

## DANIEL 9:1-19, Part 11 1-1-17

### OUR SHAME, HIS NAME

#### The Prayer of Daniel, Part 2

Next to the study of God what do you suppose would be the most important thing to understand? I suggest it would be understanding man – ourselves, others, humanity in general. So, next Sunday the plan is for us to begin a two-month series on the doctrine of man – what God’s word says about humans, pre-fall, post-fall, and redeemed humans. Today, we take one final glance at the book of Daniel. This is really part two of the message from December 4 which comes from the prayer of Daniel in Daniel 9. We saw how this prayer serves as a good model of the popular acrostic designed to remind us of what to include when we pray. That is the ACTS acrostic, which teaches praying people to include adoration of God, confession of sin, thanksgiving and supplication. That is really a fine and biblical summation of the elements of prayer. And we find, in Daniel’s prayer at least three of those elements on display. Follow as I read this prayer, so appropriate for the beginning of a new year. **1-19** *In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans— 2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. 3 So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes. 4 I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed and said, “Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, 5 we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances. 6 Moreover, we have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes, our fathers and all the people of the land. 7 “Righteousness belongs to You, O Lord, but to us open shame, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of their unfaithful deeds which they have committed against You. 8 Open shame belongs to us, O Lord, to our kings, our princes and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. 9 To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him; 10 nor have we obeyed*

*the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His teachings which He set before us through His servants the prophets. 11 Indeed all Israel has transgressed Your law and turned aside, not obeying Your voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him. 12 Thus He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us and against our rulers who ruled us, to bring on us great calamity; for under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what was done to Jerusalem. 13 As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us; yet we have not sought the favor of the Lord our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth. 14 Therefore the Lord has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us; for the Lord our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done, but we have not obeyed His voice. 15 “And now, O Lord our God, who have brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and have made a name for Yourself, as it is this day—we have sinned, we have been wicked. 16 O Lord, in accordance with all Your righteous acts, let now Your anger and Your wrath turn away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; for because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people have become a reproach to all those around us. 17 So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, and for Your sake, O Lord, let Your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary. 18 O my God, incline Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Your name; for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion. 19 O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”*

Last time we looked at this chapter we noted how Daniel’s praying was generated from his love for the people of Israel as well as his personal Bible study in the book of Jeremiah. We also noted the elements of prayer represented by the A and the C. There is adoration of God found in Daniel’s prayer and there is clearly a great deal of confession. Daniel provides us with one of the great prayers of confession in all the Bible.

Having covered those items on December 4, we begin to break down the prayer today by seeing how Daniel did also include supplication or petition in his prayer. He did make requests of the Lord. That is what supplication is. That is what interceding involves. Eventually, after worship and confession Daniel says in verse 16, “Let thy anger and they wrath turn away from

us.” In verse 17 he asks that the face of God would shine on his desolate sanctuary. Implied in that and in his call for God to take action is that the people would be sent back to Jerusalem from their captivity in Babylon so they could rebuild the temple and begin anew to worship God there. That is what Daniel envisioned as the answer to His prayer. So he calls on the Lord to forgive. And he calls on the Lord to let his face shine. That is a peculiar Hebrewism for God showing his favor. You know the great benediction of Numbers 6:24-26a *The Lord bless you, and keep you; 25 the Lord make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you; 26 the Lord lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace.*’ You may know Psalm 80:3 *O God, restore us and cause Your face to shine upon us, and we will be saved.* When does your face shine? When you’re smiling. The idea here is that blessedness is found under the smile of God. And this is the request of Daniel that the Lord, who has rightfully disciplined his son, would again smile upon his child and restore to him the privileges of his station.

Having finished now our look at the content of Daniel’s prayer, I want us to look next at the basis for this prayer. Or the grounds upon which Daniel appeals to the Lord. What are the reasons suggested to God about why he should give Daniel what he asks? There are two. The first thing Daniel appeals to is the compassion of God. In verse 4 he mentions God’s covenant love. In verse 9 he mentions compassion and forgiveness. Now look at verse 18 *O my God, incline Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Your name; for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion.* That is so important to understand. Daniel there is specifying the ground of his appeal. He says, “We aren’t coming asking for justice. We cannot appeal to our own merits, and say, *hey God, haven’t we been good?*” I think you know that in truth we have been bad, but we are asking for mercy with hope in your compassion.” That is the same thing David did in Psalm 51:1 *Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.* In speaking this way we are admitting our need for something greater than justice and fairness and we are placing our hope in the only place sinners find hope, in the mercy of God. This is very similar to what we do in the New Testament age, when we come to the Father in the name of Jesus. Christians pray in the name of Jesus out of recognition that we have no grounds of appeal in ourselves. Using the words of Daniel we are saying to God and to ourselves that we are not presenting our supplications on account of any merit of our own, but

on account of the merits of Jesus Christ.” That is why Jesus said to petition the Father in His name. The authority, the position, the righteousness of Jesus becomes for us the basis of our appeal to God. And understand - the very fact that we can come to God and confess our wickedness means what? It means that the basis of our approach to the Lord, the basis for getting an audience with Him is all of grace and not of works. It is with that humble recognition that we are to offer our prayers in Jesus name, appealing to the compassion and mercy of our God.

