

Bible Studies for Life: October 1

*Staying True in a World Far From God: Confess Wholeheartedly •
Daniel 9*

By Becky Brown



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Perhaps his parents perished in the takeover of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Daniel chapter one also tell us that Daniel and his three friends were of the royal line of the kings that ruled in Judah.

Daniel was surely taught by his family that the meaning of his name would be indicative of the current and near future situation of the imminent exile of the nation of Judah. Daniel came to Babylon as a teenager and lived to be 80-90 years old.

He would faithfully serve several kings of Babylon (known to us today as Iraq) as well as several kings of Persia (known to us today as Iran) over his lifetime.

Daniel was well aware that his nation of Judah was in exile because of continued disobedience to the Lord across many generations. His life was lived as a constant prayer to His Lord. We saw in chapter six that his jealous Persian enemies knew that he was a faithful prayer warrior.

Their plot to destroy him in the den of lions was crafted on their knowledge that Daniel would indeed pray at least three times daily with his windows open westward toward Jerusalem.

As we come to Daniel chapter nine, we find Daniel in his prayer chamber studying scrolls of Scripture from the prophet Jeremiah. Even as a senior adult, Daniel was still developing

his relationship with God through prayer and the study of Scripture.

This is great counsel for those who must stand truthfully and faithfully in a world far from God. The most important relationship we have is with our Maker and Savior. Like Daniel, I want to be a never graduating student of Scripture and a watchful soldier of prayer.

Daniel saw Jeremiah prophesied that the exile of the nation of Judah to Babylon would last seventy years (see Jeremiah chapters 25 and 29). Daniel did the math! He realized that the seventy years were about to be completed.

Daniel did NOT run to his closet and grab a suitcase to pack for the return home. Instead, such knowledge compelled Daniel to immediately begin to intercede in prayer for his nation and his people.

Daniel chapter nine is a Scripture that should be read often and prayed through and even hidden in our hearts through memorization. Every nation (and person!) that has strayed from the Lord can come to these words and possess a recipe for return. The prayer is simply amazing.

Anne Graham Lotz has written a book about this prayer that will grab you by the heart and soul and throw you on the mat and pin you down with your face to the earth. I highly recommend her book to you: *The Daniel Prayer*.

I hope that I would have the same reaction as Daniel. He was driven to his knees to lift up his own nation to the Father in prayerful intercession. He fasted from all food so that he could focus without distraction.

He wore sackcloth, which was scratchy and uncomfortable and represented grief and deep anguish. He sat on an ash heap like Job to signify great loss. Daniel meant business when it came to prayer.

Daniel gave glory to God, mentioning His greatness and His covenant and His lovingkindness. In tandem with the words of King David in Psalm 32 and Psalm 51, Daniel immediately dove into personal and national confession of sin.

He uses many of the words for sin, pointing out every shade of evil: missing the mark, moral corruption, perversion, open rebellion. Judah had ignored the prophets that God appointed and anointed and sent to warn them of His coming judgment.

God is righteous, but the people of Judah lived in open shamefulness. The compassion and forgiveness of God was the only thing that stood between them and their rebellion. Daniel's name would remind that whole generation of the fact they got what they deserved for "God to be their Judge."

Moses had established the blessings that would come with obedience as well as the curses for disobedience in Deuteronomy 27 and 28. Daniel was apparently very schooled in ALL the Scriptures available to him in 539 BC.

Judah ignored God's Law and refused to listen to God's voice. Their beloved city of Jerusalem lay in ruins as proof God keeps His Word.

Daniel begs God on behalf of his people and nation to restore Jerusalem and Judah. Daniel reminds God that His righteousness and compassion alone can save. Daniel prayed in humility and confession. God would answer Daniel's prayer.

He will hear ours as well. Pray like Daniel.

Brown is minister of missions at First Church, Richland.