

would “miserably destroy” (Mt. 21:41), as He said He would do to the wicked husbandmen of Christ’s day. This desire for the purpose of God to be fulfilled is also shown when Jeremiah uses the term “the hope of Israel”.

Prayer was also Jeremiah’s first stop whenever he needed help. It was always to his God that he turned. Certainly there was no one else to turn to most of the time, but his prayers show that he knew exactly where reliable, sure help was. It is true that many will turn to God when they are in perilous situations like the prophet, but for many it is the last resort, and a problem may not have become so vast, at least in mind, had prayer been turned to first. It is evident that Jeremiah found a peace of mind in speaking to God. “Unto Thee have I opened my cause”, he says (20:12). Many of us could back up the feeling of Jeremiah. The feeling of relief at emptying ourselves to God is immense, and for Jeremiah it was the only relief he had.

And not only does the prophet from Anathoth see God as a relief, his consistent use of phrases

such as ‘LORD of hosts’ also shows his belief in the power of God. Jeremiah 16:19 especially shows how he regarded his God, calling Him strength, fortress and refuge in the one sentence: “O LORD, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto Thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit”.

It is perhaps that sentence which sums up the prophet’s attitude to his God. Despite everything that was thrown at him, he believed sincerely in God and trusted in His deliverance. It is hard to disassociate Jeremiah from an image of dour doggedness, negativity and gloom. There are a few bright spots, but generally he appears to be just a stoic, trying to endure. But his thundering denunciations and the privations of his life overshadow Jeremiah’s deep understanding of his God. It is an understanding evident in his prayers, the prayers of a man with a real relationship with the One he regarded as “the hope of Israel”.

The prayers of Daniel

Geoff Cave

DANIEL, LIKE all men and women of faith, was a man who regularly prayed to his God; it was his habit: “Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, *as he did aforetime*” (Dan. 6:10).

A quick scan through the book of Daniel will reveal him praying on many different occasions, not only when his ‘back was against the wall’, but also to give thanks for blessings received: “Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven . . . I thank thee, and praise thee, O Thou God of my fathers, Who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of Thee: for Thou hast now made known unto us the king’s matter” (2:19,23). “The king’s matter” was a message from the God of Israel—Daniel’s God. This God was the very core and centre of Daniel’s life, and for this reason God used Daniel as a key player in His

purpose at this time. Thus it is not surprising to find Daniel referred to as “a man greatly beloved” (10:11). With such a closeness between Daniel and his God, prayer, along with the reading of God’s Word, must have been very prominent in his life.

The prayer of Daniel 9

The prayer of Daniel recorded in the most detail appears in chapter 9. Here Daniel is praying for the restoration of Jerusalem. The priorities in Daniel’s life are apparent: the righteousness of his God, the law of his God, the city of his God, the temple of his God, the holy Name of his God, the mercies of his God and the forgiveness of his God. Alongside all this, Daniel is painfully aware of the sin and rebellion of his nation, the deaf ears in his nation, the shame of his nation, the fact that his nation had caused the righteous Name of his God to be reproached by the nations around.

Daniel acknowledges the sharp contrast between the wayward nation and their righteous God: “O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto

Thee, but unto us confusion [or shame] of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither Thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against Thee" (v. 7).

Daniel acknowledges that Israel were comprehensively warned of the consequences of disobeying God, even from the beginning of the nation's history: "therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against Him" (v. 11). The prophet then acknowledges the faithfulness of God in performing that which He had promised: "And He hath confirmed His words, which He spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil" (v. 12). The prophet is seen here identifying himself with the sins of the nation; he might well have been justified in saying, "They have sinned". He is seen here as a type of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This prayer contains no request for Daniel himself; his desire is to see Jerusalem a praise in the earth and for Yahweh's righteous Name to be vindicated amongst the nations: "O my God, incline Thine ear, and hear; open Thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by Thy name: for we do not present our supplications before Thee for our righteousnesses, but for Thy great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer

not, for Thine own sake, O my God: for Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name" (vv. 18,19).

