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Dani'el's Prayer
9: 3-19

Dani'el's prayer DIG: What moves Dani'el to pray as he did? How did Dani'el prepare himself for his prayer? What was Dani'el's attitude during his prayer? What had the exiles not done? How do you think it made God feel? What, specifically, had the Israelites failed to do? What was their punishment? On what basis did Dani'el make his appeal to ADONAI? What happened?

REFLECT: In Dani'el's day, the hope of the Israelites was getting back to their home-land. How would you describe the hope of believers today? When Babylon fell, Dani'el turned back to the prophecies. What part of God's Word do you turn to when you need to get your balance in the midst of transition? What is your response to this prayer, one of the greatest prayers in the Bible?

Dani'el's prayer began with a confession of Isra'el's national sin, and concluded with a strong plea for God to have mercy on His people despite their failure.



Dani'el correctly understood that **the Babylonian Captivity** would last exactly **seventy years** (**to see link see Cw – ADONAI's Word**) and that **it** would, therefore, end soon. Throughout **9:3:19**, **Dani'el** acted as if **the Kingdom** was

about to be established. That assumption was made based on the information **he** had from reading J**eremiah** and **Isaiah**. But that assumption was incomplete; **he** needed more information. **He** mistakenly believed that the Messianic Kingdom would be established at the conclusion of **the seventy-seven year** period. As a result, **ADONAI** sent **His angel** (see **Cy – Gabri'el's Intervention**) to make things clear. This is an example of **the LORD's** progressive revelation. The fulfillment of **God's Word** is contingent upon **prayer**, so **Dani'el prayed**.

Acknowledgement of national sin and guilt (9:3-10): So Dani'el turned his face **to ADONAI Elohim**, emphasizing the **God** of the covenant, **and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes (9:3).** Three outward preparations for **his prayer**. All the three actions are symbols of remorse and mourning in the TaNaKh **(Joshua 7:6; Second Samuel 1:2** and **3:31; Esther 4:1-3; Job 2:12** and **42:6; Ezeki'el 27:30)**. **I prayed to ADONAI Elohim and** confessed: **"ADONAI, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant of lovingkindness** (see **Ruth Af – The Concept of Chesed**) **with those who love him and keep His mitzvot (9:4).** That fact assured **Dani'el** that **Isra'el** would be restored. The same hope is mentioned in **Nehemiah 1:5** and **9:32**. Anyone who **loves God** and keeps **His mitzvot** will receive **His chesed**. The keeping of **God's commandments** is the external manifestation of a believer's **love for God**. **Yeshua Messiah** made a similar statement in **John 14:15: If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.**

We have all sinned, acted disobediently and wickedly, and as a result, **rebelled. We have turned away from Your statutes** (Hebrew: *hachukkim*, meaning *to write into law permanently*) and **ordinances** (Hebrew: *hammishpatim*, meaning *a judgment of the court*) **(9:5).** In four different ways, **Dani'el** acknowledged **the sin** and **guilt** of **his people**, while including **himself (we)**. First, **he** confessed that **all** had **sinned** using the Hebrew word *chata* (see the commentary on **Leviticus Aq – The Chatta'th Offering: Communicating God's Forgiveness**). This word refers to *missing the mark*. **All** of **Isra'el** had fallen short of **God's righte**ousness. Second, **all** had **acted disobediently**. Here **Dani'el** used the Hebrew word *avah*, meaning *to bend* or *to twist*. Hence, **the Israelites acted disobediently** when **they** *turned* from the right path of righteousness. Third, **all** had **acted wickedly**. **Dani'el** used the Hebrew word *rasha*, meaning to *be wicked* or *to act wickedly* as a result of having lost one's relationship with **ADONAI**. Fourth, **all the people** had **rebelled**. The Hebrew term is *marad*. It refers to deviating from **the Torah**. In context, **the Israelites** had **rebelled** against **the Torah**; **they** had

turned from **God's statutes** and **ordinances**. In using the three terms *chata, rasha,* and *avah,* **Dani'el** made an indirect reference to **First Kings 8:47**, which states: **But in the land of exile, they might turn to You in repentance and pray, "We have sinned** (*chata*)**, acted disobediently** (*avah*) **and wickedly** (*rasha*)**."** And another verse that contains all three terms is **Psalm 106:6**, where it says: **Like our ancestors, we have sinned** (*chata*)**; we have acted disobediently** (*avah*) **and wickedly** (*rasha*)**.**[288]

