

Daniel 06-02-12a

We continue now our worship on this 12th day of February 2006. We address ourselves as has been our pattern and our policy here on Sunday mornings to the book of Daniel, where we will pick up this morning in chapter 9. Let's take a moment as we approach the study of the word of God to clear our minds and prepare our hearts. Let's take the ministry of God's Holy Spirit.

Father, what a privilege it is to be securely numbered among your children, to be everlastingly saved and delivered out of darkness into light, to be a part of your plan specifically as the body and bride of Christ, a church-age believer with such wonderful assets, so many great and precious promises, the presence of your spirit, the power of your word, the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, the certain hope of his imminent return and our movement forward into the great things that await us in eternity future. We thank you for this time of challenge and trial. We thank you for our opportunity to learn and reinforce the attitudes and the positive acceptance and obedience of your word and your plan and purpose that we exercise in this life, pushing against the resistance of the world, the flesh and the devil.

We know that this is a part of our future security. It is a part of our preparation for service and for reflecting your glory. In that light, we are able to be thankful and to give thanks in all things, recognizing that the testing of our faith produces patience and that that patience will have its perfect work in us if we are those who are the called, if we are those who love you, if we have your words and keep them, if we follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank you for him. We thank you for his ministry of intercession at your right hand, his soon revealed glory and our uniting with him forevermore. We pray that our study this morning will contribute to our preparation, that we may indeed wrap ourselves with the righteousness that comes by faith.

We pray for those that have the rule over us in our nation. We pray for those that lead in government, especially those believers who are seeking to please you and honor you in the execution and fulfillment of their duties. We pray a special blessing on them, for all those who crave the spiritual food of your word and are unable to assemble because of their duties, whether military or governmental or civil or in law enforcement.

We know that there are many who secure our freedom, and we pray a special blessing on those believers who seek to glorify you in their lives. On all of those who have assembled this morning to worship around this nation and around the world, we pray that the church of Jesus Christ will, as the woman reflects the glory of the man, reflect his glory until he returns, coming to reveal his own glory and the fulfillment of your plan and purpose of human history. We ask these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. We are going to dive straight into Daniel chapter 9 this morning, using it as our scripture reading because we begin a new section, which is one of the most fascinating, one of the most

oft quoted, one of the most referenced when attempting to understand the unfolding of God's plan in human history, particularly from the dispensational point of view. You cannot figure out what God is doing in scripture with his people, Old Testament and New, if you do not understand dispensations.

All non-dispensational theology is erroneous. I say that categorically and without any embarrassment. If you do not understand the ages revealed in scripture, clearly marked out in scripture, great waving neon signs in scripture, marking out the change in God's policy, the change in God's provision, the change in God's purpose from age to age, beginning with Adam and Eve walking out of the garden, extending down through the days of Noah, the post-flood period, the post-Sinai period, and the post-cross period.

If you do not understand those divisions in the plan and purpose of God, you are hopelessly muddled in scripture. You will never figure out how to live, which scriptures apply, how the process of observation, interpretation, and application are to be implemented if you do not understand dispensations. Covenant theologians are in the dark, evermore, everlastingly in the dark.

Most Christians, even those who go to churches pastored by dispensationally sensitive pastors, are generally in the dark. As an example, and you know this well, think about all of the times that Jesus' teaching in the Gospels is quoted directly. I heard a pastor do it this morning, going to what Jesus said to his disciples and applying it directly to the church.

Now, is there observation, interpretation, and application of timeless principles? Of course. That's why we have the scriptures. But to say Jesus' words are a command to the church is specious.

It is erroneous. It is ignorant, as we say in Oklahoma. Ignorant only has two syllables in Oklahoma.

It is a manifestation of lack of understanding, lack of knowledge, and there is a very low limit of understanding that you will ever gain if you can't figure out who Jesus is talking to when he teaches, who the Old Testament prophets are talking to, who the law is talking to. You might as well join the Seventh-day Adventists, worship on Saturday, and not eat pork. Because you can't figure out the difference between scripture addressed to Israel and scripture addressed to the church.

Well, there is no more illuminating passage to keep us abreast of developments in the plan and unfolding purpose of God in history than Daniel chapter 9. This is seminal. It is archetypal. It is critical.

