

## How to Pray for America

Daniel 9:1-19

This month we are “Digging Deeper” in Daniel chapter 9 to learn how **BEST to pray for our nation**—and Daniel, the great prophet and prayer warrior, is our guide.

There are only two persons in the Old Testament whose life story records no known sin. We know they *did* sin, for the Bible says “*All have sinned*,” but there is no *recorded* sin for either of these two exemplary lives. The first was Joseph; the second, Daniel.

Since this is true, the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of Daniel is all the more remarkable! Why? Because the majority of it contains Daniel’s *confession of sin*!

How did one of the most blameless men in the Bible come to spend a chapter confessing sin?

**This is what our study will reveal.**

As we open a window into Daniel’s soul, we uncover a treasured example of how to **most effectively pray for one’s nation**. This was a heart’s desire of Adrian Rogers: to lead believers into a deeper, more effective prayer life.

Dr. Rogers repeatedly said, “Prayer is our greatest resource. God is our sure defense and our only hope. Only prayer can hold back the floodtide of judgment and the floodtide of sin, and only prayer can release the cleansing and healing hand of God.”

Daniel prayed in a time of national calamity and God heard his prayer. We must learn to pray not just any prayer, not just ordinary prayers, but prayers that touch the heart of God. The hour is desperate. We must wake up and commit to serious prayer.

### **In the School of Prayer we learn it’s not the—**

- arithmetic of our prayers, how many we pray;
- rhetoric of our prayer, how eloquent or beautiful they may be;
- geometry of our prayers, how long they are;
- emotion of our prayers, how sweet and tearful;
- music of our prayers, how sweet our voice;
- logic of our prayers, how argumentative;
- method of our prayers, how methodical we are.

*It is the faith and fervency of our prayers that count with God*

### **Setting the Scene**

Please turn to Daniel chapter 9. God’s people—including Daniel as a young man and his friends—had been taken captive by the Babylonians (modern day Iraq).

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Taken from 1648, 2311, 2482 and 5563

Read verses 1-19.

1. There are more than 3, but overall what three specific petitions from Daniel to God do you read here?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.

Daniel asks God for deliverance. Verses 1-19 show that God brings judgment upon sin and God has a plan—even though He may seem to let evil succeed temporarily. His plan sometimes takes a long time to work out.

You may ask, “What does this have to do with America?”

**This God-blessed nation of ours has been taken captive by the world, the flesh, and the devil. We need a national, moral, and spiritual revival; without that, there is no hope. Only believing, repenting prayer can hold back the floodtides of sin and judgment and release the cleansing power of Christ upon our personal lives and our nation.**

God is a merciful God, but if we do not pray, we’re going to get exactly what we deserve.

### WHAT SPECIFICALLY PROMPTED DANIEL TO PRAY?

2. See v. 2: “In the first year of his [King Darius] reign I, Daniel \_\_\_\_\_ by the \_\_\_\_\_ the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.”

What had Daniel been reading?

He saw that God’s plan for His people was that they would be in captivity for seventy years. Daniel had been counting the years. And Daniel knew that certain things were going to come to pass.

### A CLOSER LOOK: THE CERTAIN CONNECTION

Verse 2 says Daniel had “understanding.” The one who reads the Bible is granted understanding, and the one who has understanding prays. There is no way you can separate Bible study from prayer. When you read the Bible, the Bible impels you to pray. And when you pray, your prayer life will urge you to read the Bible. Prayer and Bible reading go hand in hand. Bible reading is God speaking to you. Prayer is you, talking back to God.

### Praying in the promises

God had prophesied that He was going to do something, *but still Daniel prayed.*

## Online Bible Study for November, 2018

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3. Why didn't Daniel just sit back and say, "Well, God, since You prophesied that You're going to do it, then, ha-ha-ha, there's no need for me to pray about it"?

It's a strange thing—the Bible teaches us to *pray about what God has already promised He would do*. Here are some examples of that:

- a. Turn to Revelation 11:15.

### THE PROPHECY:

"The \_\_\_\_\_ of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and He \_\_\_\_\_ for ever and ever."  
(Rev. 11:15)

### THE PRAYER:

Still, Jesus taught us to pray "Thy \_\_\_\_\_ come and Thy will be done..." (Matthew 6:10)

- b. Turn to Psalm 122:6.

### THE PROPHECY:

The Bible teaches there's going to be peace in Jerusalem. (Genesis 15:18; all of Psalm 87, but particularly verse 3; Deut. 28:1-68, all of Psalm 128. The Psalms are filled with references to the glory of Jerusalem/Zion and God's blessings upon His holy city.

