

Dan. 9:1-19: In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans – ² in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. ³ Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking Him by prayer & pleas for mercy with fasting & sackcloth & ashes. ⁴ I prayed to the LORD my God & made confession, saying, "O Lord, the great & awesome God, who keeps covenant & mercy with those who love Him & keep His commandments, ⁵ we have sinned & done wrong & acted wickedly & rebelled, turning aside from Your commandments & rules. ⁶ We have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes, & our fathers, & to all the people of the land. ⁷ To You, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, & to all Israel, those who are near & those who are far away, in all the lands to which You have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against You. ⁸ To us, O LORD, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, & to our fathers, because we have sinned against You. ⁹ To the Lord our God belong mercy & forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him ¹⁰ & have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God by walking in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. ¹¹ All Israel has transgressed your law & turned aside, refusing to obey Your voice. & the curse & oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against Him. ¹² He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us & against our rulers who ruled us, by bringing upon us a great calamity. For under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what has been done against Jerusalem. ¹³ As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us; yet we have not entreated the favor of the LORD our God, turning from our iniquities & gaining insight by your truth. ¹⁴ Therefore the LORD has kept ready the calamity & has brought it upon us, for the LORD our God is righteous in all the works that He has done, & we have not obeyed His voice. ¹⁵ & now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, & have made a name for yourself, as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly. ¹⁶ O Lord, according to all your righteous acts, let your anger & your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy hill, because for our sins, & for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem & your people have become a byword among all who are around us. ¹⁷ Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant & to his pleas for mercy, & for your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate. ¹⁸ O my God, incline your ear & hear. Open your eyes & see our desolations, & the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. ¹⁹ O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention & act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city & your people are called by your name."

Intro: Sadly, another famous, well-known Christian has committed the sin of adultery:

- **Article:** Christian author Philip Yancey said . . . he had engaged in an affair with a married woman for eight years & would retire from writing & speaking . . . His books, including *What's So Amazing About Grace?*, have sold more than 15 million copies. He often wrote about faith in the face of pain & suffering. Yancey, 76, has been married to his wife, Janet Yancey, for 55 years.

- **Philip Yancey:** To my great shame, I confess that for eight years I willfully engaged in a sinful

affair with a married woman. My conduct defied everything that I believe about marriage. It was also totally inconsistent with my faith & my writings & caused deep pain for her husband & both of our families. I will not share further details out of respect for the other family. I have confessed my sin before God & my wife, & have committed myself to a professional counseling & accountability program. I have failed morally & spiritually, & I grieve over the devastation I have caused. I realize that my actions will disillusion readers who have previously trusted in my writing. Worst of all, my sin has brought dishonor to God. I am filled with remorse & repentance, & I have nothing to stand on except God's mercy & grace. I am now focused on rebuilding trust & restoring my marriage of 55 years. Having disqualified myself from Christian ministry, I am therefore retiring from writing, speaking, & social media. Instead, I need to spend my remaining years living up to the words I have already written. I pray for God's grace & forgiveness – as well as yours – & for healing in the lives of those I've wounded.

- Yancey's wife: I, Janet Yancey, am speaking from a place of trauma & devastation that only people who have lived through betrayal can understand. Yet I made a sacred & binding marriage vow 55½ years ago, & I will not break that promise. I accept & understand that God through Jesus has paid for & forgiven the sins of the world, including Philip's. God grant me the grace to forgive also, despite my unfathomable trauma. Please pray for us.

- Christian: I'm sure it started with a small compromise, finally ending in this devastating moment for his wife & adultery's blast radius. To the outside world, it all looked fine. He was the Yancey we did not know. So guard your heart, guard your relationships – & your marriage. Any short-term pleasure of an illicit relationship is never worth the long-term cost. As it's been said, we must remember, "Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, & cost you more than you want to pay." So I'm praying we will all be Christians & Christian leaders who live lives of integrity in community with others & ultimately coram Deo – before the face of God

Today, we meditate on Daniel's prayer of confession of sin on behalf of Himself & God's people.

Knowing you are greatly loved, confess your sins & seek God with passion in prayer for His praise!