You can't have a Bible without Daniel chapter 9. I could say the same thing about every other chapter, but for our purposes this morning, this is the passage to note. We saw last time that Daniel is aware that a change is about to take place. Daniel discerns the times.

How does he do this? It told us in the beginning of the chapter, in the first year of the reign of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, understood, I Daniel, understood by the books the number of years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah that he would accomplish 70 years in the desolations of Jerusalem. Now, where is this found? How does Daniel know what Jeremiah has spoken? Jeremiah prophesied in the 40 years before the captivity in which Daniel was taken captive. And this is some 66 years after that 604, 605 BC taking of the first set of captives to Babylon.

We are now in approximately 539 BC. Daniel was taken captive 604-ish. 66 years later.

How does Daniel know what Jeremiah said? It's not like they've got VCRs and video tape. They don't have reel-to-reels. They don't have cassettes.

They don't have MP3 players. They don't have the internet. How does Daniel know what Jeremiah said? Daniel has taken pains to supply himself with a copy of the word of God.

How many households have Bibles in them? Millions. Millions upon uncounted millions of households have Bibles in them. How many people pull that Bible out on a day other than Sunday or possibly Wednesday and look at it? Well, the percentage drops.

This is like Gideon starting with his 10,000 men and getting whittled down to 300. Of the people who take their Bible out, and maybe they're on a five-year reading plan or through the Bible or they're on a thing. Maybe they do get it out and read a verse or two.

Of believers who pull out their Bible and actually look at it at times other than church, how many actually comprehend it and make sense of it and have a soul nourished and fed thereby instead of seeing the same old thing they've always seen, traditional church interpretations, oh yes, all of this judgment and darkness and bad news and embarrassment and shame. That's all the unbelievers. I am the happy golden recipient of all things promised to every great believer in the Scripture.

As goes John the Baptist and as goes Paul the Apostle, so goes me. We'll all be together walking the streets of gold, playing harps, etc. How many of us as believers understand and comprehend what God is saying? Have you ever known someone, have you ever seen someone who hears the same thing you heard, reads the same thing you read, and gets a completely different thing out of it? Someone looks at our president prosecuting the war in Iraq and sees a completely different worldview.

He's over there for oil. He's stupid. He's killing people for no reason.

He's the biggest terrorist of all, etc. Looking at the very same events, reading the very same news reports, possessed of the very same facts, completely different understanding. This happens in the spiritual realm.

This happens with the Word of God. You take a Calvinist and he'll go to Romans 9 and see

something totally different than what you and I see. You find a Seventh-day Adventist and he'll go to the Old Testament and see something totally different.

You find a Catholic reading the account of the virgin birth and he'll get something completely different than what we get. So, of course, the nagging question in the back of our mind ought to be, well, what makes you think you're right and everybody else is wrong? You know, this is a little troubling to say, well, I've told you this before, but it always amuses me to listen to some of the little humorous bits that they used to put in gospel concerts. And Hove Lister and the Statesmen had this song they sang about the fourth man, which is about Hananiah and Mishael and Azariah.

And there's a great old spiritual about the fourth man in the fire. And so Hove began and he said, this quartet, these four singers are going to sing this song and although it has a speaking part for the verse, they are so well practiced and so well rehearsed that it's going to sound like a single voice. And you'll swear that you're only hearing one man singing even though it's actually four because they are so dead on and so well rehearsed.

And so he starts playing the piano and they start singing. And it is amazing how close together they are. But then suddenly Cat Freeman, the high tenor, just wanders all over and starts saying something completely different.

And he stops at three or four times. And finally, Hove gets away from the piano. He goes over to Cat and he says, what's the matter with you? You're embarrassing me here.

I've told these people you're all going to speak as a single man and nobody will be able to tell that it's four voices. And you're just all over the map. And Hove responds with the idea that, well, they're all out of step but me, I don't know what's the matter with these three guys.

I've got it right and I don't know why they're off in the weeds. Well, we can sometimes ask ourselves the same question. We are such, our view is a minority view.

