"APPROACHING THE THRONE OF MERCY"

(The Prayer of Daniel)

Daniel 9:1-23

6-27-2021



INTRODUCTION:

In order to experience revival in our lives,
***We need to rightly approach God's throne of mercy!**

How did Daniel approach God's throne? He prayed to God with:

I. Whole-Hearted <u>SERIOUSNESS</u> (v. 3)

II. Holy <u>REVERENCE</u> (v. 4)

III. Honest <u>CONFESSION</u> (v. 5-14)

What is honest confession of sin?

A. <u>Call sin</u> what it is (v. 5-10)

B. Take <u>personal responsibility</u> (v. 11-14)

IV. Humble <u>PETITION</u> (v. 15-19)

Daniel petitions the Lord for mercy based on:

A. God's <u>righteousness</u> (v. 16a; cp. v. 2)

B. God's <u>glory and honor</u> (v. 16b-17)

C. God's <u>desire and ability to forgive</u> (v. 18-19; cp. v. 9)

CONCLUSION: V. 20-23
God is quicker to answer prayer than we are to pray.

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INTRODUCTION:

Does life ever seem like a dark cloud has surrounded you: and there's no clearing in sight?

The feeling that life has lost its sunshine, its light, its sweetness (life seems bitter), its jubilence (life seems blah), its prosperity (it seems nothing is going right).

The hymnwriter had this experience as she penned: "Sometimes the clouds of trouble be-dim the sky above, I cannot see my Savior's face, I doubt His wondrous love . . . When sorrow's clouds overtake me, and break upon my head, when life seems worse than useless, and I were better dead . . ." ("It's Just Like His Great Love" - p. 184).

The nation of Israel in the days of Daniel had this plight.

Israel had been in captivity for 67 years. At least two generations of children have been born who find themselves bearing the consequences of their parents', grandparents', and great-grandparents' sins.

The former songs and joys of Jerusalem and the Promised Land are but a memory
(SEE: Psalm 137:1-4).

V. 2

"I Daniel understood by books" - lit. scrolls. Referring to the Holy Scriptures which were originally inscribed on scrolls.

"Seventy years" - SEE: Jeremiah 25:8-11; 29:10-14

Why the number "seventy"? According to II Chron. 36:21, Israel's captivity was to last 70 years because of their failure to give the land 70 Sabbatical years of rest (SEE Lev. 25:2-7).

606 B.C. - 605 B.C. -1st deportation of Jews from Babylon

536 B.C. -Zerubbabel starts to rebuild the Temple

_____

70 years exactly!

(Daniel is counting the years of captivity from when he was deported in 606 B.C.)

586 B.C. -Temple & city destroyed

516 B.C. -Temple dedicated

_____

70 years

Most often the cause of our misery, our sorrow, our discouragement (depression), our troubles, etc., **is our sin**. Sin ruins things! It did so for Israel. It will do so for us.

--Our present circumstances are a result of past choices.

--We are reaping for what we have sown (Gal. 6:7).

--The degenerating condition of America is due to the corruption that is in the land.

The only answer is a revival from God!

The secret to revival: II Chron. 7:14 (humility, prayer, and repentance)

In Daniel 9, the Prophet Daniel, desiring a reviving for his nation, follows this key to revival as he approaches God's throne to beseech the King for mercy and forgiveness.

In order to experience revival in our lives,

***We need to rightly approach God's throne of mercy!**

How did Daniel approach God's throne? He prayed to God with:

I. Whole-Hearted SERIOUSNESS (v. 3)

V. 3

Daniel's seriousness in prayer is evident by the following:

A. Daniel gave God his full attention

"I set my face unto the LORD"

Daniel turned his eyes away from anything earthward, and set them Heavenward.

Hymn - "Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Look full in His wonderful face"

B. Daniel sought the LORD with intensity

"To seek (Plead) by prayer and supplications"

When one seeks God with all his heart, he finds Him (Jer. 29:13 - "And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart.")

C. Daniel sought the LORD with sacrifice ("with fasting")

To "fast" is to go without food and to take the time normally spent preparing and consuming food, and to use that time to get alone with God.

