

Daniel 9 – Deep Sheet

Here we see that Daniel is someone who allows Scripture and God to be in the driver's seat of his prayer life. Daniel is reading from the book of Jeremiah, and through his reading he is enlightened to the fact that the time of exile is coming to a close. Once this realization takes place, he immediately turns to God and allows that truth to drive him into prayer for grace and mercy.

In the same way, we ought to allow the Word of God to be a primary starting point for prayer. When we see how God has ransomed us and will deliver us from the exile in which we currently live, it should cause us to reflect on our own sin. At the same time, it should remind us that God, in His grace, desires to deliver us despite our sin. This unconditional deliverance that he brings should only further drive us to repentance.

When we examine Daniel's prayer, we also see very clearly that God is the main character. Daniel continually and rightfully speaks to God as though he is the Alpha and the Omega, centering his prayer on who God is and on His glory. His prayer is reminiscent of Jonathan Edwards's statement: *"The only thing that I contribute to my salvation is the sin that made it necessary."* Our rightful positions as being side characters in the great story of God ransoming a world for himself ought to be freeing for us. This is because we don't have to save the world we just need to be there when the hero of the story does and to cheer him on.

From this, we are reminded of a crucial truth: God's work is dependent on His grace, not on our performance. When we look at the long list of sins Daniel confesses on behalf of the people, it is clear they failed to keep the commands of the Lord—yet God still showed up and accomplished a great work. Likewise, when we cry out to God, we should not fixate on ourselves to the point that we believe our sin disqualifies us from His work. Instead, we should confess our sins and seek forgiveness, knowing that His grace is greater than any sin we could commit. Therefore, we can go to God with confidence, trusting that He will continue to work in our lives—though perhaps differently—despite our past.