

# HAVE MERCY / Sunday School- March 10, 2013

## Unifying Topic: DANIEL'S PRAYER

### Lesson Text

I. Daniel's Prayer Of Contrition (Daniel 9:4-10)

II. God Righteous Judgment (Daniel 9:11-14)

**The Main Thought:** To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him. (Daniel 9:9), KJV)

**Unifying Principle:** Even though our hopes for the future are grounded in God's past actions, we are human and become fearful. What should we do when fear encroaches? Daniel went to God in prayer.

**Lesson Aim:** To help students hear the passionate words of Daniel's prayer to God.

**Life Aim:** To teach students that confession and action are contingent upon each other; one cannot exist without the other.

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- 9:4 And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;
- 9:5 We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments:
- 9:6 Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.
- 9:7 O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee.
- 9:8 O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.
- 9:9 To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him;
- 9:10 Neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.
- 9:11 Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.
- 9:12 And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.
- 9:13 As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.
- 9:14 Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice.

### **HISTORY:**

#### **Chapter 9:1-3**

9:1 *"In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;"*— Darius was the immediate successor of Belshazzar and reigned over Babylon. This Darius is not Darius the Persian, under whom the temple was built, but he is the son of Ahasuerus and the race of the Medes, who lived in the time of Daniel, and had honored Daniel by elevating him as one of the first presidents in his kingdom. He ruled over Babylon, after Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians. This is what happened in Darius first year of reign.

9:2 *"In the first year of his reign I Daniel 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."* After Daniel had been in captivity in Babylon for nearly seventy years, he knew by the books or letters that God's predictions through Jeremiah (Jer.25:11-12) were nearly fulfilled and that God might allow His people to return to Palestine.

9:3 *"And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:"*— *"Set my face unto the Lord God"*, meaning, he turned his face toward Jerusalem, the place where God had dwelt; the place of His holy abode on earth. Why? - To seek God in prayer; pleas of mercy. Since God was judging the king of Babylon and its nation, as promised (Jer.25:12), Daniel sought God in prayer and supplications for the gracious restoration of the Israelites; in allowing them to return to their land. However, Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed Jerusalem. And God had exiled them to Babylon.<sup>1</sup> Daniel was a very humble man, who knew his true wisdom came as a gift from God. The fasting, sackcloth, and ashes, tells us of the seriousness of Daniel's prayer. <sup>2</sup> *"Sackcloth"* was a

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/daniel/10.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Bible.show/sVerseID/21992/eVerseID/21992/RTD/barnes>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

coarse kind of cloth, usually made of hair, and employed for the purpose of making sacks, bags, etc. As it was dark, and coarse, and rough, it was regarded as a proper badge of mourning and humiliation, and was worn as such usually by passing or girding it around the loins. *"Ashes"*— It was customary to cast ashes on the head in a time of great grief and sorrow. The principles on which this was done seem to have been...

- (a) that the external appearance should correspond with the state of the mind and the heart, and
- (b) that such external circumstances would have a tendency to produce a state of heart corresponding to them - or would produce true humiliation and repentance for sin.

He was reaching out to God with a humble spirit, knowing that all truth comes from God.

## LESSON:

### **Daniel 9:4-10 Daniel's Prayer Of Contrition**

**9:4** *"And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;"*— Daniel prayed to the Lord his God by first confessing his own sin. He already knew that God is a covenant keeping God; He faithfully fulfills His promises, showing mercy to those that love Him and keep His commandments. Daniel was one that faithfully kept God's commandments and truly loved Him. The people had been unfaithful to God and here he is interceding in prayer and fasting for them.

**9:5** *"We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments:"* Daniel includes himself along with his people of committing sin and iniquity, doing wickedly and rebelling against God; departing from His precepts and His judgments. He did not consider himself to be above others in righteousness. How many of us would do that? <sup>3</sup>Recognizing, the fact that we have sinned, comes even before repenting of that sin to God. By having a contrite heart gets God's attention. Daniel is associating himself by admitting guilt for their sins.

**9:6** *"Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land."* He prays for Israel's restoration as related to the prophets, which were sent by God year after year to kings, princes, fathers and all the people of the land. Their messages were ignored. God still speaks infallibly and authoritatively through the Bible, and He also speaks through preachers, teachers, and concerned friends, and sometimes the truth hurts and too painful to hear. A nation's sin must be confessed by God's people if they seek God's mercy for their land. *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land"* 2Chron.7:14.

