

“And I [Daniel] Prayed”

Daniel 9:1-21

Although this chapter ends in Daniel’s third vision (the one vision of Daniel that gets the most attention by prophecy preachers), the majority of content of this chapter is given to prayer.

Verse one gives the background and timetable of when this prayer, and subsequent vision, occurred. Much debate has been given on who the “Darius the son of Ahasuerus” was. Those that want to find fault with the authorship of the book as being Daniel, as stated, will say this ruler either never existed or ruled long after Daniel would have died. Of course, neither one of those are accurate if a true acceptance of Scripture is made along with an honest study of history in accordance with what the book says.

Brief background as found in John Gill’s commentary:

This is the same with Darius the Median, that took the kingdom after the death of Belshazzar; so called, to distinguish him from Darius the Persian; and yet Porphyry has the gall to assert that this was Darius the Persian, under whom the temple was built, that Daniel might appear to live later than he did: Ahasuerus, whose son he was, is not he that was the husband of Esther, and was many years later than this; but the same with Astyages king of the Medes, and who is called Ahasuerus, in the Apocrypha:

"But before he died he heard of the destruction of Nineve, which was taken by Nabuchodonosor and Assuerus: and before his death he rejoiced over Nineve." (Tobit 14:15)

the father of Cyaxares, the same with this Darius, who was uncle to Cyrus that conquered Babylon, and made him king of it, and of the whole empire; for this was not the first year of his reign over Media, where he had reigned many years before, but over Chaldea, as follows:

which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; by Cyrus his nephew; who having taken Babylon, and settled his affairs, undertook a journey to Persia, and made Media in his way; where he met with his uncle Cyaxares, the same with this Darius, and delivered the kingdom of Babylon to him, and married his daughter, with whom he had for her dowry the kingdom of Media, as Xenophon (y) relates. Now it was in the first year of his reign over the Chaldeans that Daniel had the following vision of the seventy weeks; w

hich, according to Bishop Usher (z) and Mr. Whiston (a), was in the year of the world 3467 A.M. and 537 B.C. Dean Prideaux (b) places it in the year 538; and Mr. Bedford (c) in the year 536.

(y) Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 36. (z) Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3467. (a) Chronological Tables, cent. 10. (b) Connexion, &c. part 1. p. 125, 128. (c) Scripture Chronology, p. 711.

Daniel, based on that timetable, would be about 80 years old at this point. He had served for many years under three rulers and had proved himself faithful. In all those years, Daniel had developed and maintained an avid, purposeful prayer life. It was this prayer life that got Daniel thrown into the lion's den, as recorded in chapter six. Although it cannot be determined with absolute confidence, it is most likely that this chapter, and the events it describes, took place around the same time as the lion's den episode. In fact, it would be safe to speculate that it

may have been this very prayer that caused the events that led to the Daniel in the lion's den.

When it was that Daniel had this communion with God (Dan. 9:1), in the first year of Darius the Mede, who was newly made king of the Chaldeans, Babylon being conquered by him and his nephew, or grandson, Cyrus. In this year the seventy years of the Jews' captivity ended, but the decree for their release was not yet issued out; so that this address of Daniel's to God seems to have been ready in that year, and, probably, before he was cast into the lions' den. And one powerful inducement, perhaps, it was to him then to keep so close to the duty of prayer, though it cost him his life, that he had so lately experienced the benefit and comfort of it. (Matthew Henry)

Dr. Walvoord makes a good observation:

[T]he events of Belshazzar's feast in chapter 5 occurred between the visions of chapters 8 and 9. It is not clear where chapter 6 fits into this order of events, but it also may well have occurred in the first year of the reign of Darius, either immediately before or immediately after the events of chapter 9.

So, how does all that fit? What does it matter? It lays the framework for one of the greatest prayers recorded in the Bible – one of the best illustrations for prayer for a people, for a nation, and, more applicably today, for a church. Before we get to the contents of the actual prayer itself, there are couple things to note.

I. READING THE BIBLE (WITH THE PURPOSE OF LEARNING) WILL PRODUCE PRAYER – VS. 2

A. Reading the Bible will produce an

urgency for prayer – there will be specificity and deliberateness to it – “In the first year of his reign” (a phrase repeated from verse one, which indicates the peculiar dynamics of the prayer)

1. It is not abundantly clear as to whether Daniel was looking for something in particular in his study, or if he was just making a study of what they then had for Scripture and came across this prophecy. Either way, the outcome was the same.
2. In this first year of the reign of Darius, there would have been another upheaval in both the government and the country and Daniel, as an old man (by standards of the day) realized he wouldn't be alive long into this reign and it was likely he was searching in the writings (particularly of Jeremiah, having known of him, if not had known him personally as a youth) for something he could secure his hope upon as he faced this somewhat chaotic time.
3. A connection between the Word of God and prayer is common throughout the Old Testament, especially in the poetical books. Many of those connections produce praise and glory for who God is and are not commonly found to be penitential in nature. The outcome of this Bible study that Daniel appears to undertake produced a penitential prayer. It was a clear understanding of Scripture that produced this prayer.

