, the Law, the tabernacle, or even a day – anything that has God’s name attached to it is to be considered with great sobriety. **That is not even to mention His only**

begotten Son, the New Covenant, and the church He has purchased with His own blood. The name of the Lord is holy, and wherever it is found, the due regard of men is required. For those in Christ, associations with God include, the Word (Word of God, Eph 6:17), the Spirit (Spirit of God, Rom 8:9), the Lord Jesus (Son of God, Rom 1:4), the church (church of God, 1 Tim 3:5), the saints (children of God, 1 John 3:10), the truth (truth of God, Rom 15:8), etc. Daniel prays in view of the associations declared under the First Covenant.

Thy City

Jerusalem is called “*the city of God*” (Psalm 46:4; 87:3), and “*the city of*

and they shall be afraid of thee” (Deu 28:10).

When God sent Moses to speak to Pharaoh, He told him to tell Pharaoh, “*Let MY people go*” (Ex 5:1). Through the Psalmist the Lord said, “*Hear, O My people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God*” (Psa 50:7).

Daniel does not refer to the children of Judah as his own people, but the people of God. He is the One who chose them. As Moses said to the people, “*The LORD did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye*

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the great King” (Psa 48:2) – the city where God “*chose to put*” His name (1 Kgs 11:3). God also referred to it as “*My city*” (Lam 3:51), and “*The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth*” (Lam 2:15). The Lord said there would be a time when Jerusalem would be called “*the throne of the Lord*” (Jer 3:17), and “*the city of truth*” (Zech 8:3).

Such holy associations (all of which were known to Daniel), moved the prophet to ask God to consider the city of Jerusalem. In so doing, He would bring honor and glory to His own name. **Daniel considered that the desolation of such a city brought reproach upon the Lord.**

Thy People

When the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, Moses told them they would be viewed as the people of God. “*And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD;*

were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt” (Deut 7:8).

And why does Daniel ask the Lord to forgive, and not to defer to do so? **It is because the holy city and the Israelites are called by God’s name!** The name of the Lord has been associated with them, and they with Him. All the more reason for God to look upon them with favor, giving ear to the prayer of a man “*greatly loved*” in heaven.

The underlying supposition is that a blessed and forgiven people will bring glory to God. A chastened and unforgiven people do not bring honor to Him.

CONCLUSION

THERE IS A NOBLE EXAMPLE OF PRESENTING AN ORDERED CAUSE TO THE LORD, SAND FILLING ONES MOUTH WITH ARGUMENTS (JOB 23:4). IT IS A VIEW OF WHAT IS INVOLVED IN REASONING WITH THE LORD. THIS IS WHAT IS INVOLVED IN PUTTING THE LORD “IN REMEMBRANCE,” PLEADING “TOGETHER” WITH HIM, AND DECLARING IN ORDER THAT JUSTIFICATION MIGHT BE REALIZED.

Thus, in sixteen verses, Daniel has presented his powerful petition to the Lord. Ponder what he has done in this prayer.

- ▣ Acknowledged the Lord is a great and dreadful God (v 4a).
- ▣ Confessed the Lord as one who keeps the covenant, and mercy for those who love Him and keep is commandments” (v 4b).
- ▣ Acknowledged the covenanted people had sinned, committed iniquity, done wickedly, rebelled, and departed from the Lord’s precepts and judgments (v 5).
- ▣ Confessed the people had not hearkened to God’s servants the Prophets, who spoke in the Lord’s name to their kings, princes, fathers, and to all the people of the land (v 6).
- ▣ Acknowledged that righteousness belonged to the Lord (7a).
- ▣ Acknowledged that confusion of face belong to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all of Israel who had been scattered (7b).

- ▣ Confessed that the people had been scattered because of their trespass against the Lord (v 7c).
- ▣ Reaffirmed that confusion of face belonged to their kings, princes, and their fathers because they had sinned against God (v 8).
- ▣ Affirmed that mercies and forgivenesses belonged to the Lord, even though the people had rebelled against Him (v 9).
- ▣ Confessed they had not obeyed the voice of the Lord to walk in His laws, which He had set before them by the Prophets (v 10).
- ▣ Declared that all Israel had transgressed God’s Law by departing from Him, that they might not obey is voice(v 11a).
- ▣ Concluded that God’s curse had been poured out upon them according to the oath God had declared through Moses (v 11b).
- ▣ Acknowledged God had confirmed His word which had been spoken against them and their judges, by bring great evil upon them (v 12).

- ▣ Confessed that in spite of the judgment leveled against them, they had not sought the Lord in prayer in order that they might turn from their iniquities (v 13).
- ▣ Declared that the Lord had sought the right time to administer chastening and judgment to them (v 14a).
- ▣ Confessed that the Lord was righteous in all that He did to them, for they had sinned (v 14b).
- ▣ Recalled how the Lord had brought the people out of Egypt with a mighty hand (v 15 a).
- ▣ Affirmed that God had gotten renown for Himself (v 15b).
- ▣ Again confessed the people had sinned and done wickedly (v 15c).
- ▣ Pled with the Lord to turn His anger away from His city Jerusalem, and His holy mountain (v 16a).
- ▣ Confessed that because of their sins and the iniquities of their fathers, Jerusalem and the people had become a reproach to all about them (v 16b).
- ▣ Asked the Lord to hear his prayer and supplications (v 17a).
- ▣ Besought the Lord to cause His face to shine upon His sanctuary that was desolate, and to do so for His own name’s sake (v 17b).
- ▣ Asked the Lord to listen to what he was praying, and look upon their desolations, and the city which was called by His name (v 18a).
- ▣ Confessed their supplications were not offered because of their righteousness, but because of God’s mercies (v 18b).
- ▣ Asked the Lord to forgive the people, and not defer to do so (v 19a).

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▣ Besought the Lord forgive them because His city and His people were called by His name (v 19b).

There is a noble example of

presenting an ordered cause to the Lord, sand filling ones mouth with arguments (Job 23:4). It is a view of what is involved in reasoning with the Lord (Isa 1:18). This is what is involved in

putting the Lord “in remembrance,” pleading “together” with Him, and declaring in order that justification might be realized (Isa 43:26). It is something “kings and priests” should pursue.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 2/7/2003. We will continue in our overview of Daniel, reviewing verses 20-27 of the ninth chapter. The title of our lesson is, “**DANIEL RECEIVES INSIGHT CONCERNING THE MESSIAH.**” This is the passage in which Daniel is told of the “seventy weeks,” a prophecy of the greatest significance. It pertains to the coming Messiah, and pinpoints with staggering accuracy the time of His death. Although this passage has been greatly corrupted, it will prove to be a source of great consolation when its truth is seen. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

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A place where believers can meet, fellowship, be edified, and express themselves.

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