1. Pray In Bad Times And Pray In Good Times

Dan. 9:1-2: In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans – ² in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.

a. Pray in bad times: Daniel & God's people are under God's judgment in exile in Babylon. Times are bad! Daniel was reading Jeremiah, & he sees the number of years that must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, & this knowledge moves him to pray. When you are in trouble, pray! In this case, Israel was in trouble because of their sin.

b. Pray in good times: Daniel was reading God's Word & this moved him to pray! Jer. 25:11-12 & Jer. 29:10: For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, & I will fulfill to you My promise & bring you back to this place.

Iain Duguid: In these oracles Jeremiah announced that the Lord's plan was to subject his people to Babylon for seventy years for their sin, but at the end of that time God would act to judge the Babylonians & to bring his people home. What triggered Daniel's interest in this prophecy was likely the overthrow of the Babylonian empire by the Medes & the Persians, & the death of King Belshazzar at the hands of Darius, the new ruler. Evidently, God was now judging the king of Babylon & his nation, just as he had promised. Therefore, even though it wasn't quite seventy years yet since the destruction of Judah, Daniel began to pray with greater intensity for the fulfillment of the second half of this prophecy: the gracious restoration of God's people to his land.

c. Pray God's Word: Pray for what God has already promised. Because God is sovereign, pray!

2. Pray Confessing Your Sins

Dan. 9:4: I prayed to the LORD my God & made confession

a. Is confession of sin a regular part of your prayer life? Jesus taught us in the Lord's Prayer that it should be! Daily bread & forgive us our sins! A.C.T.S.; **1 John 1:9**

b. God's people sinned by acting wickedly & rebelling against God & turning from His commands: V. 5: we have sinned & done wrong & acted wickedly & rebelled, turning aside from Your commandments & rules.'

c. God's people sinned by not listening to God's Word through His prophets: V. 6: We have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes, & our fathers, & to all the people of the land.

d. Daniel & all Israel have sinned: Vs. 9-11, 20: for we have rebelled against Him ¹⁰ & have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God by walking in His laws, which he set before us by His servants the prophets. ¹¹ All Israel has transgressed Your law & turned aside, refusing to obey Your voice . . . ²⁰ While I was speaking & praying, confessing **my sin & the sin of my people Israel** . . .

Kevin DeYoung: This is why we see the likes of Ezra (Ezra 9-10), Nehemiah (Neh. 1:4-11), & Daniel (Dan. 9:3-19) leading in corporate confession. The Jews were not lumped together because of race, ethnicity, geography, education level, or socioeconomic status. The Israelites had freely entered into a covenant relationship with each other & with their God. In all three examples above, the leader entered into corporate confession because (1) he was praying for the covenant people, (2) the people were as a whole marked by unfaithfulness, & (3) the leader himself bore some responsibility for the actions of the people, either by having been blind to the sin (Ezra 9:3) or by participating directly in the sin (Neh. 1:6; Dan. 9:20).

e. Sin has deadly consequences: Vs. 7-8: To You, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but **to us open shame**, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, & to all Israel, those who are near & those who are far away, **in all the lands to which You have driven them**, because of the treachery that they have committed against You. ⁸ To us, O LORD, **belongs open shame**, to

our kings, to our princes, & to our fathers, because we have sinned against You; **GOSPEL!**

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3. Pray To Seek God

V. 3: Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking Him by prayer & pleas for mercy with fasting & sackcloth & ashes.

a. Only God can forgive: V. 9: To the Lord our God belong mercy & forgiveness

- **Jn. 14:6:** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

b. Only God can help: V. 11-14: the curse & oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against Him.¹² He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us & against our rulers who ruled us, by bringing upon us a great calamity. For under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what has been done against Jerusalem.¹³ As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us; yet we have not entreated the favor of the LORD our God, turning from our iniquities & gaining insight by your truth.¹⁴ Therefore the LORD has kept ready the calamity & has brought it upon us

c. Only God can satisfy: Why did Daniel so deeply long for forgiveness? Why is the exile so bad? Because God's people want God above all else! We seek God! This is why Daniel prayed three times a day & would not stop even at the threat of the lions' den. This is why Moses cried out: **Exod. 33:15:** If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here.

[Moses: This is how all will know we have Your favor! Show me Your glory!]