B. Reading the Bible with a purpose will

produce understanding – “I Daniel understood by books the number of the years...”

1. “Understood”

- a) The Hebrew word used here (יָדַע) is one that means to discern, to perceive, to observe, to pay attention to. It is translated in a literal sense in one Hebrew-English interlinear Bible as the word “meditated.”
- b) The Greek translation in the Septuagint uses a Greek word (συνίημι) that comes from two words that literally mean to put together. Spiros Zodhiates explains this word: “The comprehending activity of the mind denoted by suniēmi entails the assembling of individual facts into an organized whole, as collecting the pieces of a puzzle and putting them together. The mind grasps concepts and sees the proper relationship between them.
- c) Considering these two words and their definitions, Daniel only understood what he was reading after a careful study and comparison with all the information he had from both his experience, his relationship with the Lord, and the written Word of God to which he had access.

Psalm 119:99–100

99 I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.

100 I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.

2 Timothy 3:15–17

15 And that from a child thou hast known

the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

1 Peter 1:10-12

10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

- d) Daniel was not technically a scholar of the Scriptures as a scribe would have been. His time, for the most part, was spent in government work as a politician. He had "retired" from that service to some degree by this point and it would seem he was now spending time in the Scriptures. This shows us that one needs not be a theologian to be able to read and understand (comprehend by putting pieces together) the Bible. All one needs to do is read it with a purpose.

Daniel's purpose then produced a prayer for the ages.

2. "By the books" – the Hebrew word for books here (סִפְרִים) is plural and means books, scrolls, documents, letters, etc. Some say that this is the canon of Scripture that is referred to (some translations have it as either sacred scripture or Scripture capitalized, demonstrating this view) but that is not likely. Jeremiah sent the Jews in captivity a letter telling them how long they would be in captivity, and it is this letter that Daniel directly responds to in this verse, and from which he draws his conclusions (Jer. 29). That said, by further reading in Daniel 9 it will be found that he was also reading and meditating on the Mosaic Law (the Torah – תּוֹרָה) along with other writings of the prophets (Jeremiah and Isaiah, for example). This is most likely why the plural form of the word is used. It was this understanding of the entirety of Scripture that he had access to that produced his passionate prayer of confession and for restitution.
3. "The number of the years" – the length that they would be in captivity. Daniel expected there to be a time limit and his visions seemed to enforce the fact that God seemed to always have limits to the judgment of His people.
4. "Whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years"

- a) One thing to note is that this is the only chapter in Daniel (the only time in his writings) that the name of God is used – YAHWEH יהוה. Each other time God is referred to it is with a name that would have been more acceptable (אֱלֹהִים) and understood by both the Chaldeans and the Jews in captivity. It wasn't until Daniel had spent time in the Word of God that he came to this clear picture of who they were in relation to who He was.
- b) Another thing to notice is that Daniel interpreted the seventy years of captivity as literal – an indication from Scripture itself we are to take things literally as well. The Bible wasn't finished yet – not even much of the Old Testament had been produced in a form that would be indicative of Scripture – so all Daniel (and Jeremiah, for that matter) had to do was take God at His word. Why can't we do that today? The Bible is its best own commentary, after all.
- c) Jeremiah prophesied (recorded twice in his prophecy) that the captivity would last 70 years – and it did. Much has been written on the exactness of this span of years – when it began, when did it end, how it relates to Daniel's prophecy, etc. The point in this message is not to delve into that but simply to state that what Jeremiah prophesied came true in every detail. Jeremiah 25:1-14 and 29:1-17 give the details. Jeremiah 29 is the record of the letter that was sent that seems to be the catalyst Daniel found that sparked this prayer.

Jeremiah 25:10–11

¹⁰ Moreover I will take from them the

voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle.

¹¹ And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

Jeremiah 29:10–14

¹⁰ For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

¹¹ For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

¹² Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.

¹³ And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

¹⁴ And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.