We seem to be treading a very narrow road where there's nobody on either side. So maybe we're just all messed up and we ought to throw in with the large denominations and the mega churches and the widespread understandings of the Word of God that have prevailed, not just in our culture and in our Christian world today, but have prevailed for centuries and are built on tradition, long-standing tradition, and old gray beards and gray heads that have written and spoken down through the ages. What makes us confident that we understand God's Word rightly and everybody else has got it mixed up, no matter how much unison you hear in their singing? And we are the lonely voice that is not hitting on that oft-copied piece of music.

Well, look at Daniel. Look at the pattern here at the beginning of chapter 9. I set my face toward the Lord God. This is the first thing Daniel does.

And if you want a set of steps, if you want to be right and not be wrong, if you want to be pleasing to God and not displeasing, if you want to be doctrinally correct, principally correct,

promise-wise correct, if you want to be rightly dividing the Word of Truth, we have to do what Daniel did. It is not natural for us to rightly divide the Word of Truth. It is natural for us to mess up the Word of Truth.

It is natural for us to distort it, to misunderstand it, to misapply it. That is our nature. That is what we will do if we are not careful.

If we do not exercise diligence, if we do not study to show ourselves approved unto God, we will fail to study and not be approved unto God. We will not be workmen that needeth not to be ashamed. We will be slackers who need to be ashamed.

We will be ne'er-do-wells and indigents, spiritual homeless cases. We will be ne'er-do-wells and indigents that need to be led by the nose because we have no ability of our own. Be diligent, study to show yourself approved unto God.

Daniel gives us a pattern here in chapter 9. Verse 3, step 1. Daniel says, I set my face toward the Lord God. Now, this is Daniel. This is Daniel of lion's den fame.

This is Daniel of dream interpretation fame. This is Daniel who has persevered even though he was taken captive, made a eunuch, pressured to conform. He has gone through a couple of government changes now.

And you would think, well, he's got such a track record. I mean, it's just going to be second nature for him. Daniel makes a conscious decision to set his face toward the Lord God.

We have to do the same thing. You can't just assume that it's going to happen. When you get in your car and you start it up and you go down the road.

We're just a mile and a half or so from the expressway over here. And a lot of times when we have to go somewhere, we get on the expressway. So I drive through the streets and I weave and get out there and finally get on the thing.

Now I'm on 75. I'm heading down Central Expressway. We don't just take our hands off the wheel and our foot off the gas and say, well, now that I'm on this big road, things will just take care of themselves.

Would that we could. Wouldn't it be great to program something into your car and then just sit back and nap? Five hour drive to Claremore. I'd love to be able to just say, car, go to Claremore and join my family in snoozing for most of the way up there.

I am the guy who has to keep a hold of the wheel and keep my foot on the gas or manage the cruise control. So I don't run over somebody who's going too slow. That doesn't happen in Texas.

But boy, it's amazing. As soon as you cross the Red River, people are doing 45 in a 70. This is the opposite problem.

If you try to do the limit in Texas, you'll be run over from behind. But boy, at the Red River, it's just like there's molasses on the road and everything slows down. Well, we have to keep control.

We have to steer. We have to be consciously aware of what we're doing in our spiritual life. That's what it means to set your face toward the Lord God.

This isn't passive. It's not automatic. It doesn't just sort of happen by itself.

You and I, day by day. Tomorrow is Monday. And tomorrow, if we want to please God, we will have to set our face toward the Lord.

Our face is not just going to kind of lay there facing the Lord. It's not just going to turn itself spontaneously to the Lord. Daniel says, I set my face toward the Lord God.

And he had a purpose. What is it? To make request. Why did the children of Israel lack in the wilderness when they left Egypt and crossed the Red Sea and were out there? Why did they lack? They took it for granted, didn't they? That God would just magically supply.

And they took him for granted. They took his provision for granted. They took their need for obedience and faith for granted.

They didn't set their face toward God. And so guess what? The water started drying up. Food started drying up.

And what did the people do? Did they say, oh, I see the problem. I've not been turning my face toward the Lord. I've not been living in faith.

What did they do? They grumbled and complained and they started looking for Moses to wail on him, scapegoat. They invented. But before God ever gave it to him on Sinai, the Israelites were making a scapegoat out of Moses.

