

Daniel 9:1-19b

Daniel 9:17-19 Now therefore our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord's sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate. O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. O Lord hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.

We want to look at Daniel's prayer as an example of the practice of confession and repentance toward the experience of blessing. Daniel's frame of reference included the blessing and curse passages in Deuteronomy and the prayer of dedication that Solomon offered at the when he had completed the construction of the temple in Jerusalem. Jeremiah was clearly also on Daniel's reading list and his prophecies shared this dependence on the principles that Moses had set forth in Deuteronomy. Stated simply, obedience to God and to His commandments promised blessing but disobedience and a neglect of the

commandments would result in the removal of these blessings and a replacement of them with a curse. Israel's exile in Babylon spoke for itself. They were living under the curse. God had warned them of the exact consequences that they now experienced. Solomon had anticipated that just such a thing would happen to Israel and his prayer had been that when it does happen, God would hear the prayers of repentance and respond by forgiving His people and restoring them to their land.

Daniel's prayer took Israel's sin very seriously. In vv. 5,6 six different aspects of Israel's sin are set forth. Israel had "sinned" as in missing the mark, "done wrong" as in leaving the straight and narrow for the crooked and perverse, "been wicked" as in the committing of a crime against man or God, "rebelled" as in rejecting God, "Turned away" as in leaving God's word as if it belonged to the past but not the present, and "not listened" to the warnings and preaching of the prophets whom God had sent to call them back to Himself.

Daniel's prayer also reflected his personal experience of God through all the years of his ministry. There had been many times when Daniel had put God on the spot in times of trouble and God had always come

through for him. Daniel was old enough now to be able to put things in perspective and knew that he had not deserved the help that God had given, he had experienced God's mercy and forgiveness on a personal level. Daniel was then able to draw from those experiences of grace and to have confidence that God would also regard His people's repentance with mercy and forgiveness. Daniel perceived that it was God's intention to restore His people to the land and to rebuild the temple and the city of Jerusalem and so Daniel prayed with boldness that God do so now rather than later.

Some practical principles:

- 1) God still holds us accountable for our choices
- 2) Blessing is still generally associated with obedience to God and a curse to disobedience.
- 3) The New Testament call to sacrificial service and the promise of eternal reward has redefined the concept of blessing.
- 4) We should not expect to see a direct relationship between obedience and blessing but we should also not dismiss the possibility (negative or positive)
- 5) Repentance that takes our sin seriously is the way to begin a prayer for God's forgiveness and mercy.