C. Reading the Bible that produces an understanding will produce an uncommon knowledge of who man is in relation to who the Lord God is (as found in the following text) – “in the desolations of Jerusalem”

1. In understanding the implications of the desolations, and the consequence of the actions that precipitated these events, led Daniel to a very real sense of his sin and a real sense of the greatness and holiness of God.
2. The term “desolations” (הַרְבָּה) is one that means (properly) drought – it implies a decayed place, a place laid waste with no worth. That is what the LORD (through Babylon) did to Jerusalem – He laid it waste with no worth to it. This desolation, even though was not seen personally by Daniel, was nonetheless dramatic enough to him, vivid enough to him (both by the writings of Jeremiah and most likely the first-hand accounts by people Daniel knew that had been there) to have a dramatic influence.
3. If we comprehend the destruction sin brings, the desolation it caused, the worthlessness it creates in one’s life, and we understand that from God’s word, it will change us completely. It will have a profound impact on our prayer life.

Conclusion to the point: The Word of God plays a vital role in our prayer life. If we want the type of prayer life that is spoken of in the Bible, then we are going to need to have a workable understanding of the Bible. A cursory reading when we go to church will not be enough to transform us into what God wants us to be. If we want to know God’s will for our lives and in what we bring to Him in prayer, we are going to have to be students of the Word.

II. PRAYER WILL PRODUCE A RECOGNITION OF SIN AND CONFESSION OF THAT SIN – VS. 3-14

A. Verses 3-4a give us a basic overview of the parts involved in prayer – the pattern and attitude we are to follow, even today.

The first thing Daniel wanted to do was find the Lord's will on the matter of the length of time for the captivity (vs. 2). He knew this was a serious matter and one that he needed the answer for, in part, perhaps, so he could both guide the Jews living in captivity that would make it back to Israel, and to guide the steps of the leaders of the Medio-Persian empire in knowing their place in the return. It was something he needed answers to and knew of only one real way of getting those answers – by finding the Lord's will. So, how did he do that?

1. Commit to the purpose – needing answers – “And I set my face unto the LORD my God”
 - a) “And I set” – comes from a word (נָתַן) that means to give or to place. It is one of the most common verbs in the Old Testament, appearing approximately 2,000 times and it has a wide variety of meaning and application.

(1) The form and function of this particular verb (נָתַן) is only used twelve times in the Old Testament and is translated most of those times as a form of the verb “to give” – eight times. It is translated “set” (two times), “put,” and

"made" (each one time).

(2) *In the context of its usage, the idea behind Daniel setting his face "unto the Lord God" is that he determined to commit his entire attention – body, mind, spirit – to this one particular task of seeking the will of God. The idea behind the term is the finality of the action. To "give" something is to no longer maintain possession. To give the Lord God his "face" was to no longer possess that time and faculty until he had an answer.*

- b) "My face" - Some interpret this as "Then I directed my face to the Lord" (Keil & Delitzsch) – indicating that he looked to Him. This is a very common word and most often it is used in a figurative sense to demonstrate where one's attention is directed, where one's life is headed.

Daniel 10:12

12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.

1 Chronicles 22:19

19 Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God; arise therefore, and build ye the sanctuary of the LORD God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and the holy vessels of God, into the house that is to be built to the name of the LORD.

- c) "Unto the Lord God" – Daniel, as he had done his entire life, knew to whom he was

praying.

(1) *The words for "Lord God" here – אֲדֹנָי הָאֱלֹהִים – reference both the authority of God as Lord and Master, as well as the entirety of the godhead itself.*

(2) *It is not the name that is normally associated with the LORD in the Old Testament prophetic books (יְהוָה) but is a more personal, relational name – recognizing His relation to man as God and authoritative with the ability to hear and answer prayers. "The Lord of the whole world, the true God" – K&D.*

(3) *In one sense, this is more demonstrative of the relationship the Lord is seen having with His children in the New Testament – as "Abba, Father."*

Galatians 4:6

⁶ And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

2. Be constrained in activity until the answer comes or clear direction is given – "to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes."
 - a) The motivation – "to seek" – as demonstrated already, the motivation for this prayer was finding the will of God, and Daniel did that by imploring the Lord through prayer to show him His will.
 - b) The means – "by prayer and supplication"

(1) "Prayer"

- (a) This Hebrew word (noun) for “prayer” (תְּפִלָּה) is used 77 times in the Old Testament (which includes the times it is used in the titles of the Psalms, which are not inspired). There are at least three other words translated “prayer” in the Old Testament but they only account for six of the 83 times the English word “prayer” is used.
- (b) The word is the basic word for “prayer” – a word that carries the basic idea of a plea.
- (2) *“And supplication” – it is the coupling here of this word with prayer that gives us a better understanding of the term “prayer.”*
- (a) The word (תְּהַנְנִימַם) is one that means to ask for favor, to intreat in prayer, earnest prayer. It comes from a primitive root in Hebrew (הִנָּךְ) that means “to bend or stoop in kindness to an inferior; to implore (that is, move to favor by petition)” Strong. In its usage in Scripture, it carries the idea of asking for mercy or favor – which is what we do in prayer.
- (b) When coupled with prayer, as here, it is one of urgency and deliberate seeking for help. “He does not speak of that ordinary prayer, which he used in his house three times a day, but of a rare and vehement prayer, lest their sins should cause God to delay the time of their deliverance prophesied by