V. 17: O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate.

John Piper: My point in this book [*God Is The Gospel: Meditations On God's Love As The Gift Of Himself*] is that all the saving events & all the saving blessings of the Gospel are means of getting obstacles out of the way so that we might know & enjoy God most fully. Propitiation, redemption, forgiveness, imputation, sanctification, liberation, healing, heaven – none of these is good news except for one reason: they bring us to God for our everlasting enjoyment of Him.

4. Pray Like You Mean It

V. 3: Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking Him by prayer & pleas for mercy with fasting & sackcloth & ashes.

Fasting: John Piper: The more deeply you walk with Christ, the hungrier you get for Christ . . . the more homesick you get for heaven . . . the more you want "all the fullness of God" . . . the more you want to be done with sin . . . the more you want the Bridegroom to come again . . . the more you want the Church revived & purified with the beauty of Jesus . . . the more you want a great awakening to God's reality in the cities . . . the more you want to see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ penetrate the darkness of all the unreached peoples of the world . . . the more

you want to see false worldviews yield to the force of Truth . . . the more you want to see pain relieved & tears wiped away & death destroyed . . . the more you long for every wrong to be made right & the justice & grace of God to fill the earth like the waters cover the sea. If you don't feel strong desires for the manifestation of the glory of God, it is not because you have drunk deeply & are satisfied. It is because you have nibbled so long at the table of the world. Your soul is stuffed with small things, & there is no room for the great. God did not create you for this. There is an appetite for God. And it can be awakened. I invite you to turn from the dulling effects of food and the dangers of idolatry, & to say with some simple fast: "This much, O God, I want you."

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5. Pray Praising God For Who He Is

V. 14: for the LORD our God is righteous in all the works that he has done, & we have not obeyed his voice. [He's great! He's awesome! He keeps covenant! He's merciful, greatly! He's forgiving!]

6. Pray Praising God For What He's Done

V. 15: & now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, & have made a name for yourself, as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

7. Pray For God's Mercy

Vs. 3, 9, 16-18: Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer & **pleas for mercy** with fasting & sackcloth & ashes . . . ⁹ To the Lord our God belong **mercy** & forgiveness . . . ¹⁶ O Lord, according to all your righteous acts, let your anger & your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy hill, because for our sins, & for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem & your people have become a byword among all who are around us. ¹⁷ Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant & to his pleas for **mercy** . . . ¹⁸ For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your **great mercy**.

- **Dan. 9:23, 10:11, 10:19:** I have come to tell it to you, for you are **greatly loved** . . . ^{10:11} O Daniel, man **greatly loved**, understand the words that I speak to you . . . ^{10:19} O man **greatly loved**, fear not, peace be with you; be strong & of good courage.

- **Eph. 2:4-5:** But God, being rich in **mercy**, because of the **great love** with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved

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8. Pray For The Glory Of God's Name

Vs. 17-19: Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant & to his pleas for mercy, & **for your own sake**, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate.

¹⁸ O my God, incline your ear & hear. Open your eyes & see our desolations, & the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. ¹⁹ O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention & act. Delay not, **for your own sake**, O my God, because your city & your people **are called by your name**.

God answers prayer: Iain Duguid: God's immediate answer to Daniel's prayer was to raise up Cyrus, the Persian king, who issued the decree that allowed the Jews to return to their home . . . it occurred almost immediately after Daniel's prayer in the first year of Darius . . . The problem of Israel's rebellious heart that caused the exile in the first place would not be dealt with merely by bringing them back to the land. That would require a much more awesome demonstration of God's greatness & grace, which would be accomplished in the coming of Jesus.

Christ Jesus To His Father Prays
In Trouble And His Darkest Days
He Had No Sins – Always Obeys
The God-Man Holiness Portrays
But Died For All Our Evil Ways
Bore All God's Wrath – Our Debts He Pays
Then Strong Up From The Grave He'd Raise
By Faith Alone Just Grace Displays

Now We Confess And Praise His Ways
Pray With All Passion – Mercy Yeas
And Seek His Presence All Our Days
For His Great Name's Sake Holds Our Gaze
To Pray, Obey, And Always Praise
Oh Set Our Hearts For Him Ablaze
With Love, Grace, Mercy Us Amaze!

Knowing you are greatly loved, confess your sins & seek God with passion in prayer for His praise!