

This is a portion of a larger book. In this version, the Bible texts have been modified into modern English, the punctuation improved, headings and emphasis may have been added, and some sentences realigned.

Chapter 6

Daniel's Prayers

As the time approached for the close of the seventy years' captivity, Daniel's mind became greatly exercised upon the prophecies of Jeremiah. He saw that the time was at hand when God would give His chosen people another trial; and with fasting, humiliation, and prayer, he importuned the God of heaven in behalf of Israel, in these words:

“Oh LORD, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from your precepts and from your judgments; neither have we hearkened to your servants the prophets, which spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land” (Daniel 9:4-6).

Daniel does not proclaim his own fidelity before the LORD. Instead of claiming to be pure and holy, this honored prophet humbly identifies himself with the really sinful of Israel. The wisdom which God had imparted to him was as far superior to the wisdom of the great men of the world as the light of the sun shining in the heavens at noonday is brighter than the feeblest star. Yet ponder the prayer from the lips of this man so highly favored of Heaven. With deep humiliation, with tears and rending of heart, he pleads for himself and for his people. He lays his soul open before God, confessing his own unworthiness and acknowledging the LORD's greatness and majesty.

Earnestness and Fervor

What earnestness and fervor characterize his supplications! The hand of faith is reached upward to grasp the never-failing promises of the Most High. His soul is wrestling in agony.

And he has the evidence that his prayer is heard.

He knows that victory is his. If we as a people would pray as Daniel prayed, and wrestle as he wrestled, humbling our souls before God, we

should realize as marked answers to our petitions as were granted to Daniel. Hear how he presses his case at the court of heaven:

“Oh my God, incline your ear, and hear; open your eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by your name; for we do not present our supplications before you for our righteousnesses, but for your great mercies. Oh LORD, hear; Oh LORD, forgive; Oh LORD, hearken and do; defer not; for your own sake, Oh my God: for your city and your people are called by your name” (verses 18, 19).

The man of God was praying for the blessing of Heaven upon his people and for a clearer knowledge of the divine will.

The burden of his heart was for Israel, who were not, in the strictest sense, keeping the law of God. He acknowledges that all their misfortunes have come upon them in consequence of their transgressions of that holy law. He says, “We have sinned, we have done wickedly . . . Because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people are become a reproach to all that are about us” (verses 15, 16). The Jews had lost their peculiar, holy character as God's chosen people. “Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of your servant, and his supplications, and cause your face to shine upon your sanctuary that is desolate” (verse 17).

Daniel's heart turns with intense longing to the desolate sanctuary of God. He knows that its prosperity can be restored only as Israel shall repent of their transgressions of God's law, and become humble, faithful, and obedient.

The Heavenly Messenger

As Daniel's prayer is going forth, the angel Gabriel comes sweeping down from the heavenly courts to tell him that his petitions are heard and answered. This mighty angel has been commissioned to give him skill and understanding – to open before him the mysteries of future ages. Thus, while earnestly seeking to know and understand the truth, Daniel was brought into communion with Heaven's delegated messenger.

In answer to his petition, Daniel received not only the light and truth which he and his people most needed, but a view of the great events of the future, even to the advent of the world's Redeemer.

THOSE WHO CLAIM TO BE SANCTIFIED, WHILE THEY HAVE NO DESIRE TO SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES OR TO WRESTLE WITH GOD IN PRAYER FOR A CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF BIBLE TRUTH, KNOW NOT WHAT TRUE SANCTIFICATION IS.

Daniel talked with God. Heaven was opened before him. But the high honors granted him were the result of humiliation and earnest seeking. All who believe with the heart the word of God will hunger and thirst for a knowledge of His will. God is the author of truth. He enlightens the darkened understanding and gives to the human mind power to grasp and comprehend the truths which He has revealed.

Seeking Wisdom From God

Upon the occasion just described, the angel Gabriel imparted to Daniel all the instruction which he was then able to receive. A few years afterward, however, the prophet desired to learn more of subjects not yet fully explained, and again set himself to seek light and wisdom from God.

“In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all . . . Then I lifted up my eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz. His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude” (Daniel 10:2-6).

This description is similar to that given by John when Christ was revealed to him upon the Isle of Patmos. No less a personage than the Son of God appeared to Daniel. Our LORD comes with another heavenly messenger to teach Daniel what would take place in the latter days.

The great truths revealed by the world's Redeemer are for those who search for truth as for hid treasures. Daniel was an aged man. His life had been passed amid the fascinations of a heathen court, his mind cumbered with the affairs of a great empire. Yet he turns aside from all these to afflict his soul before God, and seek a knowledge of the purposes of the Most High. And in response to his supplications, light from the heavenly courts was communicated for those who should live in the latter days. With what earnestness, then, should we seek God, that He may open our understanding to comprehend the truths brought to us from heaven.

“I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves . . . And there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength” (verses 7, 8).

All who are truly sanctified will have a similar experience. The clearer their views of the greatness, glory, and perfection of Christ, the more vividly will they see their own weakness and imperfection. They will have no disposition to claim a sinless character; that which has appeared right and comely in themselves will, in contrast with Christ's purity and glory, appear only as unworthy and corruptible. It is when men are separated from God, when they have very indistinct views of Christ, that they say, “I am sinless; I am sanctified”.

Gabriel now appeared to the prophet, and thus addressed him: “Oh Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright: for to you am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood trembling. Then said he to me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that you did set your heart to understand, and to chasten yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I am come for your words” (verses 11, 12).

Royal Honour to Daniel

What great honour is shown to Daniel by the Majesty of heaven! He comforts His trembling servant and assures him that his prayer has been heard in heaven. In answer to that fervent petition the angel Gabriel was sent to affect the heart of the Persian king. The monarch had resisted the impressions of the Spirit of God during the three weeks while Daniel was fasting and praying, but heaven's Prince, the Archangel, Michael, was sent to turn the heart of the stubborn king to take some decided action to answer the prayer of Daniel.

“And when he had spoken such words to me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb. And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips . . . And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be to you, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken to me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my LORD speak; for you have strengthened me” (verses 15-19). So great was the divine glory revealed to Daniel that he could not endure the sight. Then the messenger of heaven veiled the brightness of his presence and appeared to the prophet as “one like the similitude of the sons of men” (verse 16). By his divine

power he strengthened this man of integrity and of faith, to hear the message sent to him from God.

Daniel was a devoted servant of the Most High. His long life was filled up with noble deeds of service for his Master. His purity of character and unwavering fidelity are equaled only by his humility of heart and his contrition before God. We repeat, The life of Daniel is an inspired illustration of true sanctification.

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