Jeremiah.” (Geneva Bible notes)

2 Chronicles 6:24

²⁴ And if thy people Israel be put to the worse before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee; and shall return and confess thy name, and pray and make supplication before thee in this house;

Job 9:15

¹⁵ Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my judge.

c) The methods – “with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes”

(1) Fasting is more an Old Testament principle than a New Testament directive but that is not to say we are not to fast today – it is to say that there was a given fast that was part of the Levitical Law that the Israelites under the old covenant were obligated to do on the Day of Atonement. We are not bound by those same laws today, being under grace rather than law. Fasting is not required to be right with God – it is a mechanism available to us if we have an urgent need and want to “set our face unto the Lord God in prayer,” like Daniel did.

(a) The word “fasting” (צוֹם), in its various forms, is used 26 times in the Old Testament – so it can be seen that it wasn’t a very common thing.

(b) The Greek word for "fasting" (νηστεια) is used only eight times – three in the Gospels, twice in Acts, and three times by Paul to the Corinthians (one in his first letter and twice in his second). So, by the infrequency of its mention in relation to prayer, it is a safe biblical interpretive principle to say it is not required but still effective if led to follow.

(c) What this teaches us in the church age is the attitude we are to have in prayer – it is to be one of understanding devotion to God rather than of things of pleasure. The use of the fast, in many cases in the Old Testament, was connected with repentance, to show their unworthiness – to seek God's forgiveness through this means. Under the new covenant, the means of our redemption has already been provided so fasting is no longer required for the purpose it once held.

(2) *"And sackcloth" (or, fasting in sackcloth) – used 49 times in the Old Testament – this was a penitential garment made of hair (K&D). It was coarse, most often made of black goat's hair, and intentionally made uncomfortable. The word (סַבְּוֹן) literally means sack and was a word use for a sack that held grain, which was most likely what they used as this garment.*

(a) This was another sign of repentance – again, as with fasting, we don't need to follow those protocols to

enter into the presence of the Father – we have direct access to the throne itself.

- (b) What this shows us is the attitude we are to have – the humbleness of mind and spirit as we approach the presence of our heavenly Father.

Hebrews 4:15–16

¹⁵ For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

(3) "And ashes"

- (a) The word used (אַפְרָיִם) is a noun meaning soil, ashes, or dust (it is used 24 times in the Old Testament). "It describes soil or dirt put on a person's head..." (Zodhiates). It comes from an unused root word that means to "bestrew," to cover or partly cover with scattered objects.

- (b) The word is used, as it is here, coupled with sackcloth, as a symbol of repentance and grief. Again, demonstrating the attitude Daniel had as he approached the Lord God.

"Very simply, sackcloth and ashes were used as an outward sign of one's inward condition. Such a

symbol made one's change of heart visible and demonstrated the sincerity of one's grief and/or repentance. It was not the act of putting on sackcloth and ashes itself that moved God to intervene, but the humility that such an action demonstrated (see 1 Samuel 16:7). God's forgiveness in response to genuine repentance is celebrated by David's words: 'You removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy' (Psalm 30:11)." (cited from <https://www.gotquestions.org/sackcloth-and-ashes.html>)

3. Make confession (of sin, and, in context, recognizing who our God is) – vs. 4a – “And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said”

a) The word for “prayed” here (פָּלַל) is verb form similar to the noun “prayer” in verse three. They both have the idea of intercession. “This is the most common Hebrew word used to describe the general act of prayer” (Zodhiates).

b) “Unto the LORD my God” – different than in verse three. Here it is יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי (Yahweh God) rather than אֲדֹנָי הֵאֱלֹהִים (Lord God). It seems there may have been two parts to Daniel's prayer. Verse three may have been him preparing his heart for the prayer itself he is about to pray, recognizing the closeness of his God to him. Here it seems that in actual prayer, as it is recorded, that with all the demonstration of penance (fasting, sackcloth, and ashes) He addresses the God of Israel, the God that all of the people would have known through

the teachings of their past – YAHWEH – “I Am.”

c) “And made my confession”

(1) The use of this word (הִתְחַוֶּה) doesn't necessarily mean confession of sin as we know it, or as the New Testament uses the word. It simply means to acknowledge, and in many cases, means to praise or give thanks.