The Israelites were not only **disobedient** to **the Torah** of **God**, but also to **the prophets** of **God**. **We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your Name to our kings, our princes and our ancestors, and to all the people of the land,** but rebelled instead **(9:6). The prophets** were like the lawyers of the covenant. When the covenant was broken, **they** appeared in order to accuse **the people** with the ultimate intention of restoring **their love** and faithfulness to **YHVH**. **Isaiah**, **Jeremiah**, **Ezeki'el**, and many others were used by **ADONAI** to carry the message of warning and repentance, but **they** were largely unheeded. **Isra'el's** persistent rejection of **the prophets** brought on **the Babylonian Captivity** (see **Jeremiah Gu – Seventy Years of Imperial Babylonian Rule**), as **Second Chronicles 36:15-16** and **Jeremiah 26:4-6** point out.

A covenant is similar to a treaty (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy Ah – Treaty of the Great King**). In simple terms, **Ha'Shem** made certain promises to **the people**, and in response **they** were to **obey the Torah**. Essential to the covenant were **blessings** and **curses**: If **ADONAI's people obeyed the Torah**, **He** would **bless them** with **security**, **fertility**, and **prosperity** (see **Deuteronomy Fe – Blessings for Obedience**). But if **they disobeyed the Torah,** especially if **they** committed spiritual adultery, then **they** would be **cursed** with oppression from **their enemies** and **exile**.

Typical is **the curse** seen in **Deuteronomy 28:64-68**, a passage that clearly anticipates **the Babylonian Captivity**. **ADONAI will scatter you among all peoples from one end of the earth to the other, and there you will serve other gods, made of wood and stone, which neither you nor your ancestors have known. Among these nations you will not find repose, and there will be no rest for the sole of your foot; rather ADONAI will give you there anguish of heart, dimness of eyes and apathy of spirit. Your life will hang in doubt before you; you will be afraid night and day and have no assurance that you will stay alive. In the morning you will say, "Oh, how I**

wish it were evening!" and in the evening you will say, "Oh, how I wish it were morning!" — because of the fear overwhelming your heart and the sights your eyes will see. Finally, ADONAI will bring you back in ships to Egypt, the place of which I said to you, "You will never ever see it again;" and there you will try to sell yourselves as slaves to your enemies, but no one will buy you. From **Dani'el's** perspective, centuries after **Moshe** wrote **Deuteronomy**, **Isra'el** was suffering for having broken the covenant, and were experiencing **the curses** of **the Torah**.[289]

Thus, **Dani'el** cried out: **ADONAI, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame – the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Isra'el, both near and far, in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to you (9:7).** A distinction is made between that which belongs to **God**, namely **righteousness**, and that which belongs to **Isra'el**, namely **shame**. It is used in this sense in **Second Chronicles 32:21**. **Isra'el** was required to pay for **her sins**. **She** had become the scorn of the pagan Gentile nations. The result of **her** disgrace was the destruction of **the Temple** and **her** captivity in **Babylon**. At that time, **the Jews** were driven not only to **Babylon**, but also to Assyria and to **Egypt**. **We and our kings, our princes and our ancestors are covered with shame, LORD, because we have sinned against you (9:8). Their** land was overrun by the enemy, **their** great city of Jerusalem was destroyed, and **their** holy **Temple** was desecrated, robbed, and burned. No wonder **the Jews** were **ashamed**! But it was **their** own **sins** that had brought those disasters, because **they** had **disobeyed the Torah** and refused to obey **God's prophets**.[290]