It's your fault. You're the guy that convinced us to come out here so we could starve and die and our children could wail and complain. It's you.

You're the problem. We want to go back to Egypt and eat onions and leeks and garlicks. I prayed to the Lord.

I set my face to the Lord God to make request by prayer. Now, let me ask you something. Jeremiah said the captivity would last 70 years.

So, it's a fait accompli. God said 70 years. It's going to be 70 years.

All we've got to do is just mark the days off the calendar. Hang up the insurance company calendar on the wall. Get a big red marker.

Just mark the days off until 70 years have passed. So, what's Daniel all in a sweat about? He just

checked the sundial. Checked the Babylonians and the Babylonians.

He said, well, I guess I'll wind up. I won't be investing in any Babylonian property here because God's going to be taking us back to the land. Daniel sets his face.

He doesn't take it for granted that just because God has made a promise there's no expression of faith necessary. God has made the promise, yes. God's covenant promises are certain and will be fulfilled but it doesn't mean that we don't think about them and claim them by faith and look at them in advance.

Look ahead. Hope. We have a certain expectation that Jesus is coming back.

Well, are we just ignoring that or do we think about it and let it be a factor in our daily life? Let it motivate us and encourage us and give us endurance through the challenges that we face. Daniel set his face toward the Lord and he made request by prayer and supplication. He prays for God to fulfill the very promise that God has already made.

After 70 years, you'll come back. Daniel says, well, I'm going to bring that up to God. I'm going to pray with that in mind.

I'm going to claim what God has already said. This answers that age-old question and thinking Christians ask it of themselves from time to time. Why should I pray if God has already got everything figured out? What's the point? Well, Daniel understood that there was a point.

He had a certain knowledge of the divine table of God and yet years in advance, he starts praying that God will fulfill that promise and that he and the nation of Israel will meet the condition to receive the fulfillment of that promise, that they will live in the light of that promise because Daniel knows that the promises of God are conditional. Your awareness of this determines how your life turns out. Yes, there is a church.

Yes, there is a destiny for the church. But we as individuals, the extent to which we participate depends on our personal volition. So Daniel, having recognized this, having recognized and set his face toward God, is going to express his faith, is going to express his knowledge of the way God's plan works.

And how does he do it? He does it in prayer. He does it by making requests. In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

Thank God that he's made the promises. Have confidence that God will fulfill the promises. But we still pray.

We still make supplication because many times, just as God did with Israel in the wilderness, God is going to withhold what he has certainly promised until we ask, and this is a relationship that has two sides. And we are not passive. We are not deaf-mutes.

We are not just stretcher-born Christians. We participate. We acknowledge.

We interact. We learn and grow as God operates in our lives. I prayed, I made requests by prayer and supplications.

With fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. If you map this out, there are four things that Daniel does in the process of setting his face toward God. Prayer, supplication, fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

Now, what's the difference in prayer and supplication? Prayer is the more general term, isn't it? There's lots of different kinds of prayer. Supplication is a specific kind of prayer. It is a request for something you don't have.

How about the last two? Fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. Fasting is something you personally experience. Unless people are just looking through your windows, they're not going to know whether or not you ate your noon meal, right? In the ancient world, the idea of fasting, you skip a meal.

Why? A meal or meals. The idea is the time that you would have spent in preparation. Remember, meal preparation took a lot longer in the ancient world.

The assembling of it, the eating of it, the dispensing of it, the clearing of it took a lot longer because no modern conveniences. You want meat. Remember when God and the two angels came and visited Abraham by the tree in Genesis 17? Remember when they came? Abraham says, if you'll stay a while, I want to give you some food.

Then they had to go kill the animal. That's where you started back then. Let's slay the animal.

We've got to drain it. We've got to butcher it. We've got to get the meat.

We've got to cook it, etc. Bake all of the other stuff. How long does it take to bake something in a stone oven with a wood fire? This is a process involving hours.

To fast, to skip a meal, this is something you know about but you generally don't. How many of you know, outside of my family, whether or not I ate breakfast this morning? You don't know, and I don't know if you did or not. It's invisible.

That's a part of your private life. You know, and I don't. I know what I did, and you don't.

