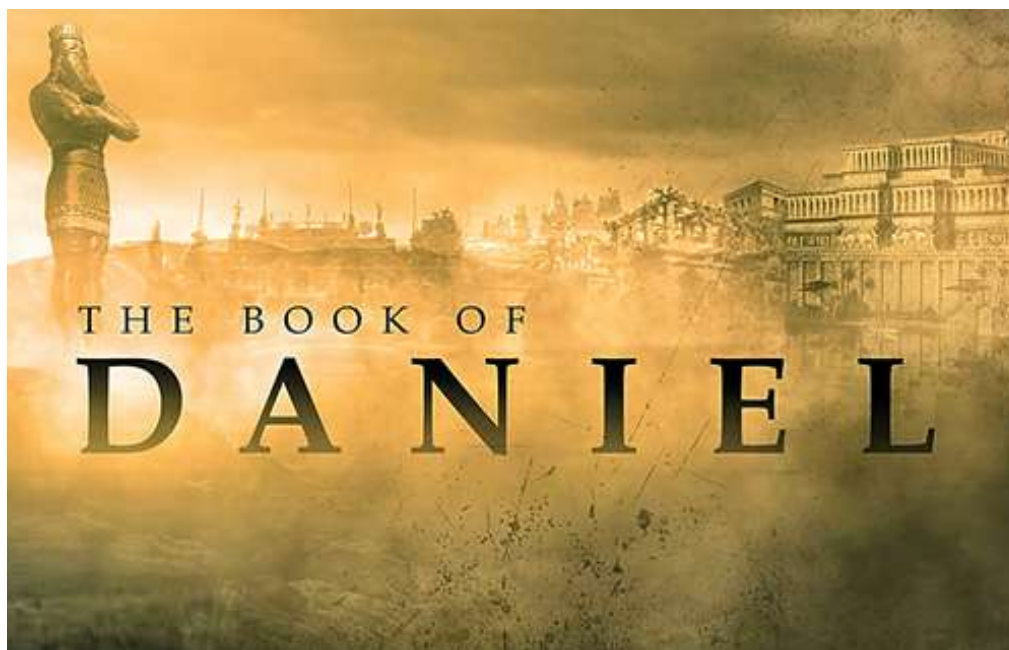


Let's Worship God

6th-11th December 2021

Daniel



THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Monday - Daniel 9:1-3 - A Fly on the Wall

If you could be a fly on the wall for one afternoon, where would you spend it?

An amateur baker might make a bee line for Paul Hollywood's kitchen and watch as he kneads, shapes and bakes his famous sourdough bread. A young tennis player might fly to Novak Djokovic's training camp to spy out the secrets of his suffocating return of serve. In just one afternoon you could learn so much from both those settings.

Over the next few days we'll see something infinitely more important than bread or tennis. If there's one thing more than anything else that Daniel is famous for, it is his steadfast commitment to prayer. We get to be flies on the wall in this chapter as we watch this saint on his knees.

Today's lesson is simple: God's promises fuel our prayers. Notice in v2 that Daniel has been reading from his Bible. Specifically, he was reading from Jeremiah 25 & 29. (By the way, note that even though it was only written a few decades earlier, this book was already recognised as God's Word. Don't believe the myth that a bunch of church leaders sat down centuries later to pick and choose which books made the cut.)

As Daniel read from Jeremiah, he realised that the time of exile was almost up. Soon God would return his people to the promised land, exactly as he had promised. Yet, isn't Daniel's response to this fascinating? He doesn't just sit back and wait for God to do as he promised. He doesn't say, "If God has decided, there's no need to pray." No! He gets on his knees and he pleads with God to keep his promise.

Daniel's prayer is fuelled by God's promise. It can be the same for us. God makes glorious promises to his people in his Word. We should take those promises and bring them to the throne of grace. That is one of the secrets of this faithful man of prayer.

Questions

1. Is there a particular promise from God's Word that you can use to fuel your prayers?

Prayer Points

1. Pick one of these verses and bring it to God in prayer - Philippians 1:6, 1 Corinthians 10:13, James 1:5, Isaiah 1:18, Psalm 9:9
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy." Daniel 9:18b

Praise: Psalm 52 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Tuesday - Daniel 9:3-15 - Praying to the God Who Is Big

Isn't it telling that the very first words of Daniel's prayer aren't focused on Daniel or his need but are focused on God himself? That's not to say that every single prayer has to start in this way, but it's surely a helpful pattern to follow. I suspect that for many of us, the praise of God is not as prominent in our praying as it ought to be.