(2) The word is used 114 times and of those at least 90 are translated “praise” or “thanks” (in their various forms). “If we wish our prayers to be heard, then God, to whom we pray, must become our God” (K&D). I believe this is the reason for the use of the two different names for “Lord God.”

Conclusion to this point: If we want a prayer life that has value and effectiveness then we are going to need to follow example in the Bible. Not only did Jesus give a model prayer in the Sermon on the Mount but He also gave many illustrations of that prayer in practice through Scripture – this text being one of those examples.

There are many pastors, preacher, theologians, teachers, etc. that have given many differing views on prayer. Some notable, influential people of both modern day and historical figures, have been adamant on length of prayer, frequency of prayer, content of prayer, etc. The longest prayer recorded in Scripture (a debatable issue, depending on version, language, etc.) would only take a few

minutes to read. The longest prayer recorded that Jesus prayed was in John 17 – again, only taking a few minutes to read. There are prayers referred to in the Bible that lasted all night, or corporate prayers that lasted even days – but those are what are considered outliers, or exceptions. There is no hard and fast rule for prayer – Jesus, when asked how to pray He simply said, “When ye pray, say...” The point is – just pray.

B. Having a proper understanding of the Person from whom we are seeking direction will make one’s prayers more effective – vs. 4b.

1. He is to be feared – “O Lord, the great and dreadful God”
 - a) The word for “dreadful” (אָרְרָא) is most often translated by a variation of the word “fear” – 265 of the 316 times it is found in the Old Testament. This word is a verb, although it is used in the sense of an adjective to describe who God is. As a verb it speaks of an action taken, or in the case, something (or someone) upon which an action was taken. Because God is great, He is to be feared, He becomes dreadful, terrible, an action mankind ought to take upon the God of heaven. When man chooses to ignore His greatness, they will not fear Him, and when they do not fear Him, they will not worship Him.
 - b) It seems, from the greater context of the prayer, Daniel was emphasizing the greatness of the God that Israel had rejected over and over. He was reminding himself, anyone that would listen to his

prayer (it could be this prayer was prayed more than once), and for us today that will read his prayer, that the God to whom we pray is one of immeasurable greatness and "dread."

- c) The description of God here is seen elsewhere in the Bible. Nehemiah used the exact words in Nehemiah 1:5 (one of the reasons some question the authenticity of Daniel's prayer here). This thought in Daniel's prayer comes from an understanding of what he knew of the Bible at the time – in particular, the Torah, in Deuteronomy 7:21.

Deuteronomy 7:21

21 Thou shalt not be affrighted at them: for the LORD thy God is among you, a mighty God and terrible.

Nehemiah 1:5 – Nehemiah speaking

5 And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments:

Nehemiah 9:32 – the priests and Levites speaking

32 Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the trouble seem little before thee, that hath come upon us, on our kings, on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people, since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day.

Psalms 99:3

3 Let them praise thy great and terrible

name; for it is holy.

Jeremiah 32:17–19

¹⁷ Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:

¹⁸ Thou shewest lovingkindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them: the Great, the Mighty God, the LORD of hosts, is his name,

¹⁹ Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings:

d) It can be seen by these references in Scripture that the God to whom we pray deserves our worship, deserves our honor, deserves to be feared.

2. He is faithful – “keeping covenant and mercy”

a) We find this exact phrase (and the following one) in Deuteronomy 7:9, again showing that Daniel based his prayer on the knowledge he received from the Word of God.

Deuteronomy 7:9

⁹ Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;

b) “While the greatness and the terribleness

of God, which Israel had now experienced, wrought repentance and sorrow, the reference to the covenant faithfulness of God served to awaken and strengthen their confidence in the help of the Almighty.” (K&D)

- c) “Keeping” (שָׁמַר) – this is an active participle verb representing an action or condition in its unbroken continuity. In the sense used here in relation to God’s promises, He will never stop “keeping” His word. His word is absolute. There may be times, as in the case of the history of Israel, where man does not follow the directives of the Lord and He has to alter His actions toward them, but His word will never fail – He will never stop “keeping” it.
- d) “The covenant” (your covenant) – your agreement, your contract – although Daniel is beseeching God on behalf of Israel in the majority of this prayer, in this particular case he broadens that view and includes all – past, present, and future – that love Him, demonstrating that love by obeying His word and following His will. God has always, currently, and will always, keep His word, His covenant, with those that follow Him.

