

Intro- We are in Daniel 9, which takes place about 12 years after Daniel's visions of ch. 7 and 8.

- * Daniel was brought to Babylon at 15 yrs of age, to be trained as a wise man in the empire.
- * Now, many years later, the Medo Persian Empire has just conquered the Babylonian Empire, and Darius its leader has placed Daniel in high leadership, who is now in his 80's.
- * This chapter begins with Daniel praying in the first 19 verses. These are the prayers that got Daniel thrown in the lion's den in ch. 6, and we learned earlier that he was praying because Jeremiah prophesied Judah would only be in captivity for 70 years, and it was that very year.
- * He also knew, as Isaiah wrote, that Cyrus of Persia who now ruled over Babylon, would soon decree that the Jews could return to their land, and Daniel was praying that God would stir the hearts of Israel to repent, and desire to honor God and return to their land.
- * Last week we began to look at the body of the prayer itself, to see --

III. WHAT DANIEL FOCUSED ON IN HIS PRAYER We learned as Daniel began to pray--

A. DANIEL ACKNOWLEDGED GOD'S CHARACTER.

- * Daniel knew prayer is only true and effective if we clearly understand the One we pray to.
- * And as he prayed, Daniel expressed 8 traits about God. (last week we saw first 4-)

1. In v4 Daniel began by referring to God as - "the great God",

which portrayed God as all-powerful, the One who is able to move and answer his prayers.

2. Daniel spoke of God as "Awesome" (v4) which showed he understood

that God was worthy of the deepest respect and reverent fear.

3. In v7, 14, Daniel affirmed that God is righteous in character, and in all He does.

- Daniel confessed that it was Israel who had terribly sinned,
and that God had acted in a perfectly righteous way by chastening them.

4. Daniel recognized God's patience which is implied in several verses (v5-6, 10-11, 13)

- where Daniel spoke of Israel's sin- from Moses up to their present time, which showed the long decades (centuries) God endured their ongoing disobedience, before He judged.
- But foolish Israel interpreted God's patience as His approval, which offended God even more, and finally, He did what He promised, and took them out of their land.

@ Now let's look at 4 final traits of God's character Daniel understood. (then confession)

5. Daniel declared that God is the rightful Judge of sin. (7, 11, 12, 14)

- In vs 7, 11,12, 14- Daniel said that- "God had fulfilled His word spoken against them', poured out His sworn judgments on them, scattered them because of their unfaithfulness, and had righteously brought their disaster upon them'.
- Earlier in Daniel we learned that the pagans believed being conquered by another nation proved that the enemy's god was stronger than your god.
- But Daniel knew Judah was not conquered because God was weak, but opposite that, it was God who powerfully brought their captivity on them, and had every right to do so.
- Sadly today, people not only think God condones sin, they also think He's passive and too loving to judge sin. Daniel honored God by acknowledging His right to judge sinners.

6. Daniel declared that God is One with His Word. (4, 5, 10, 11)

- In these verses, Daniel stated Israel's disobedience to God's commands, judgments, Laws.
- Daniel knew there is no variation between God's character and God's truth.
- The bible shows that no one can communicate in a true relationship with God, when they're disobedient and rebellious to God's truth, perfectly revealed in His Word.
- The Jews had drifted from God's Word and come to take it lightly. They began violating it in minor ways, which led to blatant disobedience to it, and finally defiance toward it.
- All the while, thinking they could live in God's favor, even though they ignored His truth.
- But God is one with His Word, which is the clear and perfect portrayal of His Person.
- This is such a reality that Jesus is even called "the Word". (John 1:1-4, 14, 1 John 1:1-2)

App- Those who think they know and communicate with God, but who ignore and live in habitual disobedience to His truth, are fooling themselves. God is 1 with His Word.

- Relationship with God is only real, and prayer is only effective as we learn, accept, and submit to God's Word. (Ps 119:2, 4, 7, 10, 28-29, 40, 59, 77)

Pr 28:9- "If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law, even his prayers are detestable."