Notice that Daniel doesn't just begin with praise; his prayer is peppered with the greatness of God (v7, 14, 15). Surely this recognition of God's greatness is precisely what allows Daniel to pray in the way he does? Bear in mind, Daniel is asking God to bring his people back to the promised land. That is no small ask! He is asking God to change the minds of kings, the paths of nations, and change the very course of world history. No small God could accomplish such wonders!

Yet we so easily forget God's greatness, don't we? Here's what Iain Duguid has to say: *"If we forget God's greatness, then our prayers will be too small. Indeed, I find that my own prayers are almost always too small. I don't find myself praying for a great and mighty work of God's Spirit in our community and in our day. I don't very often pray for remarkable demonstrations of God's power in our church. I forget God's greatness: that he is the one who created all things out of nothing, the one who hung the stars in the heavens and assigned the seas their boundaries. I have forgotten that he is the one who raises up kings and world leaders, and brings them down again. If I remembered God's greatness, my prayer life would be radically transformed."*

Duguid is honest about his failings, yet they are failings most of us share. Let us learn from Daniel's example and come on our knees to the great and awesome God.

Questions

1. Can you think of any times in the last few weeks when you would have prayed differently if you had remembered how awesome God is?

Prayer Points

1. Praise God for how he is great and awesome and keeps covenant and steadfast love (v4).
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy." Daniel 9:18b

Praise: Psalm 53 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Wednesday - Daniel 9:16-19 - Confession and Mercy

We've spent two days as flies on Daniel's wall so far. We've seen that his prayer life was fuelled by God's promises and also that the glory of God drove him to boldness in prayer. Today let's learn from Daniel's heartfelt confession of sin.

Notice that Daniel doesn't resort to vagueness or generalities. Read v5-11 and notice the many different terms he uses - "sinned... done wrong... not listened... rebelled... not obeyed... transgressed... turned away." There are no ifs and no buts, just heartfelt, specific confession of sin.

Yet this prayer is by no means despondent. Daniel recognises that God is faithful (v4) and merciful (v9). Knowing how merciful God is, Daniel confidently sought forgiveness (v18-19). Surely this is an example worth following!

There's another aspect of this prayer that I think is well worth considering. When you think about it, there's something about these detailed confessions of sin that hardly seem to fit with Daniel's life, isn't there? Now I'm not saying that Daniel was sinless... but everything we've seen about him so far suggests that he was faithful and upright and not at all guilty of the sins that he confessed in this chapter. So how do we explain it?

Is there not a sense in which Daniel wasn't so much confessing his own sin as he was confessing the corporate sins of the covenant people? That is why his prayer is full of "we" and "us" rather than "I" and "me".

Do we not see Daniel praying on behalf of the chosen people of God in this passage? Do we not see God using his mediation in order to bring the people out of darkness and judgement and into blessing and light? Do we not see a glorious picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, who took our sins upon himself, is the one mediator between God and man, and who is at the right hand of God the Father interceding on our behalf and bringing us into blessing?

How thankful we should be for our glorious, interceding Saviour!

Questions

1. Are there particular sins that you need to confess before God?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for the Lord Jesus who took our sins upon himself and intercedes for his people at the right hand of God the Father.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy." Daniel 9:18b

Praise: Psalm 54 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Thursday - Daniel 9:20-23 - Gabriel Barges In

In one sense, many of us can empathise with Daniel's experience in this passage. How often have you sat down to pray, only to find your concentration broken by a sudden interruption? Whether it's a buzzing phone or a screaming child, interruptions in prayer are an occupational hazard. Yet, this is an interruption unlike any other; God sends the angel Gabriel to help and encourage this faithful saint. While this experience may be unlike anything we have ever encountered, there are encouraging principles we can see in these short verses.

Firstly, a challenge. Notice when Gabriel comes to Daniel - "at the time of the evening sacrifice" (v21). Daniel has not been at an evening sacrifice for many, many years and yet (as we have already seen), his heart remains in Jerusalem. Even his watch is set to Jerusalem time! What a challenge to put the welfare of Christ's church at the forefront of our affections, even as we go about our daily business in the world. (Psalm 122)

Secondly, an encouragement. Notice the emphasis on speed in this passage. Gabriel appears while Daniel is still speaking and he comes in swift flight (v21). God didn't even wait for Daniel to finish praying before "sending out a word" (v23). We know that in his wisdom, God can sometimes take a long time to answer our prayers (or at least to answer them in an obvious way). Yet, there is no delay in God's hearing of our prayers. God doesn't dilly-dally. When we pray, God hears us immediately and with open ears (Isaiah 65:24).