Dani'el spelled out **Isra'el's** need for **forgiveness**, beginning with **His** attributes: **ADONAI our God is merciful and forgiving (9:9a). The rabbis used this statement to elaborate on the extent of God's compassion. They said that He is merciful, but He is more than merely merciful (4:34-35), for ADONAI is merciful and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in grace (Psalm 103:8),** and **ADONAI is good to all (Psalm 145:9a).** The Hebrew word for **mercies** is *rachamaw*, which also means **compassions**. It appears in **Lamentations 3:22**, where **Jeremiah** declared: **It is a result of ADONAI's lovingkindness** (Hebrew: *chesed*)**, that never ends; for His compassions never fail.** In this passage, **Jeremiah** recalled **God's** covenantal **love** for **the people of Isra'el**, and it gave **him** hope. Throughout the history of **the Jewish people**, a remnant has always survived because of **ADONAI's chesed**. **They** have

not been consumed by divine punishment, Replacement Theology (see the commentary on **Galatians Ak – The Hebrew Roots Movement: A Different Gospel**), or anti-Semitic attacks by either Hitler and **Haman** (see the commentary on **Esther Au – Haman's Plan to Annihilate All the Jews**), because of **ADONAI's** covenantal **love**. Regarding **God's forgiveness, Psalm 130:4** provides a result**: But with You there is forgiveness, so that You will be feared (**also see **Exodus 34:6-7** and **Nehemiah 9:17**)**.**

After reminding **ADONAI** of **His** attributes, **Dani'el** presented the reason for **his** plea. **For we have rebelled against You. We have not obeyed ADONAI our God or kept the Torah He gave us through His servants the prophets (9:9b-10).** In summary, **Dani'el** confessed eight specific **sins** that **the people of Isra'el** had committed: (1) **they** had **sinned (9:5a)**; (2) **they** had **acted disobediently (9:5b)**; (3) **they** had **acted wickedly (9:5c)**; (4) **they** had **rebelled (9:5d)**; (5) **they** had **turned away from God's statutes** and **ordinances (9:5e)**; (6) **they** had **not listened to God's servants the prophets (9:6)**; (7) **they** had been **unfaithful to God (9:7)**; and (8) **they** had **not obeyed ADONAI our God or kept His Torah (9:10).**[291]

The punishment for sin and guilt (9:11-14): As Arnold Fruchtenbaum relates in his commentary on *Dani'el*, these next verses deal with the punishment for **Isra'el's** national **sin** and **guilt**. In **verse 11**, **Dani'el** provided a summary of what had just been acknowledged in **verses 3-10. Yes, All Isra'el has transgressed your Torah and turned away, refusing to obey You. Therefore the curses and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against you (9:11).** Because the chosen people had **not obeyed ADONAI or kept His Torah, they** received **the curses of the Torah (Leviticus 26:14-39; Deuteronomy 28:15-68** and **29:20)**. **Moses** explained what would happen if **Isra'el rebelled**, including the threat of **captivity**. Everything **Moses** predicted came true **because we have sinned against God**. **Dani'el** included **himself** among **the guilty**.

Next, **Dani'el** showed that not only **Moshe's** words, but also those of **the prophets** had been **fulfilled**. **You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our kings by bringing on us great disaster. Under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem (9:12).** Just as in the previous verse, the idea here is that **the Torah** proved to be true. The judgment of **Isra'el** confirmed the words of **Moshe**. It also confirmed the words of **the prophets** who spoke to **the kings** of **Judah** and **Isra'el**. They, too,

predicted **the Babylonian Captivity**. The evidence is **the great disaster** that was brought upon **Judah** and **Isra'el**. That great disaster was **the Babylonian Captivity** and the barren state of the holy city of **Jerusalem** (see **Jeremiah Ga – The Fall of Jerusalem**).