7. Daniel affirmed that God is Faithful. (4c- "He keeps His covenant of love..")

- The pagans believed their gods were fickle and moody, and would change their mind or character on a whim. (care, love, bless - 1 minute, hate, reject, and harm the next)
- But Daniel knew God would be faithful to His unconditional covenant with Abraham to give his physical descendants a land, a Messiah, and spiritual blessings, and that He would never utterly forsake them.
- Within that promise God set conditions that if they obeyed, He would bless them, if they disobeyed, He would punish them, **but if they repented**, He would forgive and restore them.
- Daniel believed in God's unwavering faithfulness to what He said, and true effective prayer is based on faith in what God has promised to do.
- If we struggle with sin, He promises strength to overcome it, If we struggle with worry, He promises peace. If you're working on a lost person, God promises His Word will not return void. Whatever the struggle, we should seek God based on His promises.

8. Daniel said in vs9- "The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving". (v9a, [18b])

- God was offended by Israel's continued wickedness and their unrepentant hearts, so at this time the Jews were living under God's punishment of their sin.
 - Mercy is when God withholds the punishment someone deserves. Forgiveness is when God sets the offense aside, and cancels the penalty based on a just payment.
 - Daniel knew that regardless how far they had gone, how badly they failed, how terribly they ignored and disobeyed God, God is an extremely merciful and forgiving God.
 - If this were not true, prayer would be useless, because everyone has sinned.
 - In the bible, the prophets and Israel's Godly people knew physical sacrifice didn't earn God's favor, so when Israel sinned, they approached God based on His merciful forgiveness.
- David--- "His mercy is great", "You Lord are good, ready to forgive, abundant in mercy".
"Your lovingkindness (mercy) is great above the heavens, The earth is full of His Mercy".
- Mic 7:18 Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.

Summary- Daniel approached God based on the fact --

God is great and awesome, more powerful than anything we face,
and completely worthy to be admired, respected and even feared.

He is to be approached as a Person of total righteousness, who can never do wrong,
who is 1 with His Word, and who holds mankind to His righteous standard.

He also knew that God is offended by sin, and is the rightful judge of sinners,
but that He's also extremely patient with sinful Humanity.

Finally, Daniel approached God, knowing He is faithful to His promises,
and merciful and forgiving to those who repent.

**@ These and other traits of God, must be considered and understood
if we will approach God correctly in prayer.**

* When people ignore God's truth and fashion a God in their mind that fits their idea of what
they want God to be like, they may find some kind comfort in that, but it's false comfort.

* Daniel knew God well, and what he said about Him in this prayer proves it.

@ The 2nd main thing that permeated Daniel's prayer is-

B. DANIEL CONFESSED THE NATION'S SIN. (5-14)

* This continues to show that Daniel understood God, but also shows he understood true confession, and grasped how terribly Israel had sinned. **(6 things about his confession)**

1. Daniel knew confession is required for fellowship with God.

- Daniel confessed Israel's sin because he knew God is holy, and that sin offends God, and turns Him away, and that God must be approached with a desire to confess sin.
 - Isa wrote in 1:15- When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood;
 - Isa 59:1-2- Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.
 - Mic 3:4- They will cry out to the Lord but He will hide his face from them, because of their evil.
 - Pr. 28:13- He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. Ps 66:18- If I cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not listen;
- * Intellectually, God knows all we ever say (or think); But spiritually, He deliberately refuses to pay attention to those who pray but refuse to acknowledge and confess their sin.

2. Daniel understood the concept of true confession.

- The Hebrew word Daniel used for "confessed" means- 'to hold out the hand and throw away'. The word depicts opening the hand and turning loose of the sin a person holds onto.
- In the NT, the Greek word for confession means "to say the same thing", meaning that true confession is when we agree with God about sin. So what does God think of sin?
- He rightly defines sin, hates it, is offended and grieved by it, He holds us responsible for it, and He wants to remove it, so we honor God, and don't harm our lives and others.
- So we must agree with how God defines sin, be grieved that it offends and grieves God, accept responsibility for it, and desire to turn from it to honor God, and allow God to remove it so it doesn't harm our lives or others. (more later)

3. Daniel knew confession should be detailed. >>>>>>>>>>

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Q- Some say detailing sin causes sorrow rather than joy. Obviously we must accept forgiveness and not live in constant guilt, but the bible shows joy/peace come from detailed confession.