Romans 8:28

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

- e) “And mercy”

(1) חֶסֶד – a word that means loyalty, faithfulness, steadfast love,

lovingkindness.

- (2) *"This aspect of God is one of several important features of His character: truth; faithfulness; mercy; steadfastness; justice; righteousness; goodness." (Zodiaties) This word is used twenty-six times in Psalm 136 – that's how important it is to us to know the merciful, loving God we serve. He's not just some "big bully" in the sky waiting for us to mess up. He's so much more!*
- (3) *There is a verb form of this noun that gives us a good idea of the principle of its use by Daniel. He was not only stating in his prayer to God that he was recognizing that God was a God of mercy, but that God acted out His mercy, His lovingkindness by showing mercy, by showing kindness, by being kind. It wasn't just something that God was, but it was something He did.*

[Exodus 20:6](#)

⁶ And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

[Exodus 34:6-7](#)

⁶ And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,

⁷ Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the

third and to the fourth generation.

3. He wants our affection – “to them that love Him”

a) The promise of God’s faithfulness in showing lovingkindness and providing those things He has promised in His covenant with us is conditional upon His followers doing their part. This is the case throughout Scripture. God’s love for the lost is unconditional, in that all they need to do is believe and receive. For believers (both Old and New Testament), our love, our affection for Him is demonstrated by our obedience. God’s love is unconditional in that He will never stop loving us, but just like with our children, there are consequences to disobedience.

b) There is only one word in Hebrew for “love” – אָהַב – and it has about as wide variety of meaning as the English word “love.” Greek has four different words (if you count one that is derived from another as two words) translated love, the most familiar being the word ἀγάπη (from ἀγανῶ – sacrificial love, sacrificial giving of ourselves to other), and it is that word that is used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament found in the Septuagint.

c) God keeps his word, his covenant (contract, agreement) with us today, just as He has always does, and that is clearly obvious to us, as His children, when we obey Him – it shows we love Him.

John 14:15

15 If ye love me, [you will] keep my commandments.

1 John 2:3-5

³ And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

⁴ He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

⁵ But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

1 John 4:19-20

¹⁹ We love him, because he first loved us.

²⁰ If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

4. He wants our faithfulness – “and keep His commandments”
- a) These two are frequently connected, in both the Old and New Testaments (as the verses above show), because our love for our heavenly Father is outwardly expressed by our obedience, just like our love for our earthly father is best expressed by our obedience.
 - b) The word for “keep” here (שָׁמַר) is the same type of verb participle that is used for God “keeping” His word and showing mercy to those that love Him – we will continue to see His work in our lives as long as we continue without interruption keeping His commandments.
 - c) It isn’t just the 10 Commandments that are to be kept – that seems to be the standard understanding by many nominal

churchgoers that refer to themselves as “Christians.” It is all the commandments that are applicable to our lives today that we are to keep. We are to keep them because we love the Lord and because they are best for us to live a godly, productive life for Christ.

Conclusion to this point: When we pray, do we truly recognize who God is and why He deserves our love and obedience? He is to be feared, yes, but He has earned that reverence – He is awesome, and terrible (dreadful) in His judgments, but He also sent His Son to die on Calvary’s cross to take sin’s judgment on Himself. That’s how “awesome” He really is.

C. As we pray, following the basic pattern as found in verses 3-4a, and understanding the God we serve as well as we can, and our relationship to Him as His children (vs. 4b), it will lead us to a proper understanding of sin, its consequences, and the hope we have for victory over that sin.

1. The sin – vs. 5-6, the end of verse 7, vs. 9b-11a, c, verse 14a, c - there are parts to this confession Daniel was making that help us to understand what is meant by the statement he made, “We have sinned.” Sin is seen and known by several things in this text, and throughout Scriptures.
 - a) Vs. 5 – “Committed iniquity” – done wrong – simple term describing the word “sinned”
 - b) Vs. 5 – “Have done wickedly” is described in the next phrase, “and have rebelled” –

vs. 5; "Though we have rebelled against him" – vs. 9b.

- c) Vs. 6 – "Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name..." – they didn't listen to the preachers.
- d) Vs. 7b – "Because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee" – the word for "trespass" here is one that means an unfaithful act – unfaithfulness.
- e) Vs. 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" – here, Daniel seems to be referencing the writings of the prophets and not just their preaching.
- f) Vs. 11a – "Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice" – Daniel emphasizes, for the third time, that they simply didn't listen to what had been given by the Lord.
- g) Vs. 11c – "because we have sinned against him"
- h) Vs. 14a – "Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us"

(1) The word for "watch" [וָשָׁרַף] is one, at its primitive root, that means to be alert as opposed to being asleep – "hence to be on the lookout" (Strong). "Because Israel did not do this, therefore the Lord watched upon the evil, i.e., continually thought thereon – an idea very frequently found in Jeremiah; cf. Jer. 1:12; 31:28; 44:27" (K&D).

