

Praying for a Nation's Deliverance

Daniel 9.1-19

Introduction

During the first year of the Persian King Darius, (539 BC), Daniel perceives that the 70 years prophesied by Jeremiah for the appointed period of captivity are coming to an end and he prays fervently for God's merciful deliverance for his nation. In doing so, he provides a pattern for praying for a beleaguered nation that has fallen under God's righteous judgment for their persistent, grievous sins.

Observation

1. How did Daniel come to understand that Israel's period of captivity was coming to an end? (vv. 1-2) What does Daniel mean by the books?
2. How did Daniel respond to this understanding? What does the description of his response indicate about his attitude? (vv. 3-4)
3. How does Daniel address God? (v. 4)
4. To whom does God "keep covenant and mercy"? (v. 4)
5. Whose sin does Daniel confess? (v. 5). List the sins confessed (vv. 5-6, 9-11)
6. What reasons does Daniel give for God to answer his prayer? (vv. 17-19)

Interpretation

1. What lessons can we learn from Jeremiah's prophesy concerning the Babylonian captivity about how God handles a rebellious nation? (Jeremiah 29.4-10; 25.8-14).
2. Contrast Daniel's description of God with his description of Israel in verses 7-9. What is the basic cause of Israel's problem and how does this relate to the law of Moses referenced by Daniel in verse 12 (see Leviticus 26.14-45; Deuteronomy 11.26-29 and 28.15-68). Why is God "righteous" (verse 14) in bringing evil upon Israel?
3. How does God deal with Israel's sin compared to other nations? (Amos 1.3-2.8)

4. What are Daniel's specific requests in verses 16-19? How do his requests compare with the prayers of the Psalmist? (see Psalm 25.11; 44.13-16; 71.2; 79.9; 80.1-3). What grieves Daniel most? What does he most long to see as a result of his prayer?

Application

1. How do you as a Christian identify with Daniel as a follower of God in a godless culture?
2. What lessons can you learn from Daniel's regular, extended study of the Word?
3. What does Daniel's prayer reveal to us about our own relationship with God?
- 3., As you pray for our nation, do you see similar blessings and curses having been visited upon us?