Well, that's personal. That's private. Fasting is sort of between the individual and God.

Now, sackcloth and ashes when I had some kind of special issue going on, absolutely. In fact, you would be quite startled, I think, if I had ashes smeared all over me and was standing here in rags, had my Volkswagen engine rebuilding clothes on, and was covered in soot. You'd say, good heavens, what happened? This is an outward sign.

This is a sticker on your forehead that says, problem. In the same way that there is a twofold expression toward God. There's prayer in general, which you look inside your soul, and you think about Thanksgiving.

You think about gratitude for God's blessings personally. You think about yourself, and you think about others. That's a general arena of prayer, and prayer largely does us good.

Prayer is for our benefit. that God already knows what we're gonna ask before we ask it. Many times He's answered before we ask.

Prayer isn't for God's benefit. We're not reminding Him of something. He's not saying, oh, you know, I'm so glad you mentioned that.

I mean, we do that with each other, but God's not up there saying, boy, I sure hope somebody prays and reminds me of stuff or it's not gonna get done. Prayer is entirely for our benefit. Entirely.

Doesn't do God a bit of good. It is all for us. It is the exercise of remembering what we know and expressing it in conversation to God.

Supplication is specifically what we lay before God in our prayer by way of request. We build our case. Lord, you are the Lord of mercy.

You are the Lord of grace. You are the Lord of righteousness. You are the Lord of justice.

I know that I am undeserving, but the Lord Jesus Christ is my righteousness. The Lord Jesus Christ has made me acceptable in your sight. You have given me the grace to be cleansed and to be qualified and to be privileged to come into your presence and to stand before you in righteousness and represent myself as a priest.

That's the work of Jesus Christ. And here I come and having claimed that grace and claimed that knowledge and understanding in my soul in prayer, I am now presenting you with a supplication. It is not by might.

It is not by power. It's not because we are living a good life that God should listen to our prayer. Why does God listen to our prayer? A lot of people are sort of bashful about praying.

I knew somebody one time who told me this. He said, well, you know, I've lived too bad of a life. I've made too many mistakes.

This person was like 23 years old. You know, I can't go to God because I've goofed up a lot of things. Already married and divorced.

Single parent. Got a child. Can't... it's too late for me.

I'm 23. My life is over in terms of any kind of spiritual potential. And I kept saying, look, do you not understand that it's not your qualification that gets you in to see God? It's not your righteousness.

It's not what a great job you've done or failed to do. It is all about Christ. That's the life of faith.

On Christ the solid rock I stand. All other ground is quicksand. I stand on the rock.

I represent myself before God. I have confidence because I am part and parcel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And He was made sin even though He didn't know sin so that I could be made the righteousness of God in Him.

That's the basis upon which we approach. And it is stupid. It is stupid beyond belief to not go to God and say, well, I'm not worthy.

I... He won't listen. It's too late. If you're breathing air, it's not too late.

And the fact that we are breathing air is God's way of telling us it's not too late. And we are to claim the righteousness of Christ and stand before God. We are commanded.

We have been commissioned as priests. What do you think would happen if the 19th course of priests is on duty and you're a member of the 19th course in the Levitical priesthood and it's your time to go stand by the brazen altar and you say, you know, I'm just not good enough to do that. How can I stand there and officiate over sacrifices when I'm just as bad as the people bringing the offerings? And I just can't.

I'm not going to go do that. What do you think would happen? Well, they'd grab you by the stack and swivel and give you whatever kind of drubbing that Levi's gave the ne'er-do-wells and layabouts that didn't do their job. They say, look, you've got the basin here, wash.

You've got your linen clothes, put them on. You've been sprinkled with the blood. You've been anointed with the oil.

You've had the earlobe and the thumb and the toe. What's the matter with you? God has cleansed you. Look at the rituals we put you through to qualify you as a priest.

Now get up there and start chopping meat. That's what you're supposed to do. Well, look, we are the same.

We are priests after the order of Melchizedek. We are to set our face toward the Lord God and represent ourselves before him. That's our job.

That's our calling. It is a command. And there's not a good reason in the world to not do it.