Jeremiah 1:12

¹² Then said the LORD unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I **will hasten** my word to perform it.

Jeremiah 31:28

²⁸ And it shall come to pass, that like as I **have watched over them**, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 44:27

²⁷ Behold, I **will watch over them** for evil, and not for good: and all the men of Judah that are in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by the famine, until there be an end of them.

- (2) *The "evil" of this verse points back to verses 12 and 13 where the "evil" spoken of is the captivity in Babylon.*
- (3) *The Lord "watching upon the evil" and bringing it (or allowing it) upon the children of Judah and Jerusalem was, in reality, the people receiving the harvest of what they had sown.*
- (4) *There seems to be a wide and varied translation view in other versions, indicating this particular verb and word order is hard to translate into an English form we can readily understand.*
- (5) *One this shows in Daniel's prayer, and what it should teach us in prayer, is the sovereign will of God over the will of man – he's watching over us for both*

good and bad.

- i) Vs. 14c – “For we obeyed not his voice” – the fourth time this is mentioned
 - j) It seems that the sin they were guilty of, although having several facets to it, can be summed up in the repeated truth that they simply chose not to obey the Word of God, and ignored the teaching of the preachers of the day (the prophets). The same is true today. We have changed the definitions of sin and no longer consider the Bible as God originally intended to be the rule of faith and practice in our lives. Until we get back to the Bible and to a true form of prayer, as Daniel demonstrates, we will not be what God wants us to be in order to be used the way God intends, whether it be as individuals, as a church, or as a nation.
2. The sorrow – vs. 7b, 8, 11b-13 once sin is recognized for what it is it will produce an acknowledgment on the part of the penitent that will show they understand the consequences.
- a) One thing to note here is the mention of the political leaders of Israel – God held them accountable for how they led the nation. That has not changed – God still holds leadership accountable, especially those that have authority to impact the lives of His children. Daniel specifically mentions these leaders, including himself with them, in verse eight – separate from the broader reference to all the people in verse seven.
 - b) One of the results of the acknowledgment of sin as we pray is that our very

countenance may change to one of “open shame” as we consider what sin does in our life and what it does to our relationship with the Lord.

1 John 1:5–9

⁵ This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

(1) *“Confusion of faces”* (vs. 7), *“confusion of face”* (vs. 8)

(a) Several translations of the Bible translate this phrase as “open shame.” It’s not just modern ones that have it that way – the Bishop’s Bible and Geneva Bible, both predating the KJV, have it that way. That may be easier to understand and a proper translation, it doesn’t give us as accurate a picture as does “confusion of face,” or “shame of face,” as some have it.

(b) בְּשֵׁת הַפְּנִיּוֹת (both times this phrase

is used in these verses it is in the plural – they are identical in Hebrew) – literally, “shame of face” – the word for “face” is emphatic and what is called the “absolute noun” in a Hebrew construct chain. To not translate it or minimize the importance of the use of the word for “face” would be to limit the purpose of the phrase. It is often used in a figurative sense which plays into the use of the words “open shame,” but there’s more to it than that.

[S]hame which reflects itself in the countenance, not because of disgraceful circumstances...but in the consciousness of well-deserved suffering. (K&D)

(c) The use of the word “confusion” by some translations is a right translation but the word use has changed over time and needs some explanation. The use of the word in the English of the King James is one that means (this is a subsequent meaning to the primary) “astonishment; agitation; perturbation; distraction of mind” (1828 Webster).

(d) Vs. 7 – “as at this day” - In the formula $\text{כִּי־בַיּוֹם־הַזֶּה}$ the כִּי has always the meaning of a comparison...and everywhere the expression has this meaning: as it happened this day, as experience has now shown or shows. (K&D)

(2) In the middle of verse 7 and in verse 8

Daniel is bringing into focus that all of Israel was guilty, not just the leadership, not just those in Judah or Jerusalem (the two southern tribes), nor just Israel (the ten northern tribes that had been taken by Assyria 150 years before Judah). This "shamefacedness" belonged to all of Israel. This teaches us that we can't blame someone else for our sin. We are held accountable and the consequences should rightfully be ours.

- c) The consequence of their sin is described in verses 11b-13 where Daniel, in his prayer, is rehearsing the results that sin brought upon the nation, as well as the people.

(1) In prayer, there ought always be an acknowledgment of sin and a confession of that sin (even the Lord's Prayer has that). The more we pray, the more this will become clear.

