

#13 - Standing Up in a Smackdown World

2/1/2009 - Jim Johnson/Daniel 9:1-19

How should we be praying for our nation? Daniel chapter 9 gives us a great template. This was Daniel's 3rd vision (538 BC) during the reign of Darius the Mede. (v.1) Daniel had been reading the writings of the prophet Jeremiah at the time. (v. 2) Jeremiah wrote back when Judah still existed as a nation. He warned of judgment. God delivered on his promise. King Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah and took her people into captivity. The first strike took place in 605 BC. Daniel was reading Jer. 29:10-14 where God promised 70 years of captivity, after which Judah could be restored to her land again. The clock had already ticked off about 67 years. This is what prompted Daniel's prayer (3) in chapter 9. We need to study this prayer, because this is the kind of prayer you need to pray if you live in a place that is hostile to you and your faith.

A. Daniel was _____ the right things – 4-6

He began by confessing the faithfulness of God (4) and the faithlessness of God's people (v. 5) Daniel used the word "we" and included himself in this confession. He acknowledged that they had rejected God's Word and His prophets (v. 6)

Daniel spoke the truth. This was his prayer of _____

B. Daniel was _____ the right things. – 7-10

His confession was colored with remorse. He used the word shame (v. 7) He cited the failure of the men, and the leaders in the capital city, those who lived near to the temple and those who lived far away. (v. 8) He was careful to also assert the truth that nevertheless God was a forgiving God (v. 9)

Daniel felt shame. This was a prayer of _____

C. Daniel was _____ right things. - 11-14

Daniel admitted that he and his people rightfully deserved God's discipline. (v. 11) and that God did what he should have justly done (v. 12) Unfortunately they did not all respond as they should have. He argued that all the calamity had come on them they had not yet sought the favor of the Lord by turning from iniquity." (v. 13) They had not learned their lessons. Because the repentance was not there - the cloud of judgment had not yet moved. It stopped & the storm continued to wreak havoc on the people of God. (v. 14)

Daniel was thinking that God was just. This was a prayer of _____

D. Daniel was _____ for the right things. – 15-19

Daniel recalled God's rescues of the past (v. 15) and hinted that a current rescue would be welcome. He asked God to redirect His anger – away from His people and the city of Jerusalem and the holy hill on which that Temple once proudly stood. (v. 16) In verses 17 and 18 he pleads for God to pour out His sweet forgiveness and mercy. He asked to turn his heart to the city with which he was so identified.

Daniel was asking for the rights things. It was a prayer for _____

He asked God to end the 70 years of desolation and restore the temple and the city of Jerusalem and return God's people to the land.

B. Why did Daniel _____ if the termination was already promised?

Jeremiah prophesied that the curse would be lifted after 70 years. Daniel understood God's promises to be literal and he was therefore highly motivated to pray that God would do what he said he would do. So why bother asking for something that God already was planning on giving?

The answer: It was a _____ promise. God would lift the curse, if and only, if the Jews would repent and return. This was the message in Jer 29:10-13. These promises were conditioned on the response of the Jews. Daniel read the promises in their context and he knew that as one of the people of God he had the opportunity to influence the course of the future. If he and others like him should take responsibility for the sins of the nation, the nation could be saved. (2 Chron 7:14) **Like Daniel, we too have the opportunity to shape the future course of our nation by praying the kind of prayer we find in Daniel 9.**

C. Why did Daniel make it a _____ prayer?

Daniel used the words "we" and "us" 21 times in Daniel 9. He included himself in the confession (v. 5) in the humiliation (v. 8); and even in the discipline. (v. 13) Daniel is one of the few major characters of the Bible, of whom nothing bad is said. He was squeaky clean. So why should he include himself in their sins?

In the state of Texas, a person who passively participates in a crime can be held liable for doing the crime. In other words, if you know a crime is going to be committed, you either need to leave before it happens or make an active attempt to keep it from happening. If you don't you are held as liable as the doer of the crime. It called the Law of Parties. In the state of Texas you can be guilty of crime simply by doing nothing.

Perhaps in chapter 9 Daniel was saying, "I am not guilty of pulling trigger, but I am guilty for watching and doing little. Daniel of course shared in the discipline of the land for sure. He was one of the first to be taken captive.

There is a lesson for us. Our nation is running from God pretty quickly and we may share in their guilt if we passively sit and watch. Though we can not control the choices that any one person makes, we can certainly be a wholesome influence in helping others make good choices.

We can work at the Crisis pregnancy center and counsel with the young ladies who are contemplating an abortion or share our faith with those who currently do not have any moral compass. We can vote our biblical values during election time. We can demonstrate God's love by the way we love the disadvantaged around us. We can run for office and try to steer government towards right decisions. We can lovingly confront a friend or family member when they wander from God and most of all WE CAN PRAY. We can pray like Daniel prayed - a genuine and authentic prayer. We can confess the sins of our people as if they were our sins. We can ask God to cleanse, forgive and restore us as a people

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Use this section in your personal or family devotions to better apply the truth.

1. In what ways are your prayers like Daniel's?
2. In what ways are they different?
3. Are you a passive rider, or involved in changing the course of things? What is one tangible thing could you do to inhibit our nation's rush toward sin?