You can't think of a valid excuse. There's none. Is the work of Jesus Christ insufficient? You confess your sins, he's faithful and just, but he only forgave part of your sins and he cleansed you from most of your unrighteousness to the extent that the Lord Jesus Christ is great and perfect and his work is complete.

To that extent, we are qualified to represent ourselves before God. And so that's what we do. Set my face toward the Lord God to make requests by prayer.

This is marshalling everything I know that pertains. Thanksgiving, grace orientation. Look at the things that God has done.

Look at the character of God. Look at what a great God he is. Thank God that he's God and not some perverse fly wing puller up there just toying with us because he can.

Have you ever thought about the fact that because God is omnipotent, it's a darn good thing he's righteous? Is the verse Jeremiah 23, or Jeremiah, what is it? 17, 23 and 24. What's our memory verse that says, let not the mighty man, let not the rich man. I've forgotten the reference now.

What does it say? It says, let him that glories, it's 9, 23 and 24. Let him that glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me. God says, glory, if you want a glory in something, glory in your understanding of God.

Glory that you know God. Why? Look at the potential for prayer. If you understand and know God, then you know that you can go in there and you can essentially demand the fulfillment of his promises.

I mean, it sounds like a real cheeky thing, but that's what we are commanded to do. God says, look, I'm waiting for somebody to come in here and make their case. Remember what he did with Moses on the mountain? Stand aside Moses, I'm gonna destroy this people and I'll make a new nation out of you.

God had no intention of ever doing that. What was he doing? He was prodding Moses to produce a response and say, Lord, and this is what Moses does in his prayer and his conversation to God. You can't do that because of your character, because of your promises, because of what the nations are gonna see in the inconsistency of your statements about yourself and the inconsistency of your dealing with your people.

You can't do that. And that's exactly what God wanted Moses to do. God wanted Moses to stand up and claim doctrine, to stand up and claim the character of God.

And that's exactly what Moses does. What do you think God is doing in our lives? Sometimes we have really big issues. Sometimes we have really great prosperity.

What is God looking for? For people who will turn their face to him and come to him in prayer and marshal what we know about God and bring it to bear and make a case. God's saying, look, I am leaning forward, waiting to do all of these things for you, but I want you to think your way through the problem and make your case so that I can do it. What's the point in me just handing you this if you never figure it out? If you don't learn the lesson that this came into your life to teach.

I want you to show me that you've learned it. I want you to show me that you understand it. Speak to me, God says, claim the things that you've known.

Pray. This is what Daniel's doing. It's a foregone conclusion that the captivity is gonna be over in four more years.

Daniel knows that. He's the interpreter of dreams. He's the figure outer of problems.

He knows this. He's looked at Jeremiah, hey, four more years. All I gotta do is tidy up my real estate investments and start packing my bags.

And hey, if I'm still alive in my 90 something year, why I'll tootle on back to Israel. What does he do? Daniel understands God and knows that he has to come to God and make the case. Now, look at this prayer.

I prayed to the Lord, my God, and I made confession. And I said, oh Lord, great and awesome God. If you just do nothing more than go through Daniel's prayer and look at the things he says about God, you can see that he has marshaled all of his information, all of his knowledge, and he's put it into this prayer.

God is a great God. God is an awesome God. God is a God who keeps his covenant.

You know, this whole captivity thing seems like sort of a breach of the covenant. But he says, no, God keeps his covenant. It's we who have not kept our end.

God keeps his mercy with those who love him and with those who keep his commandments. How many times have we seen this in the word of God? Old Testament, New Testament. If you love me, you will keep my words.

The one who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is that loves me, Jesus says in John. Having them, having, you know, I've got probably two dozen Bibles, but they don't do me a lick of good if I don't open them. Read them and meditate on their content and think about what's inside.

It's not just having the words. It's not just hearing them and it's not all of our 50-odd memory verses. What do we do with them? Do we keep them? Keep here is just like tereo in Greek.

Same thing in Hebrew. It means to guard, to treasure, to treat as something to be held onto. Have my words and keep them.

Those who have the commandments of God and who keep them, who live by them, who are influenced by them, have to think about them for that to take place. We have sinned. We have committed iniquity.

This is corporate confession. Daniel was a lad. He wasn't responsible for the final generation that Jeremiah prophesied to and all their bad decisions, but he confesses their sins anyway.