(2) A point should be made here that goes back to the beginning of this chapter and the importance of reading and studying the Bible when it comes to our prayer life. As Daniel prayed this portion it is clear that he knew what God had said, and what had been written down in the sacred Scriptures and he connected that with the downfall of Israel and Judah.

(3) This is found in verse 12 where Daniel says, "And he hath confirmed his words" – Daniel knew what had been said.

- (a) There is almost universal translation of this Hebrew word [קָוָם] as

“confirmed.” The word is very common and has, as its base meaning, the physical action of rising up or standing up, and the resulting end of that action.

- (b) In many cultures across many ages, when a decree was given or a judgment was handed down, the king or the judge would stand up and give his order. The act of declaration from this standing position was to “confirm” the thing to be true and unalterable. This is even seen in the book of Revelation when the Lamb rises from off the throne.

Revelation 5:1-6

¹ And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

² And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

³ And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

⁴ And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

⁵ And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals

thereof.

⁶ And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

d) Verse 13 says that all these things had come upon them because they simply chose not to pray and to turn from their sin (a result of prayer).

(1) *"Yet made we not our prayer" – even though they knew the consequences they chose to ignore them. The root verb used here (הִלַּחֵץ) is one that means to be weak, sick, to be a patient. It is used in a figurative sense here as to appeal to, as a patient would a doctor. The Israelites didn't even bother to ask God to help them out of the trouble they were in – didn't seek Him to treat their disease.*

(2) *The reason, most likely, that they didn't seek treatment is that they wouldn't have wanted to follow the prescription – "that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth." They like their life the way it was and didn't want to know any more than that.*

(3) *The same is true of those that claim to be Christians. They don't want to know the truth, they don't want to have to change because they like life just the way it is.*

3. Savior – vs. 7a, 9a, 14b – Daniel recognized that there was hope even in their deepest sorrow. It is the same hope we have today, brought to us by the redemptive work of Christ – that of “mercies and forgivenesses” even though we are still sinners (vs. 9).

a) “O Lord [אֲדֹנָי, Adonai], righteousness belongeth unto thee” (vs. 7a) – “the LORD our God [יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, Yahweh Elohim] is righteous in all his works which he doeth” (vs. 14b). These two texts give us one of the attributes of God: His righteousness.

(1) The first one (vs. 7a) declares His righteousness – the word “belongeth” is implied in the words used and is of the “to be” or “is” family of verbs. Not only does God possess righteousness but it originates with Him because He is absolute righteousness.

(2) The second one vs. 14b) describes His righteousness – “in all his works which he doeth.” The tense of the verb עָשָׂה (work – Qal perfect) denotes completed action in either the past, present, or future. In the case of the attributes of God, all three are found – He has always been righteous, He is righteous right now, and He will always be righteous. Everything that God has done (in the context of Daniel’s prayer and Israel’s history, this is the tense dealt with), is doing, and will ever do is absolutely righteous – absolutely right.

“Righteous on the ground of all His works – a testimony from experience”

(K&D).

b) "To the Lord our God [אֱלֹהֵינוּ] belong mercies and forgiveness" – "From God's goodness flow His mercies; and from His mercies, forgiveness" (TSK).

(1) Again, we see the verb "belong" as implied by the text (this is considered a verbless clause in Hebrew – something we don't have in English) showing that the Lord "is" mercy and forgiveness, as well as being the source of them, and the possessor of them.

(2) We see the use of the more personal name for the Lord God used here, showing that Daniel was well aware of whom it was that showed mercy and forgiveness. These two are also attributes of God – not just something He does but something He is.

(3) "Mercies" – not just in a single sense, or He was merciful once, but, recognizing the history of Israel, Daniel, in his prayer, is recognizing how often Israel was the recipient of the mercy of God.

(4) "Forgivenesses" – plural as well, emphasizing the manifold forgiveness of God.

Psalm 86:5

⁵ For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

Isaiah 63:7

⁷ I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD,

according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.

Lamentations 3:22-23

²² It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.

²³ They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.

Micah 7:18-19

¹⁸ Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.

¹⁹ He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

Conclusion to this point: Although a proper understanding of prayer will cause us to see sin more clearly and see the consequences of those sins, it must always be stressed that God is not only a righteous and holy God but He is a God of mercies and forgivenesses. He has always been that, especially to His children, and He will be that until we are in glory with Him. Sin ought to burden us, and we ought to sorrow over it, but He is there to forgive us, and He will always love us.

**III. CONFESSION OF SIN WILL ALLOW OUR
PRAYER TO BE EFFECTIVE – VS. 15-21**