

Daniel's Prayer for the People

Key Verse: *“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 9:17*

Selected Scripture:
Daniel 9

DANIEL, NOW AN ELDERLY prophet, had read the words of another faithful prophet, Jeremiah, who had foretold that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. Seventy years had now passed, and Daniel sought to have God’s favor returned to Israel and to have Jerusalem restored. He prayed to God very humbly, “with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes” (Dan. 9:3), realizing it was Israel’s unfaithfulness to God which

had resulted in their seventy years of captivity.

Daniel’s moving prayer included six important parts:

1. He acknowledged God as one who always keeps his covenants and gives mercy to those who love him.—vs. 4

2. He confessed that, as a nation, they had sinned greatly, had rebelled against God, and had ignored the teachings and warnings of their prophets.—vss. 5-8

3. He stated his faith that, although they had sinned, it was still possible for God to exercise mercy and forgiveness toward them.—vss. 9,10

4. He said he understood the punishments they had suffered were just, and according to the law of Moses, and yet as a nation they had not repented.—vss. 11-15

5. He asked for God's anger to be turned away, that their sanctuary no longer be desolate as stated in our Key Verse, not because of their righteousness, but because of his mercy.—vss. 16-18

6. He appealed to God that he hear his prayer and act upon it, “for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.”—vs. 19

Daniel's prayer shows the importance of approaching the Heavenly Father even at times when we feel unworthy of doing so, due to our falling short of doing his will. Indeed, these are times when we most need to go to God in prayer and ask for his help and guidance. The Apostle James says, “Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. Is any one of you [spiritually] sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”—James 5:13-16, *New International Version*

As Daniel concluded his prayer, the angel Gabriel spoke to him, providing him the answer he sought. Paraphrasing, Gabriel stated that a partial measure of favor would be restored to Israel for a period of four hundred and ninety years (70 prophetic weeks). In that period, Jerusalem would be rebuilt, and the people be given another opportunity to change their sinful ways. Most importantly, though, Gabriel said that near the end of this period of time their long-awaited Messiah would come on the scene. As a nation they would have the opportunity of receiving him. Gabriel warned, though, that their Messiah would be cut off, and following this there would be complete destruction and desolation once again of their nation and the city of Jerusalem.—Dan. 9:21-27 ■