Thirdly, another encouragement. Notice how Daniel is described in v23. He is "greatly loved". God doesn't roll his eyes as this man pesters him with yet another request. God loves Daniel greatly - how it must have warmed Daniel's heart to hear this from the angel's mouth.

Yet, it's not just true of Daniel. It's true of every single believer as well (1 John 4:10, Romans 8:38-39). What an encouragement to pray!

Questions

1. Are there practical ways you can keep your heart set on the kingdom of Christ, even as you go about your daily business in the world?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for how in the Lord Jesus, we are greatly loved.
2. Give thanks for how God hears our prayers without delay.
3. Use prayer points from your congregation.
4. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy." Daniel 9:18b

Praise: Psalm 55 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Friday - Daniel 9:24-27 - God's Roadmap

Imagine driving across the USA, from east to west. You reach the Appalachian mountains and are stunned by their sights and scale. But this is not your destination. You have days of driving still to come; you need to strap in for the long haul. Yet there's good news: when you eventually reach the Rockies you will find peaks that are even more majestic than what you witness now.

In these verses, we see the journey that God's people must take. The return to Jerusalem is like a mountain peak but it is not the end of the road. The 70 years of exile may be almost done, but there are 70 "sevens" still to come. (I believe the numbers are symbolic.) There is a long road ahead. Yet, towards the end of that road is a great mountain peak of God's grace that leaves all other mountains in the shade.

We can't go into every detail of this difficult passage but we can look at the main points. After the Jews return to Jerusalem, there will be a total of 69 "sevens" which will be an extremely trying time (v25). Then there will be one final "seven"; this is not necessarily a shorter period, rather it is the climactic period of God's dealing with his people.

During this time, "the Anointed One" (Hebrew: Messiah; Greek: Christ) will come: the Lord Jesus Christ, who will be cut off (on the cross) in order to win salvation for his people. After Christ's death there will be more devastation on Jerusalem - it would be destroyed by the Romans 40 years later. As Jesus himself demonstrates, this destruction of the city that rejected him points forward to the final judgement when all who reject the Messiah will face "the end that is decreed" for them.

We are living in the final "seven". Time is short. Either we trust in Christ for salvation or reject him and face eternal judgment at his return. We must be ready for the end of the road.

Questions

1. In what ways did Christ "have nothing"? (v26) See Philippians 2:5-8.

Prayer Points

1. Praise God for the cross of Christ, the highest mountain peak of his grace to his people!
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy." Daniel 9:18b

Praise: Psalm 56 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Saturday - Daniel 9:24 - What the Anointed One Does

Let's take another day to consider this majestic mountain peak of God's gracious dealings with his people. What does the Lord Jesus do? Six achievements are mentioned in v24.

The first three accomplishments describe how Christ the Anointed One conquers evil. Remember the context of this chapter: it is sin that got God's people into the mess they found themselves in and it was sin that Daniel was confessing on behalf of the people. How incredible that even as Daniel was praying, God graciously announced his plan for dealing with sin! Christ and only Christ can atone for wickedness. Only he could take our sins and bear the punishment that we deserve. Only he could make us right with God. Only he could free us from the power of sin and ultimately lead us to the next life where it will be a thing of the past. How thankful we should be for the Anointed One! How terrified we should be if we are ignoring him and trying to go it alone!

The second three accomplishments describe the "positive" aspects of Christ's work. Firstly, he brings in everlasting righteousness. I like how one preacher put it: Christ doesn't rescue us from drowning and then leave us stranded in a boat that's bobbing on the ocean. He doesn't give us a fresh start, he gives us his righteousness; a righteousness that can never be taken from us.

Secondly, Christ "seals up vision and prophecy". The entire Old Testament was pointing to him; now that he (and the apostles he commissioned) have spoken, there is no more need for revelation from God. Christ is the last word! (Hebrews 1:1-2).

Thirdly, Christ "anoints the most holy". This is a difficult clause to interpret, but it obviously alludes to the Most Holy Place within God's temple. Christ is the Holy One of God and the fulness of God dwells in him. As the church of Christ meets in the name of Christ it enters into God's holy presence. What a privilege we have!

Questions

1. Which of these six accomplishments of Christ excites you the most?

Prayer Points

1. Praise Christ for the achievement you picked above.
2. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
3. Use prayer points from your congregation.
4. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy." Daniel 9:18b

Praise: Psalm 57 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

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