### THE PRAYER:

Yet we are commanded to pray for that very thing in Psalm 122:6.  
"\_\_\_\_\_ for the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jerusalem. They shall prosper that love thee."

- c. Turn to Revelation 22:7

### THE PROPHECY:

Revelation 22:7 is one among many verses that prophesy the return of Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches He is coming again. Jesus Himself says,  
<sup>7</sup> "Behold, \_\_\_\_\_ . Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." And verse 22 says, <sup>20</sup> "He which testifieth these things saith, " \_\_\_\_\_ , I come \_\_\_\_\_ ."  
(Revelation 22:20)

### THE PRAYER:

Then John immediately prays, "Even so, \_\_\_\_\_ , Lord Jesus."  
(v. 22)

Even when God says He's going to do something, God does what He's going to do *through the prayers of His people*.

## Online Bible Study for November, 2018

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### DANIEL'S RESOLVE AND DETERMINATION

See 9:3

"Then I \_\_\_\_\_ toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes."

So often our prayer is casual prayer, prayer that comes with almost a take-it-or-leave-it attitude. Many of us could not even remember what we prayed for this morning or last night. We rattle off little "Now I lay me down to sleep" prayers.

4. But have you ever set your face to prayer, desperately sought the Lord? ? If so, what was the situation? (There may have been many such events in your life.) List some of them here:

(1)

(2)

(3)

### Prayers empowered by understanding God's character

5. When you pray, is it with a clear picture in mind of the might and power, the holiness of the One to Whom you are addressing your prayer?

v. 5 "And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, (note the way he describes God), "O Lord, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ God, who \_\_\_\_\_ His covenant and \_\_\_\_\_ with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments...."

v. 7 "O Lord, \_\_\_\_\_ belongs to You..."

v. 9 "To the Lord our God belong \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_."

v. 14 "Therefore the LORD has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for the LORD our God \_\_\_\_\_ in all the works which He does, though we have not obeyed His voice."

Daniel keeps talking about the character of God, His greatness, His awe, His power, righteousness and mercy. It is impossible to see who our great God is in a time of crisis and not want to pray. When you see the character and nature of God, you can hardly keep from praying!

6. We must see this about the great heart of our God: God is a God of righteousness, judgment, and justice, but *God had rather show mercy than send judgment*. Turn to Jeremiah 18:7-8.

"The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy *it*, <sup>8</sup> if that nation against whom I

## Online Bible Study for November, 2018

Taken from 1648, 2311, 2482 and 5563

have spoken turns from its evil, I will \_\_\_\_\_ of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it.

### The character of the people

Skip down to verse 16.

<sup>16</sup> “O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the \_\_\_\_\_ of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are a \_\_\_\_\_ to all those around us.

Could the description in the latter part of this verse be said about America? God will turn from judgment if a nation will repent. America is ripe for judgment. We need to pray, “Oh God, hold back Your hand of judgment upon America.”

### Daniel’s REPENTANCE on their behalf

The heart of Daniel’s prayer was sincere confession. Read vv. 4-14. Daniel confessed both personal and national sins—the sin of his people Israel, realizing that Israel was in difficulty because of national sin.

7. Notice how Daniel is talking.

- a. V. 4-5 “I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my \_\_\_\_\_ (who?) have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and they judgments.”

Was Daniel guilty of all that? No. Daniel simply included himself in the prayer for his nation.

- b. Read again vv. 5, 6 and 7 all at once. Are you willing to humbly identify yourself with the sins of your nation and to beg God for forgiveness, mercy and restoration?
- c. Are you willing, like Daniel, to humbly say “we,” even though you yourself may not have committed the stated sins?

**Does God hold the church accountable for our national sins in America? For abortion, pornography, drug addiction, alcoholism, materialism and the humanism in our land? Yes, He does.**

We are a part of it. We as a church need to repent. Churches across America are “playing church.” We pray without fasting, witness without tears, give without sacrifice. Is it any wonder we sow without reaping?

## Online Bible Study for November, 2018

Taken from 1648, 2311, 2482 and 5563

If the church had done what she ought to have done, and if we would do what we ought to do, these problems would be healed. While we may not commit these sins, they are still our sins. This is not a time for finger-pointing in America. This is a time for repentance by people in the pew of personal sin.

### WHO ARE WE WAITING FOR TO MAKE CONFESSION?

People who don't know God aren't going to confess the sin of this nation. Like Daniel, we as believers must pray with resolve. We must set our face. We must pray with reflection, understanding just who God is. And we must pray with repentance, confessing personal sin and the sin of America, because only sin that is confessed is forgiven. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked way, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land"—2 Chron. 7:14

### The REMOVAL of guilt

Daniel is saying, "O God, please forgive us. Remove the guilt." We need to pray "God, cleanse us, restore us."

