

# Day Four

## When God reveals His plan

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### Today's reading: Daniel 9

**There are times when God's Word speaks to us in a special way. It happens at the right time, in the right place regarding a specific circumstance. I call these moments, times of revelation. These are the times when God's Word becomes alive in such a powerful way, you feel your soul being lifted and nourished with hope!**

We know Daniel as a mighty prophet and a man of faithfulness and integrity. We also remember Daniel for his prayer life (three times a day) and how God preserved him in the lion's den.

Daniel was, indeed, a man of prayer. He must have been taken into exile to Babylon as a young man. While in exile; away from his family, relatives and any spiritual influence; Daniel continued to maintain his relationship with God, in prayer. Because of his stand, God gave him great favour and position in Babylon.

The key to Daniel's blessing and favour from God is found in Daniel 1: 8 - *"But Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods."* When faced with the temptation to let go of his God, his values and his faith, Daniel decided in his heart that nothing in Babylon could match the joy of knowing God and being rightly related to Him. For Daniel, having God was the only way to be successful in a place like Babylon.

Warren Wiersbe, suggests 4 principles that form the foundation of Daniel's success. I would like to expand on that framework because they are part and parcel of what made Daniel a man of God.

**He believed in a sovereign God.** (Daniel 4: 25, 32; 5: 21)

Daniel's life spanned the life of 3 empires: from the Babylonian Empire under Nebuchadnezzar to the Mede Empire under Darius and the Persian Empire under the rule of Cyrus. Daniel was a high official in all three empires. God used him in a high position at a time when Israel was but a faded memory. God had disciplined His people for their disobedience and allowed king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to come and flatten Jerusalem and their most beloved Temple. Throughout his entire life, Daniel (who

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was most likely in his late 80s by the time of this prayer), had no doubts about the sovereignty of God.

### **He had a disciplined prayer life.**

Daniel must have developed this habit of praying three times a day, early in his life. In Daniel 2, king Nebuchadnezzar had a strange dream which he could not remember. The dream disturbed him so much he was willing to decapitate all the wise men of Babylon, unless the dream and its meaning were communicated to him.

When Daniel needed revelation, he prayed. After spending time in prayer, the Lord revealed to Daniel what the dream was and its meaning. *“Then Daniel went home and told his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah what had happened. He urged them to ask the God of heaven to show them his mercy by telling them the secret, so they would not be executed along with the other wise men of Babylon. That night the secret was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven.” - Daniel 2: 17 - 19*

When Daniel was threatened, he prayed. It was the time, under Darius the Mede, when all the other officials became jealous of Daniel and tried to catch him doing something unlawful. Daniel was a man of full integrity, so they could not find any faults. They tricked the king into passing a law where no one was allowed to pray except to the king himself. As Daniel's character was impeccable, they tried to use his prayer life to discredit him before the king.

*“Then the other administrators and high officers began searching for some fault in the way Daniel was handling government affairs, but they couldn't find anything to criticise or condemn. He was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy. So they concluded, “Our only chance of finding grounds for accusing Daniel will be in connection with the rules of his religion.” - Daniel 6: 4 - 5*

When Daniel heard of their plans, he went home and prayed to God, with his face towards Jerusalem, as if nothing had happened. In fact, when the officials came to arrest him at his house, they found him praying and asking God for help. God was about to answer his prayers. When Daniel was thrown into the den of lions, God kept their mouths shut. Daniel was spared while all the officials perished, along with their families.

### **He loved the Word of God and believed it.**

Daniel understood, from his reading of Jeremiah, that God would allow 70 years of exile followed by God's grace and mercy. God would bring His people back to Israel. Once Daniel understood that, he began praying for the fulfilment of God's promise in His Word. Daniel was not prepared to sit and wait. He understood the call to prayer and he obeyed immediately. Daniel was not satisfied with a passive attitude, he went into action. That action meant prayer. The more he prayed the more convinced he was that God would keep His promise.

**He had an understanding of spiritual warfare.**

In chapter 10 we find Daniel very aware to the reality of spiritual warfare. His prayer of intercession in chapter 9 is followed by powerful visions of events concerning the future. The context of these visions is spiritual warfare. His reaction, again, was to fast and pray.

*“When this vision came to me, I, Daniel, had been in mourning for three whole weeks. All that time I had eaten no rich food. No meat or wine crossed my lips, and I used no fragrant lotions until those three weeks had passed.” - Daniel 10: 2 - 3*

Daniel’s intercessory prayer, in chapter 9, follows God’s revelation of the amazing plan to redeem Israel and to bring them back from exile. Daniel began his prayer with confession and repentance. He confessed his own sins, but as well as the sins of the nation (Daniel 9: 20). He was broken over his own disobedience as well as the disobedience of the nation. He wept and he prayed.

**Chapter Summary**

Daniel’s prayer is full of passion and energy. It is a good model to follow, if we want to learn to intercede for the nation, ourselves. There is nothing wrong with showing emotion in our prayer life. Emotions are very much part of how God created us to communicate. Imagine trying to share your love for your spouse, but without showing any emotion. Your communication will surely fail to achieve its desired goal.

The mighty prophet of God had the healthy habit of reading God’s Word. In his reading, Daniel comes to understand that the 70 years of exile are about to come to an end. It must have been Daniel’s calculation and his unshakable faith in God, that motivated him to pray and fast, right away.

*“During the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, learned from reading the word of the Lord, as revealed to Jeremiah the prophet, that Jerusalem must lie desolate for seventy years. So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and fasting. I also wore rough burlap and sprinkled myself with ashes.” - Daniel 9: 2 - 3*

Daniel’s prayer is, what I refer to as, an “O Lord” prayer. His prayer reflected the brokenness of his spirit and the deep desire of his heart. The “O Lord” type of prayers are filled with faith and desperation. In his prayer Daniel focused on several things: the faithfulness of God, intercession for the nation and confession of sin (personal and national), identification with the historical sins of his fathers (the very sins that caused God to bring them into exile in Babylon), the righteousness and holiness of God. Daniel concluded his prayer with an emphatic declaration: *“O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, O Lord listen, O Lord act.”*

It is good to use this model of prayer to introduce intercession in the church prayer meetings. Intercessory prayer is not easy and seems to be different than any other prayer. But the truth is, we need intercessors today, more than ever!