It is not easy to go without food, especially when one's life is scheduled for two or three meals daily. Perhaps this is why we rarely fast.

D. Daniel sought the LORD with TEARS

"Sackcloth and ashes" - Symbols of mourning and distress

"The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Ja. 5).

Both Ezra (Ezra 9:5-15) and Nehemiah (Neh. 1:4-11) followed the same pattern of prayer as Daniel did.

II. Holy REVERENCE (v. 4)

"My God" - You cannot pray to God unless He is your God. He only hears the prayers of His children.

"O Lord" - Adonai = Master, ruler, sovereign

"Great and dreadful" - God's presence and power is awesome! Demons tremble (shudder) at the thought of Him (Ja. 2:19); Moses was so terrified when he stood in God's presence that he said, "I exceedingly fear and quake" (Heb. 12:21).

When we approach God, we are coming before the One whose very presence melts mountains; the One who is a "consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29). He is holy, holy, holy (Is. 6).

The only reason we can have any level of boldness when approaching His holy presence is because of the blood of Jesus (Heb. 10:19).

God is no "cream puff" in the sky; He is no "softy"; He is no indifferent, detached, old, gray-haired, impotent Being aloofly sitting in Heaven.

He is "great and dreadful."

"Keeping the covenant" - God is faithful to His Word (His promises and warnings).

III. Honest CONFESSION (v. 5-14)

What is honest confession of sin?

A. Call sin what it is (v. 5-10)

V. 5

Note the specific words for sin in verse 5 -

1. "Sinned" = missed the mark
2. "Iniquity" - to twist or pervert something good into something bad (distorted in heart and action)
3. "Wickedly" - criminal law breaking; to be guilty of violating God's law
4. "Rebelled" - to turn against; to revolt.

   Rebellion is not neutrality toward God and His Word but it is determined (willful) opposition to God and His Word.

"Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft" (I Sam. 15:23)

Is alcoholism a "disease" or a sin?

Is drug use a "Problem" or wickedness?

Is homosexuality an "alternative lifestyle" or abomination?

Is abortion a "woman's right" or is it murder?

Is premarital sex a "biological need" or is it perversion?

Is adultery an "affair" or is it unfaithfulness?

Let's call sin what it is!

V. 6

To not listen to God's preacher is serious sin.

V. 7

"Confusion of faces" - a paleness of the face caused by embarrassment. To be ashamed. To feel shame.

In contrast to God, who is perfectly righteous, all Israel deserved the shame that came because of their sin.

B. Take personal responsibility (v. 11-14)

When someone takes responsibility for sin, they are saying:

1) **I** am guilty
2) **I** deserve what I have coming to me.

1. Daniel prayed and said: "I (as well as my people) am guilty."

Though Daniel was a righteous man, even one of the most upright to ever live, who according to God fits into the ranks of Noah and Job (Ezek. 14:14, 20), he was still a sinner in need of God's forgiveness.

Note how he includes himself among those of apostate Israel. What humility! What a keep sense of wretchedness! (cp. Rom. 7).

Note the first person pronouns in vv. 5-18 (27 references to "we...us...our") - "my sin" - v. 20

"His people's sin was his sin; their failure, his failure; their reproach, he makes his own" (Foster, p. 38).

When problems arise in any social setting (whether school, home, church, etc.), rather than pointing fingers at others, we must take responsibility for our part in the problem.

As long as we blame society, others, circumstances, Satan, etc., for our sin, we are not being honest with ourselves and forfeit God's forgiveness.

2. Daniel prayed and said: "I deserve what I have coming to me."

V. 11

"Therefore the curse is poured upon us" -

The curse referred to is found in Deut. 28:15-68. Israel's disobedience to God's Law demanded the curse to be poured out.

*There are always consequences to sin.

There is always a price for disobedience.

Daniel is saying: "God, we deserve the curse You sent upon us!"

V. 12

"He hath confirmed His words" - What God says, He does!

The LORD, though very patient with Israel, fulfilled His promise of judgment for Israel's disobedience.

V. 12-13

"God was bound by His word to punish them. Had He not punished them, He would have made Himself a liar" (unfaithful to His word) (Walton, p. 73). (EX: How a parent destroys his credibility by not carrying out threatened discipline).

