

## **Daniel's Prayer of Repentance**

As we study the book of Daniel on Sundays, we are going to take some time to look at Daniel's Prayer in Daniel chapter 9. We know from Daniel's most famous story, the story of the lion's den, that Daniel was a man of prayer. In this prayer, Daniel turned to God in repentance for the sins of Israel. This can be difficult for us to relate to in today's culture of individuality, as we are generally not familiar with confessing the sins of our nation or other groups to which we belong. Our confession is more focused on our own deeds, the ones for which we are personally responsible. Daniel, a man of God from his youth, confessed that "we have sinned, we have done wickedly." He included himself with people and behavior that by his beliefs and example he did not agree with. Yet he humbled himself before the Lord in humility, owned and confessed his guilt before God.

As always, if you are new to or nervous about fasting, see our guide on fasting here: <http://intown.org/worship/prayer>. Go to your Father in prayer, asking Him to be present with you as you read Daniel 9:1-19, (printed on the back of this sheet), and contemplate your own repentance as an individual, as a family member, as a church member, as a denomination member, as a citizen of your community and the United States and as a member of the human race.

The passage contains 4 sections that are familiar to other prayers in the Bible:

### Daniel 9:1-3 – Humility before God

Daniel turned toward the Lord "with fasting and sackcloth and ashes." Sackcloth and ashes were a visible way of showing contrition and mourning before God and is a practice used throughout the Bible. It, along with fasting, is a way to put aside our own needs and comforts to more acutely focus on God Himself. Take some time to pray in humility before the Lord, preparing your heart before the Lord as his creation.

### Daniel 9:4 – Worship

In verse 4, Daniel worshipped God for who He is, recognizing His worth and praising Him for His faithfulness and love. At the time of this story, God had sustained Israel throughout their 70 years of judgement and Daniel knew that time was coming to a close. In our time, we have the new covenant through the blood of Jesus. Tell Him what this comfort and provision means to you.

### Daniel 9:5-15 – Confession

This is not a 'gentle' confession. Daniel used words like wickedness, shame, treachery, rebellion and refusal. He doesn't pull any punches and speaks of "our sin" as it truly is before God. The sin is described as an active choice, not an inattentive mistake or slip-up. He confessed a truly sinful heart, consciously and purposely turned against God. This can be hard to hear and admit in our own lives but it is a part of who we are. Even with the grace of the gospel fully present and preached to our hearts by the Holy Spirit, we still consciously and purposely sin against our Savior. Take some time to contemplate your own heart before God. As David Fisk preached a couple of Sundays ago, our pride can work both ways: not admitting sin in one extreme and not believing that we can be redeemed in the other. In your repentance, remember that Jesus' blood covered all sin for all men for all times. He has done what we could not and has done it perfectly.

### Daniel 9:16-19 – Petition

Daniel's petition at the end is for God to turn away His wrath, to pay attention to and care for the needs of His chosen people. We can read this petition in light of the new covenant and we can even see reflections of the new covenant in verse 18 where Daniel says "For we do not present our

pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy.” In Jesus, we do not need to ask for relief from God’s wrath or for more forgiveness than we have already been given. Jesus has completed it all for us already. But we can pray for God to hear our prayers, plead for mercy in our fallen world and ask for God’s holy name to be glorified in our own time.

### **Daniel 9:1-19 English Standard Version (ESV)**

In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—<sup>2</sup> in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.

<sup>3</sup> Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.

<sup>4</sup> I prayed to the LORD my God and made confession, saying, “O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments,

<sup>5</sup> we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. <sup>6</sup> We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. <sup>7</sup> To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you. <sup>8</sup> To us, O LORD, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you. <sup>9</sup> To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him <sup>10</sup> and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God by walking in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. <sup>11</sup> All Israel has transgressed your law and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice. And the curse and oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him. <sup>12</sup> He has confirmed his words, which he spoke against us and against our rulers who ruled us, by bringing upon us a great calamity. For under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what has been done against Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup> As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us; yet we have not entreated the favor of the LORD our God, turning from our iniquities and gaining insight by your truth. <sup>14</sup> Therefore the LORD has kept ready the calamity and has brought it upon us, for the LORD our God is righteous in all the works that he has done, and we have not obeyed his voice. <sup>15</sup> And now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

<sup>16</sup> “O Lord, according to all your righteous acts, let your anger and your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy hill, because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a byword among all who are around us. <sup>17</sup> Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy, and for your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate. <sup>18</sup> O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. <sup>19</sup> O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name.”