

A BEAUTIFUL PRAYER

(Daniel 9:1-19)

I. The preparation (Daniel 9:1-3).

- a. Daniel begins the chapter by giving us a time frame for it.
 - i. It was in the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede.
 - ii. Chronologically, this prayer was uttered before the events of chapter 6, or at least led to Daniel being thrown in the lions den.
 - iii. Darius was king over Chaldea, while Cyrus was over the whole Medo-Persian empire.
 - iv. The year for this would have been right around 538 BC.
- b. Daniel had been reading from the prophet Jeremiah.
 - i. Twice in Jeremiah we read that God would punish Israel by Babylon for a period of 70 years (Jeremiah 25:9-12; 29:10).
 - ii. The 70 years began in 606 BC when Daniel and others were carried into captivity.
 - iii. This being around 538 BC, the seventy years were almost complete.
 - iv. We don't know how Daniel came to possess a copy of Jeremiah's writing.
 1. Jeremiah 29:1 says that he had sent a letter to the captives in Babylon.
 2. It may have been this letter that Daniel had read and come to understand.
- c. Daniel understood that the time was about up and wanted to pray for his people.
 - i. He turned his face to God and was ready to pray and ask for mercy, which is the idea of the word translated "supplication".
 - ii. Sackcloth was made from black goat hair and was long a sign of mourning.
 - iii. The ashes were a symbol of grief and may have been a sign of understanding what would one day happen to the body after death.
- d. Daniel had prepared his mind and his body to pray a penitential prayer to God.
- e. More than likely, he was in his room with his window open facing towards Jerusalem,
 - i. Daniel 6:10.
 - ii. Solomon had asked God to answer prayers that were offered this way at the dedication of the temple, recorded in 1 Kings 8.

II. The prayer (Daniel 9:4-14).

- a. Daniel began his prayer by praising God.
 - i. He describes God as great and awesome.
 - ii. He is the God who keeps His word and extends mercy to those who love Him, which was shown by keeping His commandments, just as it is now.

- iii. There is no doubt that Daniel understood that any failure was on the people's part, not on God's.
 - iv. God had kept His end of the covenant but the people had not.
 - b. He then turned to the failures of his people.
 - i. They had sinned by committing iniquity.
 - ii. They had acted wickedly and rebelled against God.
 - iii. They turned aside, departed, from God's commands and judgments.
 - c. Not only had they rebelled but they had failed to listen to God's messengers.
 - i. The prophets had spoken to all classes of people; none were left out.
 - ii. This shows the fairness of God and how no one had an excuse for their actions.
 - d. Because of their actions they had open shame, shame before all.
 - i. Everything that had happened to Jerusalem was known far and wide.
 - ii. There was nothing hid, everything was out in the open.
 - iii. It didn't matter where they were or who they were, if left in and around Jerusalem or off in captivity, they had open shame.
 - e. The words used in verse 9 show God to be a loving and caring parent who has great pity for the punished children.
 - f. Daniel knew God would forgive His people despite their sins and ignoring of God's messengers.
 - g. Verse 12 shows us the character of Daniel.
 - i. He knew that everything that God had done was just.
 - ii. God fulfilled all that He had said He would do.
 - iii. God kept His integrity despite the actions of His children.
 - h. All that God had done to Israel could be found in the Law of Moses.
 - i. Despite that fact, the people had not prayed to God.
 - ii. They failed to turn from their iniquities.
 - iii. They refused to understand God's plain word.
 - i. God saw the evil and did what was right, showing to His people how righteous He was.
 - i. Some versions translate this verse to show that God had kept a watch over Jerusalem until He could stand it no more.
 - ii. Similar to the punishment inflicted on the Amorites when the time of their sins was full, God saw the fullness of Israel's sin and had to punish them as He has said He would.

III. The plea (Daniel 9:15-19).

- a. Daniel is reminded how God had taken the Israelites from Egypt.
- b. Now, Daniel pleads for God to remove His anger from Jerusalem and gives four reasons:
 - i. It would be in line with God's prior righteous acts;
 - ii. The city belonged to God as much it did the people;

- iii. The land on which the city was built was holy;
 - iv. The inhabitants had suffered great reproach already.
 - c. Daniel then pointed out to God that the temple lay in ruins.
 - i. The temple had been laid to the ground by Nebuchadnezzar in 586, about 50 before this prayer.
 - ii. In the eyes of the nations around them, it seemed as if Jehovah was unable to protect what was His and Daniel wanted it restored for God's glory as much as the people's restoration.
 - d. Daniel then called on God to turn His ear to Daniel and open His eyes to the state of Jerusalem and see the desolation that was there and that of the people.
 - i. Daniel was asking God to be totally focused on the cries of His people.
 - ii. But notice, it was not for the sake of the people, because they were in sin.
 - iii. Rather, it would be a sign of the righteousness of God to forgive those who had sinned against Him.
 - e. Daniel closed his prayer with a request for speed on the part of God to answer his prayer.
 - i. Every day that Jerusalem remained ruined was a day more for those against God to use as a means of shaming God.
 - ii. Not only that, God's people needed rescuing and Daniel knew God was the only One who could allow it.

IV. The pertinence.

- a. This prayer shows us the power of sin.
- b. This prayer shows us the word of God will not be broken.
- c. This prayer shows us the way back to God (Daniel 9:13).
 - i. They would not pray.
 - ii. They would not repent.
 - iii. They would not learn from God's word.
 - iv. If we pray, repenting of our sins, and learning from God's word, we will be restored.
- d. We also learn of the longsuffering of God.
 - i. God put up with Israel's sin for as long as He could.
 - ii. There comes a time when God can stand it no longer.
- e. Again, we learn of the sovereignty of God.