He says, Lord, I know what you see when you look at our nation. I know what you see when you look at our history. I know what you see when you look at our present and past generation.

And we are sinful. But, we have not heeded your servants, the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and to all the people of the land. Distributed responsibility.

Can't blame it on the king. Can't blame it on the president. Can't blame it on the elder in the tribe or the chief of the clan or the head of the family.

We all heard this. The word of the prophets was distributed to all. Oh Lord, verse 7, righteousness belongs to you.

Let him that glories, glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, which exercise lovingkindness. That's the word you have up here. Covenant mercy.

That's lovingkindness. It's the very same word that you find in Jeremiah 9. Chesed. Lovingkindness, righteousness, and judgment.

Lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. That's what we glory in. Righteousness belongs to you.

To us belongs shame of face. Unto this day, to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, all Israel, those near and those far off, and all the countries to which you have driven them, why? Because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed. The lack of faith.

When we spend days getting things done for better or for worse successfully or failing, where is the faith? If we do things in unfaithfulness, we are going to be scattered. We are going to be judged. Oh, Lord, to us belongs shame of face.

To our kings, princes, fathers, because we have sinned. Lack of faith is one thing. Sin is another thing.

One leads inevitably to the other. To the Lord our God belong. Now you have back to the positive.

You'll notice that when Daniel is speaking here in many of the our God passages, he is sort of leveraging my God to our God. Daniel doesn't have near as much a problem with God as the rest of the nation does. But he says to the Lord, our God belong mercy and forgiveness.

And it's us corporately that needs mercy and forgiveness. I seriously doubt that there's any big problem in Daniel's spiritual life, but he claims it on behalf of the people, on behalf of believers. We have rebelled against him.

We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord, our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants, the prophets. Yes, all Israel has transgressed your law and has departed so as not to obey your voice. Therefore, the curse and the oath written in the law of Moses, the servant of God, has been poured out on us.

We saw this. It's in Leviticus. It's in Deuteronomy.

You have in Leviticus the five cycles of discipline. You have in Deuteronomy the passage we studied last time about all of these being put to flight. And one will put to flight a thousand.

But if you're disobedient, then a thousand of you will be put to flight by one of the enemy and so on. Sky of brass and the earth of bronze, all the rest of the horrible things that take place. He has confirmed his words.

He has poured out these judgments on us, which he spoke against us and against our judges who judged us by bringing upon us a great disaster. For under the whole heaven, such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem. As it is written in the law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us, yet we have not made our prayer before the Lord God.

We've studied this in Revelation. What's going to happen to the people with all the hailstones falling on them? No matter what God does, no matter how obvious it is, the Lord Jesus Christ, as we saw Friday night, is going to ride out of heaven on a white horse, accompanied by us, Lord willing, church-age overcomers on white horses, and the people on earth are still going to gather and fight against him. This is just nuts.

This is nuts. It's not a matter of, well, if God would just reveal himself, I would believe. This gives the lie to that whole atheistic argument.

The revelation is insufficient. Nonsense. Lucifer had more revelation than any creature that's ever lived, and he chose against God.

A third of the angels saw God on a quote-unquote daily basis, and they chose against God. Negative volition toward God is not based on a lack of revelation. It is based on a lack of acceptance.

It is a free choice. And that's going to become apparent. This disaster has come upon us, and yet we have not changed our minds, Daniel says.

God has revealed the truth of his covenant. He gave us the positive side and we luxuriated and got sloppy. And now here comes the negative side when we have become faithless and disobedient and we haven't woken up and recognized that we have an obligation.

We have a duty to set our face toward the Lord. Therefore, the Lord has kept this disaster in mind and brought it upon us. The Lord, our God, is righteous in all the works which he does, though we have not obeyed his voice.

Now, O Lord, our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and made yourself a reputation as it is this day, we have sinned. We have done wickedly. Well, that is the necessary step to recovery, to a return to the grace and the blessing and the abundance and the positive potential and the plan and purpose of God.

Daniel understands it. And that's what he reflects here in the first half of chapter nine. We're going to pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we're going to look at the positive side of his supplication beginning in verse 16.