**9:7** *"O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee."* Righteousness is ascribed to God and shamefulness is ascribed to the people. <sup>4</sup>He felt that at that time they were a down-trodden, a humbled, a condemned people. Their country was in ruins; they were captives in a far distant land, and all on which they had prided themselves was laid waste. All these judgments and humiliating things he says they had deserved, for they had grievously sinned against God. They were scattered everywhere, and wherever they were they had common cause for humiliation and shame. <sup>5</sup>Israel had committed spiritual adultery, by worshipping the false gods of the heathen people around them. God is holy. Israel was driven out of their homeland, because they trespassed greatly against their God. They didn't know what to believe anymore.

**9:8** *"O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee."* He tells God that their kings, princes, and fathers are weighed down with shame because of all their sin. Their loyalty was to no god. They wanted to worship God, but all at the same time they worshipped false gods. Their confusion was obvious to everyone, but themselves as they did it.

**9:9** *"To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him;"*— Daniel continues to acknowledge their rebellion against God while reminding Him that mercy and forgiveness belong to Him. Daniel begins to lay the groundwork of an appeal to God hoping to receive God's mercy and forgiveness for all the people.

**9:10** *"Neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants*

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Bible.show/sVerseID/21996/eVerseID/21996/RTD/barnes>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/daniel/10.html>

*the prophets.*" Of course God knows all, but Daniel still confesses the sin to God. God wants us to know what we've done, confess it, and ask for forgiveness. We need to be clear of what sin we have committed. The Holy Spirit will bring to our remembrance, what we've done so our hearts will be humbled and teachable, to not go back into that same sin. Daniel is admitting to God, they had not kept the law. One thing that set the Hebrews aside as being different is they had the law of God. God had promised to bless them mightily, if they kept His law. If they did not keep His law, there would be curses. They were not keeping His law which was set before them by God's servants the prophets.

## **Daniel 9:11-14 God Righteous Judgment**

**9:11** *"Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him."* Daniel is still praying and confessing sin. Now, he utters not only for the tribe and the kingdom of Judah, but the whole nation has transgressed God's law; departed from obedience and turned from God's voice. That's why the curse is poured on them. The oath they swore by, written in the Law of Moses was null and void to them. God would always keep His Word and oath to His people. The problem is, if they would only keep theirs. God had given the people of Israel a choice: obey Me and be blessed; disobey Me and be cursed.

**9:12** *"And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem."* Therefore, the promise of Deuteronomy 28 had come upon the nation. His Word is confirmed. God did exactly what He said He would do. They sinned in full knowledge of the law, and God greatly punished them for it. Daniel is pretty much saying: in all of history they had never has a disaster like this to happen to them in Jerusalem or to their rulers.

**9:13** *"As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth."* He further tells God that all the evil written in the Law of Moses has come true and upon them. He makes it plain by saying they still didn't go before God in prayer, so they could turn from their sin and understand God's truth. They really brought all this trouble upon themselves; disregarding the law and doing what they wanted to do. Daniel is speaking of Israel as a whole, and not individually. Daniel knows that if they had prayed before God, they would understand His truth and God would not have brought all this evil upon them.

**9:14** *"Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice."* The Lord had carefully observed the course of events, and had been attentive to all they had done. God is not inattentive to any of our conduct, though He may seem to be, and that in due time He will show that He has kept an unslumbering eye upon all evil. At the end, Daniel knows and speaks that God is righteous in all the works He does. Daniel did not complain that it was too harsh or severe of punishment, but knows that they can't escape from God. And he makes it clear that they defiantly did not obey God's voice!

### **SUMMARY:**

<sup>6</sup>The events of this chapter took place sixty nine years after Daniel had been carried captive to Babylon. This was after the fall of Babylon to the Medes and Persians and in the first year of the reign of Darius. Even though Daniel was extremely busy he found time to study the Word of God and to pray each day at morning, noon and night. Daniel's study of the Scriptures led him to turn to God and to pray. His prayer is given at considerable length. <sup>7</sup>As he prayed he fasted (v.4), confessed his sins (v.5), and pleaded that God would reveal His will (vv.6-10). He prayed with complete surrender to God and with complete openness to what God was saying to him. The captives from Judah had rebelled against God. Their sins had led to their captivity, but God is merciful even to rebels, if they confess their sins and return to Him. God had sent many prophets to speak to His people through the years, but their messages had been ignored. The truth was too painful to hear. Daniel tells the Lord He has been merciful and forgiving, even though they had rebelled against Him and rejected His teachings that came to them from His servants the prophets.

<sup>8</sup>Two grievous sins had been committed by the nation. First the people had disobeyed the law of God (v.11). Then they had refused to listen to the prophets who were sent by God to warn them (v.14).

### **APPLICATION:**

I cannot expect God to answer my prayers when I constantly disobey Him. Like Daniel I must cry out for mercy. Then when he sends mercy I must be careful to give Him praise and thanksgiving.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/daniel-cries-out-to-god-for-mercy/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/daniel-prays-for-the-people/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/daniel-cries-out-to-god-for-mercy/>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>