There is one other ground for Daniel’s appeal. This too is instructive to us. Daniel appeals to God to act for the sake of God’s own name. Notice this in verse 18 when he says, “Hey God, take merciful notice of that city that is called by Thy name.” He reminds the Lord as it were that His reputation and fame in the earth has been attached to Jerusalem. And was that true? Yes. Verse 17 is interesting 17 *So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, and for Your sake, O Lord, let Your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary.* Again Daniel is reminding God that He has an interest in this matter. Again in 19 *O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name.*” There is something very profound going on here that we want to grasp. Follow me closely on this one as I follow John Piper’s thinking in his book *The Pleasures of God*. Piper spends some time in I Samuel 12 where we have that speech of Samuel to the children of Israel after they ask for a king. If you know the story you know that the request of the people to the prophet Samuel for a king was grievous to Samuel and to the Lord. We are told it came out of the desire of the Hebrews to be like the nations around them. Samuel rebukes them for this but then offers them comfort in verse 22 of I Samuel 12. He tells them not to fear 22 *For the Lord will not abandon His people on account of His great name, because the Lord has been pleased to make you a people for Himself.* Fascinating argument isn’t it? He doesn’t mention God’s compassion in this instance. Samuel’s reasoning is based on God’s zeal to protect His own name, His own reputation which He had invested in His chosen people. He tells them not to worry about divine abandonment because God, in making them His special people, has placed His name on them and God is very careful about His name.

We see this idea often in the Old Testament. God acts for the sake of His own name. Remember what He told Pharaoh thru Moses? Exodus 9:16 *For this reason I have allowed you*

*to remain, in order to show you My power and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth.* The point of the Exodus was to make a world-wide reputation for God that was associated with this tiny nation of Israel. You'll remember how, when Israel showed up near Jericho and they met Rahab the harlot, she said, "Oh, yes, we heard of you, you are the nation with the Great Big God." Isaiah recounted the history of Israel in 63:**12-14** *Who caused His glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, Who divided the waters before them to make for Himself an everlasting name, 13 Who led them through the depths? Like the horse in the wilderness, they did not stumble; 14 as the cattle which go down into the valley, The Spirit of the Lord gave them rest. So You led Your people, to make for Yourself a glorious name.* When God showed His power to deliver His people He had His sights set on His own everlasting reputation. Psalm 106 teaches the same thing **7-8a** - *Our fathers in Egypt did not understand Your wonders; they did not remember Your abundant kindnesses, but rebelled by the sea, at the Red Sea. 8 Nevertheless He saved them. Why did He save them? 8 Nevertheless He saved them. for the sake of His name, that He might make His power known.* Why was God good to a bunch of rebel sinners like the children of Israel? Out of concern for His name. What hope do we have that God will hear our prayers and revive His church? Out of concern for His name and the name of His Son. That is why we sing, "Glorify Thy Name in all the earth. In my life, in Your church be glorified."

Let's read on, Ezekiel 36 speaks of the captivity in which Daniel lived **20** *When they came to the nations where they went, they profaned My holy name, because it was said of them, 'These are the people of the Lord; yet they have come out of His land.'* You see, God's fame is connected to how his people are doing. **21-23** *But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went. 22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God, "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. 23 I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord," declares the Lord God, "when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight.* Fascinating, and so consistent with the prayers of Daniel. Ezekiel 39:**25** *Therefore thus says the Lord God, "Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name.* When every other hope is gone and the people

of God lay under the judgment of God because of their sin, one hope will always remain, that God has a passion for His name and will not allow it to be trampled on for long. Isaiah wrote some time before Ezekiel but he dealt with the same problem - the dishonoring of God in the captivity of his people. Isaiah makes the motive of God in saving his people from exile unmistakably clear Isaiah 48:**9-11** *“For the sake of My name I delay My wrath, and for My praise I restrain it for you, in order not to cut you off. 10 Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. 11 For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; for how can My name be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another.”* So Daniel touches the heart of God when he prays **19** *O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name.* Think of this as you pray, not only with respect to the church as a whole but with respect to your own life. Is your life one that brings honor to God’s name? Or does your life profane it, disgrace it? Have you taken his name on your life in vain? When we see as Daniel did that we are bringing shame on God’s name by our conduct it’s time to pray. David in Psalm 25:**11** *For Your name’s sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great. 79:2* *Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your name; and deliver us and forgive our sins for Your name’s sake.*

That book that Daniel was reading, Jeremiah, says this Jeremiah in 14:**7ab** *Although our iniquities testify against us, O Lord, act for Your name’s sake!* I think you get the point. We want to learn to appeal to God as Daniel did. We want to learn to lay our case before the Lord on the ground of His own glory, and out of that concern. Whatever your need today, if you are a child of God, if He, by grace, has placed His name upon you, then you too can appeal for help on the basis of God’s name which is on the line in your life. May our prayers be filled with a preeminent concern for the reputation, the fame, and the glory of our God. And so when we seek for revival in the church, when we cry for restoration of moral purity in our land, when we repent of our own sins and seek deliverance in our families we can say as Daniel did **19** *“O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”*