

Hurst Green

8th Jul 2018

Daniel 9

Daniel's prayer

So I have skipped over chapter 8 which is another dream about the empires that will rise up and fall away?

The amusing part is Shaggy Goat in verse 21 who is the King of Greece. It would appear that that is Alexandra the Great. I don't know how he would feel at being called a shaggy goat!

But we have had Daniel chapter 9 read to us and that is what we are going to be looking at today.

We have had a prayer like this before in another book! **Who remembers where?**

Nehemiah chapter 1 and it covers the rebuilding of the walls.

Daniel is about the people.

Time wise we are in the first year of Darius – remember that – the Medes and Persians took Babylon just after Daniel and done his bit with the writing on the wall.

Darius did not want too much disruption and so Daniel ruled over one third of the Kingdom and Darius wanted to promote Daniel still further until we had the trickery of the lion's den – read all about it on the web site.

Now before we look at this prayer I want to leap in on a single verse – verse 23

Daniel 9:23 (ANIV)

²³ As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision:

We wrestle with unanswered prayer and yet for Daniel as soon as he began to pray and answer was given.

That's the place to be and did you see how he was described – highly esteemed

Would you like Gabriel to use those words about you?

Well Daniel as an old man had earned these words. He was faithful in prayer and faithful before his God not just when the going was OK but in all the other times too. We have seen times when he could have been killed for being faithful to God but still he was faithful.

That's how you earn high esteem in heaven – by being faithful to God. Daniel prayed five times per day – we have trouble praying five times per week!

We have trouble praying for five minutes.

And be sure it is being faithful in this that earns you high esteem. Daniel did not get it because as a God fearing Jew he ran one third on Babylon

It was because he was faithful and held in high esteem in heaven that he was given one third of Babylon to run.

So let's learn from this prayer since it has been recorded here for our benefit.

Daniel has been studying scripture – a huge part of being faithful. He has been in Jeremiah and found out the exile was to be for seventy years and those seventy years are nearly up. The temptation is to jump in and start to demand that God honours what he has said and send you home again.

After all that is what he has promised!!

But Daniel takes a different approach in his prayer and one we ought to consider.

He starts off in a spirit of worship:

Daniel 9:4 (ANIV)

⁴ ~~*I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed: "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands,*~~

In those few words he:

- States that God is his Lord
- Acknowledges that God is great and awesome
- Acknowledges that God is faithful – hasn't he learnt that over the years in Babylon
- That the covenant is between God and those who love him and obey his commands – states our role in this relationship.

Daniel shows that he adores his God.

Then Daniel goes into a period of confession – that great practice of confessing our sins.

It would be easy to start to blame others for the situation but Daniel will have none of that.

Israel has sinned and so that includes Daniel and this confession is loaded with we and our.

And verse 6 has an interesting one

Daniel 9:6 (ANIV)

⁶ *We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.*

We of course have the books of some of those prophets that God sent before the exile. Prophets that first called for repentance and turning back to God and then as the exile became inevitable the prophets called for submission to God's will.

Not popular words that were ignored and so Israel went into exile and even then God was sending prophets with words of hope such as Jeremiah that Daniel had been reading. Even those words were ignored by most of Israel.

Verses 7 to 14 are simple admissions that Israel has time and again turned away from their God, have ignored his commands and therefore received the just punishment promised if they would not obey.

To squirming – no attempt to shift blame. It's a fair cop God you caught us.

How often do you pray like that?

Probably not often enough – it's a big prayer.

God we have not done as we ought to have done and we knew what we should have done but we turned away.

No excuse – we did it.

And only then does Daniel turn back to his petition and even here he is not asking to be returned to Jerusalem.

Look at how he phrases this because this is important

Daniel 9:16 (ANIV)

¹⁶ *~~O Lord, in keeping with all your righteous acts, turn away your anger and your wrath from Jerusalem, your city, your holy hill. Our sins and the iniquities of our fathers have made Jerusalem and your people an object of scorn to all those around us.~~*

He admits that it is they who have made the promised nation an object of scorn.

Daniel 9:18 (ANIV)

¹⁸ *Give ear, O God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy.*

He approaches God he knows as a merciful God and he knows this because the scriptures have promised that God is a merciful God

And he asks God to be merciful because they bear his name – just as we bear his name.

Daniel is not concerned for getting back to Jerusalem or any of the myriad of things he could have asked for.

He is concerned that God's name is being held in disrepute.

Remember the heathen has a long memory – As they entered the Promised Land the heathen was in dread because of the great things God had done while Israel was concerned that God might not do what he had said.

So Daniel prayed that God might honour his own name. How many of your prayers are shaped around that or do they focus on how God might honour you?

Then we hit a fun passage which has many books and more waffle written about it than it deserves.

To be fair it is a difficult passage to understand and, as always, I take a simple approach.

- Verse 24 we have seventy sevens. That is 490 years and is about the time between this passage and Christ's first coming. So this passage is dealing with that period.
- Verse 25 we have seven sevens that is 49 years. That is the period of the return of the exiles in the various waves and will be times of trouble as the verse says.

- Verse 25 then also has sixty two sevens. That is 434 and is the period between the Old and New Testaments. This is often called the mute period because we have no biblical books for this period.
- **Daniel 9:26 (ANIV)**
²⁶ *After the sixty-two 'sevens', the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing.*
 The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.
 Christ will come for the first time
- We then have one more seven in verse 27 in the midst of which the temple is destroyed and the abomination is the establishment of Roman temples in its place.

So we have an example of a perfect prayer with yet another interpretation that is less than clear.

Think more on the structure of the prayer and how that might help you rather than scratching you heads about sevens.