Look in verses 17-19:

<sup>17</sup> Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord's sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate. <sup>18</sup> O my God, \_\_\_\_\_ Your \_\_\_\_\_ and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. <sup>19</sup> O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name."

8. In v. 18, Daniel feels that he can bring this petition before the Lord not because of \_\_\_\_\_ but because of \_\_\_\_\_.

### The RESTORATION of glory

He's praying for the removal of guilt, but he's also praying for **the restoration of glory**.

9. Daniel describes the sanctuary of the Lord as \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 17).

In many houses of worship today, the unadulterated Word of the Lord is no longer preached. Or if it is preached, it's watered down to conform to political correctness. It's not preached truthfully, boldly and fearlessly because of the fear of man's opinion.

## Online Bible Study for November, 2018

Taken from 1648, 2311, 2482 and 5563

10. A key phrase in this passage is in v. 19. Why should God do this? Daniel appeals to God not on the basis of his own creature comforts or reputation! He appeals on behalf of “Your \_\_\_\_\_”  
It is God’s name, His honor, and His glory that Daniel wants to see restored.
11. Be honest. When you cry out to God on behalf of our nation—what is foremost in your mind?

**Many of us are praying “for America’s sake.” But so many times we’re just simply trying to get out of difficulty. Rather than going to God in praise, seeking His glory, we say, “God, we’re in a mess. Get us out of this mess so we can go right back on to our own sinful lifestyle.”**

12. What should be foremost in our minds? That our economy will improve so our savings and bank accounts will increase? So we will live a life of “ease, comfort and pleasure”? What should be our motivation, first and foremost?

**Daniel is praying for a restoration of God’s glory. We must pray for the glory of God.**

### God answers His servant Daniel

13. See v. 20-21. Daniel says,

<sup>20</sup> Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing \_\_\_\_\_ sin and the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God, <sup>21</sup> yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.

### The Underpinning of Daniel’s Prayer

One last riveting truth, and we will close our study. When you realize this, you will be blessed beyond measure.

14. When (at what time of day) did Daniel pray? (v. 21): “...at the time of the \_\_\_\_\_.”

### A CLOSER LOOK AT “THE EVENING OFFERING” (OBLATION)

This was the time when sacrifices were made in the Temple.  
Now, Daniel had not been to the Temple—because the Temple had been destroyed for seventy years by the time Daniel was praying. No

## Online Bible Study for November, 2018

Taken from 1648, 2311, 2482 and 5563

more sacrifices were being made, yet Daniel is praying at the time of the evening offering, when the blood was shed in the Temple.

He remembered that the priests would go there with shed blood upon the altar, “the evening oblation,” between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m. At that time, he’s praying. It’s what the Bible calls “the ninth hour.”

It corresponds directly to the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross. “*And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, Lama sabachthani, that is to say, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?”* (Matthew 27:46). The time of the evening offering was exactly, precisely the same hour that Jesus died on the cross.

Daniel was looking back to a bloody Temple sacrifice, praying there in the present on the basis of sacrifices made a long time ago. What you have here is a prophecy and a picture of praying in the power of the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

The best, most effective prayer is...

- the Holy Spirit finding a desire in the heart of the Father,
- putting that desire into our heart,
- then sending it back to heaven
- in the power of the blood.

Therefore, even though it was centuries before the Cross, Daniel is praying in the power of the shed blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

When today you pray for your nation, you pray in the name of Jesus Christ, through His shed blood, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, using the Word of God. Pray silently when you have to, but when you are able, pray aloud. And pray Scripture!

### Conclusion:

Do you pray for the glory of God? Do you have a yearning in your heart for the glory of God? Do you want to see God’s glory spread over this land? To see God do something again that cannot be explained by the pundits on television and the news anchors? Something that cannot be explained by technology, personality, propaganda or persuasion—the removal of guilt and the glory of God.

That ought to be the concern of our prayers for America.

That is revival—not for America’s sake, but for the glory of God.

Do you want revival for your sake?  
Or do you want it for God’s sake?

When your prayers are for the glory of God, God moves in.

## Online Bible Study for November, 2018

Taken from 1648, 2311, 2482 and 5563

It is prayer time in America. Time for deacons, teachers, lay people, mothers, fathers, for Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians—all who know our God, whomever they may be—to seek the face of God in prayer.

Like Daniel,

- **Identify** yourself with the sins of your nation.
- **Confess** them.
- **Set your face** to seek the Lord.