This prayer also reveals the prophet's intimate knowledge of the rest of the revealed Word, in addition to the writings of Moses and the prophets which he mentions. In particular, he is well aware of the prayer of Solomon recorded in 1 Kings 8. The [table](#) below shows some of the links between this passage and Daniel's prayer and mode of life.

The reason for Daniel's prayer is given in verse 2: "In the first year of his [Darius's] reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem". It is worth noting that the seventy-year period was not revealed to Daniel by vision or dream, for it had already been revealed to [Jeremiah](#); Daniel had to read and then understand what was written. It is also worth noting that Daniel was praying for that which was in accord with Divine revelation; the principle is seen in 1 John 5:14: "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us".

The answer to Daniel's prayer

The prayer was without doubt answered: "yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched

1 Kings 8	Daniel
... make supplication unto Thee in the land of them that carried them captives (v. 47)	And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications (9:3)
We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness (v. 47)	we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled (v. 5)
... and pray unto Thee toward their land, which Thou gavest unto their fathers (v. 48)	and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed (6:10)
then hear Thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven Thy dwelling place (v. 49)	Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of Thy servant, and his supplications (9:17)
and forgive Thy people that have sinned against Thee (v. 50)	O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do (v. 19)
That all the people of the earth may know that the LORD is God, and that there is none else (v. 60)	defer not, for Thine own sake, O my God: for Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name (v. 19)

Jeremiah's prophecy

"For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform My good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive" (Jer. 29:10-14).

me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision" (Dan. 9:21-23).

The answer to Daniel's prayer, and the understanding he received, were not what he was expecting. He was praying for the restoration of Jerusalem from Gentile domination, for his nation to return to their Saviour and God, and for His Name to be magnified amongst the nations. At this stage Daniel had no idea as to how long "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles" (Lk. 21:24); his limited knowledge was of a period of seventy years, as revealed by Jeremiah. He had yet to learn that another 490 years were "determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city"; he learned that at the end of this period it would be the work of Messiah the prince "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness" (Dan. 9:24).

This was not to be the end of the downtreading of Jerusalem; Daniel learned in his last vision of what was to befall his people in the latter days, and he learned that "the time appointed was long" (10:1) for the desolations of Jerusalem. On learning this Daniel records: "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, till three whole weeks were fulfilled" (vv. 2,3).

Lessons for today

Believers of all ages can learn much from Daniel and his prayers, both by following his example and by striving to understand what is revealed in the prophecies revealed to him to answer his prayers. The first lesson emerges by returning to a point made earlier in relation to his prayer in chapter 9. This prayer reveals a selfless man praying to his God for his nation; this is characteristic of most of his prayers.

He did make personal petitions, and asked others to do the same, for example in chapter 2: "Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon" (vv. 17,18). Here is another lesson; Daniel was praying according to the will of his God; there was work for Daniel to do in Babylon and later in the kingdom of Medo-Persia. He willingly witnessed for the God of Israel even though it meant foregoing the king's meat or even facing the lion's den.

Daniel was told at the end of his mortal life: "But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days" (12:13). This selfless man, who was beloved of the Lord, is given a personal assurance of future inheritance on the earth when his prayers will be answered in full. There is no prayer recorded where he asks specifically for his own salvation, yet he was given this personal assurance. He lived most of his life during the Babylonian captivity, but when he stands again upon the earth, not only will Babylon of old be no more, but the latter-day Babylon will also be destroyed by the Lord Jesus Christ. At that time Daniel's prayers will be fulfilled: "they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart" (Jer. 3:17).

If we follow the example of Daniel, we shall stand with him at the end of the days, when Jerusalem is a praise in the earth, when all men shall know the Lord, when peace shall flow like a river and when the meek shall inherit the earth.