V. 13

When people get deep into sin and even face the horrible consequences for it, many still do not come to God in repentance, but harden themselves and persist in their miseries (cp. the wicked living in the Day of the LORD - Rev. 16:9-11).

V. 14

"Therefore hath the LORd watched upon the evil" - the LORD "kept the calamity in store" (NASV).

God's judgment may be delayed, but it is never late.

*God is right in all He does!

IV. Humble PETITION (v. 15-19)

Daniel petitions the Lord for mercy based on:

A. God's righteousness (v. 16a; cp. v. 2)

V. 16a

Daniel is saying: "LORD, have mercy on us based on Your righteousness."

God can have mercy upon us today because all of His righteous demands against sin have been satisfied by Jesus Christ.

Therefore, He is both "just (righteous) and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 4:26).

He is faithful and just (righteous) to forgive us" (I Jn. 1:9).

As far as Israel was concerned, God was righteous to turn away His wrath, since He promised in His Word a restoration after 70 years (cp. Dan. 9:2; Jer. 25:11, 12; 29:10).

God is righteous to fulfill His Word!

Whenever you pray according to His will (as revealed in His Word), He has obligated Himself to answer your prayer (I Jn. 5:14-15).

God is bound by His own Word!

B. God's glory and honor (v. 16b-17)

Daniel's prayer is self-less. He is more concerned about the reputation of God than anything else.

The worst loss when a Christian sins is not the embarrassment he faces, but it's the dishonor that His God receives from the world.

V. 16b

Daniel appeals to God for mercy on His people because of their reproachful testimony among the surrounding pagans.

Because Israel was an object of scorn among the pagan nations, so their God was an object of ridicule. His name was "profaned among the heathen" because of their sin and His consequent judgment (Ezek. 36:21-23, 32).

*Cp. Moses appealed to God's testimony as a basis for Him to withhold judgment on Israel - Ex 32:11-13; cp. Dt 9:28.

V. 17

"For the Lord's sake" - cp. v. 19 - "For thine own sake" = Daniel is praying that God would restore Israel, not because they deserve it, but for God's own holy reputation and glory.

*When you pray for forgiveness, for revival, etc., is it because you are concerned about God's glory?

The main reason we should desire God to cleanse us is not for our benefit, but for His good pleasure and honor!

Both the city (Jerusalem) and the people (Israel) were called by God's name (v. 18, 19). It was God's city; they were God's people. Therefore, it would bring honor to God to grant mercy.

C. God's desire and ability to forgive (v. 18-19; cp. v. 9)

V. 18

"For Thy great mercies" - No one deserves mercy. If it were deserved, it would not be "mercy."

> A mother once approached Napoleon seeking a pardon for her son. The emperor replied that the young man had committed a certain offense twice, and justice demanded death. “But I don’t ask for justice,” the mother explained. “I plead for mercy.” “But your son does not deserve mercy,” Napoleon replied. “Sir,” the woman cried, “it would not be mercy if he deserved it, and mercy is all I ask for.” “Well, then,” the emperor said, “I will have mercy.” And he spared the woman’s son. (Luis Palau, “Experiencing God’’s Forgiveness“, Multnomah Press, 1984)

When you have failed the Lord, you cannot appeal to your goodness as a basis for His forgiveness, but to His mercy.

God's mercies (plural) are many, "great" and eternal - "His mercy endureth forever" (Ps. 136).

CONCLUSION: V. 20-23

God is quicker to answer prayer than we are to pray.

God's answer to Daniel's prayer was on the way before he ever got up from off His knees.

As a matter of fact, Gabriel interrupted Daniel's prayer in "mid-stream."

"Whiles I was speaking (v. 20) . . ."

"Whiles I was speaking in prayer (v. 21) . . ."

"At the beginning of thy supplications (v. 23) . . ."

God is more anxious to answer prayer than we are to pray!

God is more desirous to forgive than we desire to be forgiven.

As we will see, God goes above and beyond the immediate request of Daniel (that being the restoration of ancient Jerusalem [v. 25]). God also reveals the future, permanent restoration of the Messianic Kingdom (v. 24).