

Passionate Prayer

Long Beach Alliance Church • August 9, 2015 • Pastor Chris Lankford

I prayed to the LORD my God and made confession, saying, "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules.

~Daniel 9:4-5 (ESV)

1) Seeking Answers To Life's Difficulties

- A) By the time of Darius the Mede (Daniel 9:1, cf. 6:28), Daniel is over 80 years old. After a lifetime of Babylonian exile, Daniel thirsts for the end of Jerusalem's desolation (9:2).
- B) Some of the exiles (around 50,000) have already returned to Jerusalem (cf. Ezra 1-2), but many are still in captivity. Worst of all, Jerusalem was still desolate, without a temple (God's presence) and without walls (God's protection).
- C) When God's reputation is diminished, when the world cannot see the wonder of God, it troubles God's people, and especially leaders (9:2-3, cf. Nehemiah 1:2-11; Ezra 9:1-6).
- D) Instinctually, Daniel goes to God for answers as he faced difficulties. Daniel's response of "turning my face" (lit., "I gave my face") "to the "LORD God" in "Jeremiah the prophet" and are instructive for all of God's people (9:2-3).
- E) Daniel seeks God by reading promises written by Jeremiah when Daniel was just a teenager, and in God's Word he finds hope (Jeremiah 29:10-14)! Faced with trouble, Daniel seeks God and naturally responds in passionate prayer!

2) Daniel's Extraordinary Prayer

- A) In all the Bible, Daniel's prayer should be considered as a valued example of depth and personal intimacy in prayer.
- B) At the very least, if you find your Bible reading or prayer life lacking, Daniel's prayer contains opportunities to engage God in ways you may not have ever considered.

A Reading Of Daniel's Prayer (Daniel 9:4b-19)

Pastor Chris Lankford (Daniel 9:4b-5)

O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules.

Church Family (Daniel 9:6)

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.

Pastor Chris Lankford (Daniel 9:7)

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, and to all Israel, those who are near and 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.

Church Family (Daniel 9:8-10)

To us, O Lord, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you. To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him and 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.

Pastor Chris Lankford (Daniel 9:11-12)

All Israel has transgressed your law and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice. And the curse and 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. He has confirmed his words, which he spoke against us and 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.

Church Family (Daniel 9:13)

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 and gaining insight by your truth.

Pastor Chris Lankford (Daniel 9:14)

Therefore the Lord has kept ready the calamity and has brought it upon us, for the Lord our God is righteous in all the works that he has done, and we have not obeyed his voice.

Church Family (Daniel 9:15)

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

Pastor Chris Lankford (Daniel 9:16-17)

O Lord, according to all your righteous acts, let your anger and your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy hill, because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a byword among all who are around us. Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy, and for your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate.

Church Family (Daniel 9:18)

O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and 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.

All Together (Daniel 9:19)

O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name."

- C) Daniel's prayer is responsive to God's Word (9:2-3). Daniel comes to God in order to respond to what he has read from Jeremiah, begging God for mercy toward His people.**
- D) Daniel's prayer is physically reflective of his spiritual attitude before God (9:3). Daniel fasts from food, because feeling gnawing physical hunger reminds Daniel of his deep spiritual need for God. Daniel covers himself in sackcloth (coarse and itchy) to physically remind himself of his spiritual discomfort and want. Finally, Daniel covers himself and sits in ashes, to physically represent his low and comparative position to an "awesome God" (9:4).**
- E) Daniel's prayer is always inclusive of his community/family. Daniel uses "we" and "our" almost 30x in his prayer. Despite being found "blameless" before God (6:22), he rightly sees himself as sinful before a holy God (9:4-5).**
- F) Daniel's prayer is focused on praise to God because it rightly locates a person in comparison to God (9:4). Daniel's physical positions are a constant reminder of his spiritual deficiencies before a wholly sufficient God (9:3-4).**
- G) Daniel's prayer is confessional (9:5), revealing the sin and accepting the shame of judgment against the community for their treason and disloyalty (9:6-14). On behalf of all of Israel, Daniel affirms God's righteous judgments!**
- H) Daniel's prayer begs for mercy, forgiveness, and restoration (9:15-19). In response to God's Word, Daniel appeals for the restoration of God's Name and His people.**

3) Incomprehensible Assurance & Answers

- A) God answers Daniel's prayer through the Angel Gabriel (cf. 8:16), with a message of great assurance and love (9:20-23).**
- B) Gabriel's message from God also answers Daniel's concern for Jerusalem and God's reputation (9:25), rooted in a literal understanding of Jeremiah's 70 years (29:10-14).**
- C) Gabriel further reveals a vision of "70 weeks," but this "70" has such an odd timeline for the rebuilding of Jerusalem, it doesn't appear literal (9:24-25). This was good & bad news. On the one hand, Messiah was coming (9:25)! But on the other hand, it meant incomprehensible "desolations" and a terrible "desolator" were coming (9:26-27).**