

Explore the Bible: February 27

Confession Made • Daniel 9:4-19

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It is sad to realize all our sins can be forgiven by our Lord, but people let pride and arrogance keep them from repenting. Unlike Moses, many people want to enjoy “the fleeting pleasures of sin” (Heb. 11:25 CSB).

Daniel was an exception. He found how easily confession of sin and repentance came to the humble. Daniel was around 80 years old when the events of this passage transpired circa 538 BC (NAC, p. 240). Confession is the path to forgiveness.

In this final lesson of our series on the Book of Daniel, we learn, “Believers can confess their sins knowing God offers forgiveness.” God stands ready to pardon us when we acknowledge our iniquities.

The “fleeting pleasures of sin” pale in comparison to the eternal blessings of God. He gives us joy and peace beyond measure, once confession is made.

Confession made (Dan. 9:4-6). How does one confess sin? Daniel prayed; we should too. Prayer is the appropriate context for confession of sin and repentance toward God.

Daniel began his prayer by acknowledging three aspects of God's character: His greatness, His awesomeness (from the Hebrew word for "fear," thus, "to be revered), and His faithfulness in keeping covenant and lovingkindness. "Those who love Him and keep His commandments" experience these three qualities (9:4).

Daniel heaped up several verbs to emphasize Israel's wrongdoing: "we have sinned," "done wrong," "acted wickedly," "rebelled against you," and "scorned your commands and regulations" (9:5). Moreover, they had not listened to God-sent prophets (9:6).

The reader is left with the strong impression of how seriously Daniel viewed Israel's sins. Daniel pleaded with the Lord, "in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes" (9:3). Since God answers prayer, Daniel prayed.

Righteousness seen (Dan. 9:7-14). Daniel contrasted God's "righteousness" to the "public shame" of His people. The people had committed "unfaithful deeds" against the Lord (9:7). He doubled down on the theme of "public shame," indicting the kings, leaders, and fathers of the people. All sin is ultimately against God (9:8).

Is there any hope for sinful people before a righteous God? The short answer is, "Yes." Daniel appealed to God's "compassion." He declared, "Compassion and forgiveness belong to the Lord our God" (9:9).

The word, "forgiveness," renders the Hebrew term, *s^eliyachah*, a word used only with the Lord God as the subject. There is a type of forgiveness only God can provide. Nehemiah used the term (Neh. 9:17), as did the psalmist (Ps. 130:4).

In contrast, the people rebelled, disobeyed, broke God's law, turned away, and sinned (9:9-11). Daniel emphasized the deep rift between God and Israel due solely to their errant

behavior. As a consequence, God sent the “promised curse written in the law of Moses,” a reference to the curses found in the Deuteronomy 27.

Even though Daniel was a righteous, God-fearing man, he and his friends were exiled to Babylon as part of God’s judgment against Judah. As we have seen in our study of the Book of Daniel, God strategically placed His people where Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael could be of godly influence to the Babylonian and Persian kings.

Daniel acknowledged the Lord’s faithfulness in carrying out judgment as He forewarned the people (9:12). The fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple was “a disaster that is so great that nothing like what has been done to Jerusalem has ever been done under all heaven.”

The people’s unbridled sin brought on God’s unmitigated judgment. Daniel prayed, confessing the sins of the people and appealing to God’s compassion and forgiveness. The exile lingered on because the people had “not sought the favor of the Lord our God by turning from our iniquities and paying attention to your truth” (9:13-14).

Forgiveness sought (Dan. 9:15-19). Daniel pleaded with God, who delivered His people from Egypt (9:15). He petitioned the Lord to turn away His “anger and wrath” from Jerusalem (9:16). He wanted the Lord to hear his prayer and make His “face shine on your desolate sanctuary for the Lord’s sake” (9:17).

He begged God to listen, hear, and see their desolations, appealing to His “abundant compassion” (9:18). The prophet concluded with a flurry of imperatives: hear, forgive, listen, take action, do not delay (9:19).

In that same year (538 BC), Persian King Cyrus emancipated the people, sending them home to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. The Lord answered Daniel’s prayer. The lesson truth holds for us today also, “Believers can confess their sins knowing God

offers forgiveness.”

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