The judgment of **the nation** was also confirmed by **the Torah**. **Just as it is written in the Torah of Moses, all this evil has come on us, yet we have not sought the favor of ADONAI our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to Your truth (9:13).** This verse contains both a confirmation and a proof. The phrase **"all this evil has come on us"** proves that these prophecies have been fulfilled. The Hebrew word for **evil**, *ra*, can refer to either **sin** or **disaster**. **YHVH** does not **sin**. Therefore, in this verse, the reference is to **a disaster** that **Ha'Shem** brought upon **His people**. **He** did so because of **Isra'el's** failure. Yet, even while suffering the judgment, **the people** did **not seek the favor of their God**! In brutal honesty, **Dani'el** confessed the failure of **the Israelites** to plead for **God's mercy** and **grace** even during **the seventy-years** of exile. Furthermore, **he** confessed that **they didn't turn away from their sins** or **seek out God's** instruction of **His truth**. That truth is found in the Scriptures, and **the Torah** laid out, in detail, what the consequences of **sin** would be, especially the **sin** of idolatry. Yet, **Isra'el** continually refused to obey. This led **Dani'el** to **pray**, and intervene for **his** people. **ADONAI did not hesitate to bring the disaster on us, for ADONAI our God is righteous in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him (9:14).** Because of **His righteousness**, **God** must punish **sin**.[292]

The plea for mercy and grace (9:15-19): **Dani'el's prayer** began with a confession of **Isra'el's** national **sin (9:3-14)** and concluded with a strong plea for **YHVH** to have **mercy** (not getting what you deserve) on **His people** despite **their** failure. **He** started by remembering **God's** past dealings with **Isra'el**. **Now, ADONAI Eloheinu, you brought lasting honor to Your Name when You brought Your people out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Dani'el** addressed **YHVH** as **ADONAI Eloheinu. Dani'el** was appealing to **the God** of **the Exodus** who had brought **His people out of Egypt.** The reference to **Ha'Shem's mighty hand** emphasizes the miracles **He** wrought on behalf of **His people**. **God made a name for Himself** through the miracles of **the Exodus (Nehemiah 9:9-10).** Then **Dani'el**, again, admitted **Isra'el's** failure: **But we have sinned** (chata)**, and are full of wickedness** (rasha) **(9:15).**

Then, **Daniel** proceeded to plead for **mercy** on the basis of **YHVH's righteousness**. **ADONAI Eloheinu, in keeping with all your righteous**

acts, turn away your anger and your wrath from Jerusalem, your City, your holy Temple Mount (9:16a). It was **God's righteousness** that required **Isra'el's** punishment for **sin**. On the basis of that same **righteousness**, **God** should consider letting **His anger and wrath be turned away.**

Once again, **Dani'el** acknowledged **Isra'el's** responsibility for the barrenness of **Jerusalem**. **Our sins and the iniquities of our ancestors have made Jerusalem and your people an object of scorn to all those around us (9:16b). Babylon** was merely a tool in the hands of **God**. It was **the Jewish people** who were responsible for the destruction of **Jerusalem**, not Nebuchadnezzar. The phrase **"the iniquities of our ancestors"** points to **the Jewish generation** that lived **seventy years** earlier. The punishment came because of **their sins**. However, the **sin** issue continued with **Dani'el's** present **generation**. As a result, both **Jerusalem** and **the Jewish people** had become a source of embarrassment to all the surrounding **Gentile nations**. **Dani'el's** point was that since **God's Name** was linked with **Jerusalem (First Kings 11:36** and **14:21; Second Kings 21:4** and **7; Second Chronicles 6:6** and **33:4; Ezra 6:12)**, and **the Jewish people**, that disgrace would also affect **His** reputation.