ILL- Even the world knows you can't fix failure if you don't **analyze** the problem. (football tm)

- Lam 3:40- "Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the LORD."

- David- Ps 26:2- "Test me, O LORD, and try me, examine my heart and my mind;" (139:23-24)

@ Daniel shows how detailed his confession was, by the words he used. (MacArthur)

Vs 5 - "we have sinned". "Chata"- "To miss the mark"

Israel had failed to live up to God's standard of righteousness He set for them.

- **"we have done wrong"**. "Avah"- to make crooked, to pervert". Israel had twisted God's righteous truth, which perverted God's will, and then perverted their lives.

- **"We have been wicked"**- "rasha"- to violate, to make trouble". Israel had deliberately violated God's holy standard, and brought trouble and harm on themselves and others.

- **"We have rebelled"**- "marad", this described stiff-necked 'blatant rebellion'. (Jer 5:3)

In Vs 7 - Daniel confessed their "unfaithfulness"- "Ma-al"- 'deliberate disloyalty and betrayal in breaking a promise'.

In Vs 11 Daniel said- "Israel has transgressed"- "abar" - "to cross over".

This refers to how Israel finally abandoned God, and crossed over to the other side.

Q- These words describe how they sinned, and how it progressed, which didn't come all at once, but slowly crept in and led them to be unrecognizable as God's people.

They began missing the mark, wandering from the path, and polluting God's truth, and then progressed to wickedly violate and harm God's truth, and trouble the nation.

Finally, they became blatant and rebellious against the prophets, betrayed their covenant with God, and in the end, they abandoned God altogether and went to the other side.

In the same way, Satan knows he can't get us to sin terribly all at once, so he introduces sin into our life progressively, this is why we must "watch and pray".

App- Detailing sin is not to inform God (He knows all), but it helps us see the **extent** of our sin, what may have **caused** it, the **damage** it did, how to **avoid** it, and it helps us **grieve** over it.

* Re-occurring sin in our life, is often the result of shallow confession.

@ Along with the specific words, Daniel also listed 4 specific sins the nation was guilty of.

a. Daniel detailed- Israel's rebelling against God's truth. (6, 10) (touched here before)

- In v6, 10, Daniel said they rejected God's law He miraculously gave them through Moses, and they rejected the prophets who were the authorized voice of God to the nation.
- God's truth is the spiritual foundation that cleanses and sustains our lives. (family, society)
- When truth is rejected, society will follow the lies of depraved humanity, spawned by Satan.
- Israel lowered the authority of God's Word, integrated pagan beliefs, which resulted in spiritual and moral decay in every area of their society, which finally brought God's judgment.
- Jer. 7:28- "Truth has perished, it has vanished from their lips". (Josiah found Word- 640 bc)

b. Israel was guilty of corrupt leadership. (8, 12a) (Jer 14:14)

- Daniel spoke of the "kings, princes, fathers, and judges (rulers)". God holds leaders seriously accountable for how they lead anything- in a home, church, or a nation.
- 1st and 2nd kings describes Israel's and Judah's kings, most of which were wicked.
- Leaders can't force righteous hearts on people, but they're responsible before God to set and enforce biblical laws, rather than lower the standard so sin becomes acceptable.

c. The Jews neglected their personal responsibility. Vs6 refers to- "all the people", Vs 7- refers to "all Israel", and Vs 11 says - "all Israel has transgressed".

- The leaders were accountable, but that was no excuse for the people to abandon God's Word and His moral truth, that permeated their history and was set in their consciences
- In v13- Daniel said Israel was told in God's Law that God had sent this disaster on them for their sin, YET, they did not turn from sin and seek God's favor'.
- After all the preaching prophets and promised judgment from God's truth, they **didn't care** enough to abandon their sin and repent and embrace God. (Jer 5:12-13)
- They followed their wicked leaders and prophets, just to-- "go along to get along" and they excused themselves from personal responsibility, and just **didn't care**.
- Daniel and his friends were much different, they were righteous and must have come from homes where regardless the nation's sin, they feared God and followed the truth.

APP- Again, these are the ways Satan bring sin to creep into our life. He downplays God's truth, introduces corrupt people, tempts us to forget about our responsibility to live rightly, and people become so preoccupied with life, they don't really care to be righteous.