



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

FERVENT PRAYER FOR THE NATION'S RESTORATION

Daniel 9:1-19

This chapter reveals the instructive account of Daniel's prayer for the restoration of Judah from captivity. Daniel was not a full-time prophet yet his intercessory and prophetic ministry was as effective as that of any other prophet of his day. He said, "***I rose up and did the king's business***", yet he found time to read, search, study until he "***understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem***" (Daniel 8:27; 9:2). The discoveries of his study drove him to prayer. "***And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting***" (Daniel 9:3). Daniel combined the secular and the spiritual effectively and advantageously for the progress of the kingdom of God (Daniel 6:1-4,10). Though Daniel was himself a great prophet, respected by men, kings and angels, yet he was a diligent student of the Scripture. The greatest and most favoured of saints and servants of God must remain diligent students of God's Word. Though Daniel knew, by divine predictions, that the promised restoration was very close at hand, he still prayed earnestly for that restoration. That is God's expectation. His promises are not an inducement to spiritual idleness but an encouragement to prayer, obedience and faithfulness. "***I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it. Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them***" (Ezekiel 36:36,37). We should pray more earnestly when we have the conviction that God is about to display His power in the conversion of sinners and also fulfil His great promises in His Church. An assurance that a great revival is to come should lead us to more consecration and prayer.

PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION AND CONFESSION OF THE NATION'S SINS

Daniel 9:1-10; Jeremiah 25:11,12; 29:10-14; Leviticus 26:40-42; 1 Kings 8:47-49; Ezra 9:5-15; Psalm 106:4-7; Jeremiah 3:13-18,25; 14:7-9,20,21; 2 Chronicles 36:20-23.

Judah's captivity in Babylon had continued for about seventy years and there was no indication of national repentance. The last king of Babylon, Belshazzar, had been judged, yet Judah remained in captivity. God's promise was still waiting to be fulfilled. God's people must seek His face for His promise to be fulfilled. "***After seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and ye shall seek Me, ye shall search for Me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: AND I WILL TURN AWAY YOUR CAPTIVITY***" (Jeremiah 29:10-14). Daniel had read this and he did not wait for others to show some interest and desire in the restoration of his people. He set his "***face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting***". Daniel was not discouraged by contrary circumstances and pronouncements, he prayed. God had said to Ezekiel that though Daniel stood before Him, his intercession would not prevail to prevent their judgment (Ezekiel 14:14,16,18,20) yet Daniel "***against hope believed in hope***" and prayed. Having "***received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins***" (Isaiah 40:2) he prayed for the forgiveness and restoration of the nation. Though Daniel was declared righteous by God (Ezekiel 14:14), though he was faultless before men and innocent before God (Daniel 6:4,22) he identified with the nation in making confession and seeking forgiveness for his people. Instead of saying, they have sinned, he said, "***WE have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled***" (Daniel 9:5). "***Neither have WE hearkened unto Thy servants the prophets***" (verse 6). "***O Lord, to US belongeth confusion of faces, because WE have sinned against Thee***" (verse 8). "***Neither have WE obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws***" (verse 10). "***WE have sinned against Him***" (verse 11). "***Yet made WE not our prayer before the LORD our God, that WE might turn from OUR iniquities***" (verse 13). "***WE obeyed not His voice***" (verse 14). "***WE have sinned, WE have done wickedly***" (verse 15). Daniel approached God with a contrite heart and a humble spirit as he prayed and interceded for the nation. His prayer was answered speedily because it was focused on God's glory, and characterized by humility, unselfishness, fervency, self-denial and faith.

PROPER INTERPRETATION OF THEIR CALAMITIES AND NATIONAL SUFFERING

Daniel 9:11-14; Deuteronomy 31:16-18; 32:18-29; 1 Kings 9:6-9; 2 Kings 17:18-23; Nehemiah 9:26-35; Isaiah 59:9-15; Jeremiah 32:23; Ezekiel 22:26-31.

Daniel did not "***charge God foolishly***" for the nation's calamities and suffering. He knew God to be faithful, righteous and merciful, "***keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love Him, and to them that keep His commandments***" (Daniel 9:4). In his intercession for Judah he said, "***O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto***

Thee". **"To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness"** (Daniel 9:7,9). God is always faithful to His covenant promises when His people keep their part of the covenant. If there is any failure, it does not begin with Him. God has committed Himself to show favour only while His people are obedient. As a just and righteous God He cannot encourage evil and sin by bestowing His special blessings on the wicked. Daniel interpreted Judah's trials and troubles scripturally. **"Therefore the curse is poured upon us because we have sinned against Him"** (Daniel 9:11). If God's people had continued a holy people they would have been **"high above all nations in praise, and in name, and in honour"** (Deuteronomy 26:19), they would not have been in captivity under the dominion of any nation. Shame and confusion came upon them because they had **"sinned and done wickedly"**. Daniel justified God for all the trouble, suffering and calamity which came upon Judah and Israel, upon their kings and the people. Their suffering was the penalty which their disobedience and wickedness deserved. It was necessary for God to punish the backslidden and apostate nation in order to preserve His glory, the honour of His law and to save His government from contempt. Even men on earth appreciate governments when they punish evil-doers and keep justice, making the world a relatively safe place to live in. Angels and saints will justify and praise God throughout eternity for His righteous judgments.

PASSIONATE INTERCESSION FOR COMPASSION AND THE NATION'S SALVATION

Daniel 9:15-19; Exodus 32:11-14; Nehemiah 1:4-10; Psalm 79:4-11; Isaiah 64:9-12; Lamentations 2:17-19; Romans 10:1-4; Isaiah 55:6,7; Micah 7:18-20.

Daniel, like Moses, was a great intercessor. He pleaded with God passionately on behalf of his people, Judah. He prayed on account of God's faithfulness, mercy, compassion, love, righteousness and past deliverances (Daniel 9:4,15). He prayed for the nation's forgiveness and restoration. In his great desire for the nation's deliverance and restoration to great mercies, he pleaded, **"O Lord our God", "O my God", "I beseech Thee", "Let Thine anger and Thy fury be turned away from Thy people". "Hear the prayer of Thy servant and his supplication", "cause Thy face to shine upon Thy sanctuary". "Incline Thine ear, and hear, open Thine eyes, and behold our desolations". "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, FOR THINE OWN SAKE, O my God"**. His heart being burdened and broken because of the condition of his people in captivity, Daniel's language in prayer was earnest and strong. With words of fervent request he sought divine intervention for the oppressed, captive people. He consistently entreated the Lord to be merciful, to forgive, deliver and restore them to former state and glory, **"for the Lord's sake"** (Daniel 9:17,19). He was making his requests so that the excellent glory of God might be displayed and His glory be promoted on earth. All true prayer has its foundation in a desire that the glory of God may be promoted and the excellence of His character displayed. The answer to his prayer was not delayed (Daniel 9:21-23) because his request was pleasing to the Lord.

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