Therefore, **Dani'el** pleaded for **grace** (getting what you don't deserve): **Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of Your servant.** This time, **Dani'el** addressed **YHVH** as **Eloheinu, the One true God,** and asked **Him** not only to hear **his prayer**, but also to respond to **it**. **For Your sake, ADONAI, cause Your face to shine on Your deserted Sanctuary (9:17). Let your face shine** is an everyday expression referring to **God's** favor. In **Numbers 6:25**, **it** appears as a priestly blessing. In **Psalm 80:3**, **it** appears alongside **restoration**. In the context of the destroyed **Temple**, **Dani'el** was asking **Ha'Shem** to permit the rebuilding of **His deserted Sanctuary** (see **Da – The Seventy Sevens: The decree of Cyrus**). The basis of this request was **ADONAI Himself**. Through earlier prophecies, **God** had promised that **the Temple** would be rebuilt. **Dani'el** now encouraged **YHVH** to act on those promises.

Then **Dani'el** presented **his** request in **9:18: Give ear, O my God and hear; open your eyes and see the barrenness of the City that bears Your Name.** There was only one **city** that was called by **His Name: Jerusalem**. **We do not make requests of You because we are righteous, but because of Your great mercy** (see **9:9a**)**.** If **God's** response to **Dani'el's prayer** depended on **the Jewish people, it** would not have been answered. Therefore, **Dani'el** appealed to the covenant-keeping **God** and asked **Him**, on the basis of **His** loyal **lovekindness**

and **mercies**, to remember **His** promises**.**

ADONAI, shemah (Hebrew: listen)**! ADONAI, selachah** (Hebrew: forgive)**! ADONAI ha'kashivah** (Hebrew: hear) **and va'aseh** (Hebrew: act)**! For Your sake, my Elohai, do not delay, because your City and Your people bear Your Name (9:19).** The petition not to delay the fulfillment of **the seventy years** of **the Babylonian Captivity** may be an indication of concern that **Dani'el** had. **He** may have feared that **YHVH** might decide to begin the counting of **the seventy years** not from the first deportation, but from the second or third deportation (see **Jeremiah Gt – In the Thirty-Seventh Year, Jehoiachin Released from Prison**). If **He** did that, **the captivity** would be prolonged. Therefore, **Dani'el prayed, "Elohi,** please **don't delay!"** Then **he** spelled out the basis for the plea and repeated it was for **God's own sake**. This time, however, **Dani'el** added two other reasons. Because **God's City** and **people** were linked with **God's Name**, **He** should act for the **sake** of **His** own glory.[293]

ADONAI answered **Dani'el's prayer**. The next year, **Cyrus** issued a decree that permitted **the Jews** to return to Judah, take **the Temple vessels** with **them** and **rebuild the Temple** (see **Ag – Cyrus and Darius**). What a remarkable ministry **Dani'el** had in **Babylon**! **He** was counselor to four **kings (Nebuchadnezzar** and **Belshazzar of Babylon; Cyrus** and **Darius of Persia)**, intercessor for **the people of Isra'el**, a faithful witness to **the God of Abraham Isaac, and Jacob**, and author to one of the basic books of prophecy in the TaNaKh.[294]

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise You, the almighty **Sovereign Ruler** of the universe and the **Omniscient God** who always was, is now, and is the future. **Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Hosts who was and who is and who is to come (Revelation 4:8b-c)!** Thank **You** for being such a gracious **God** to be willing to act on **the prayers** of **Your children** who are interceding for others. How merciful you are to listen to humble prayers that plead for your mercy. Please show me how to draw closer to **You** and open the eyes and minds of those in my nation, and my friends. Please give them a moment of spiritual clarity, so that they may decide to accept **You** as their **Lord** and **Savior**. Please help them to know that trials here on earth will soon be over, and heaven's joy will be forever! **For I consider the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us (Romans 8:18).** In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and the power of **His** resurrection Amen.*