

## How Sin Is Made More Sinful

Daniel 9:1-19

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If we lie to one another, it is a sin; but if we lie under oath it is even more sinful. Why? Because we have sworn by oath to tell the truth (perjury).

If we practice sexual immorality before marriage, it is a sin; but if we practice sexual immorality after marriage, it is even more sinful. Why? Because we have sworn by oath to be faithful till death (perjury).

If a nation unjustly attacks another nation, it is a sin; but if a nation unjustly attacks another nation with whom a treaty of peace exists, it is even more sinful. Why? Because that nation has bound itself by a treaty (covenant) not to initiate an unjust war with that nation (perjury).

The Canaanite nations certainly sinned against God by way of their idolatry and wickedness (God cast them out of Canaan for their abominations), but Israel and Judah sinned even more sinfully against the Lord in serving other gods and in breaking His commandments because they sinned against the Lord THEIR God (their God by way of a matrimonial covenant of grace and love into which the Lord had brought them). Greater mercy from the Lord brings greater blessings and greater light unto Israel (and to us as a nation, church, families, and individuals). Greater blessings and greater light bring greater accountability (not less).

Daniel's prayer (in Daniel 9) must be understood against the backdrop of God's covenant mercy to Israel and Judah (to whom much is given, much is required). They were far more accountable to God for the blessedness of His covenant mercy and commandments than the heathen nations. God's covenant mercy should have led Israel/Judah to repentance (Romans 2:4). They abused God's mercy, and it led to their desolation.

Thus far, we have observed the following notable aspects in Daniel's prayer: (1) Daniel Exalted God; (2) Daniel Confessed Sin; (3) Daniel Was Ashamed of Sin; (4) Daniel Hoped in God's Mercy. This Lord's Day let us consider these last two distinctive parts of Daniel's prayer: (5) Daniel Did Not Justify Sin; (6) Daniel Pled with God.

### **V. Daniel Did Not Justify Sin (Daniel 9:10-15).**

A. Rather than justifying or minimizing the sin of God's people, Daniel justifies God and His righteous judgment that was brought upon Israel and Judah for having knowingly backslidden from the good and holy commandments of the Lord (given to Moses and preached by God's prophets, Daniel 9:10, 11, 14).

B. God's people did not sin ignorantly. They knowingly violated God's gracious matrimonial covenant made with them (Daniel 9:11 [Deuteronomy 28—blessings and curses by way of oath/covenant], 12 [greater mercy—greater judgment], 13, 15). They were God's people and Jehovah was their God by a covenant of grace. God sought them out to be His own. They did not seek Him out. He called them. They confirmed and engaged themselves to be His people.

1. They had God's gracious covenant, His holy commandments, the temple, the priesthood, the sacrifices and ordinances of the Lord, and God's prophets (Romans 9:4). They had God's gracious gospel promises in word and ceremony (Hebrews 4:2).

2. They had more light by way of God's loving and gracious revelation than any other nation in the world (who only had the light of nature and the law written on their hearts, Romans 2:15). And yet God's people turned against their Heavenly Husband who had delivered them out of Egyptian bondage and servitude to the nations in Canaan and had freely given them a land flowing with milk and honey as a gracious inheritance that they certainly did not earn or deserve.

3. Throughout their history, how did God's people respond to such goodness and mercy

from the Lord their God? They intermarried with the heathen nations around them and fell into the idolatry and wickedness of those nations. They committed spiritual adultery by going after the gods of the nations, thinking like them, training their children like them, and behaving like those in the culture all around them.

C. Daniel prays to the Lord their God that they deserved what Jehovah had brought upon them by way of the desolation of Jerusalem, Judah, the Temple, and their captivity. Daniel is careful to clear God and His holy name of any wrongdoing in the judgment that was brought upon Judah and Israel. God was not unfair, unreasonable, unloving, or lacking in mercy toward His people. No, He was righteous in what He had brought upon them for their willful rebellion against His love, mercy, goodness, holiness, and faithfulness to His covenant (Daniel 9:14; Psalm 145:17). What more could the Lord have done to show to Israel and Judah His love for them (Hosea and Gomer)?

D. Though Daniel had personally not backslidden from Jehovah into gross idolatry and wickedness, he identified himself with the nation of Judah that had done so. Why? Why would he accept any responsibility for what the backsliding nation had wickedly done (the emphasis is upon “all Israel” and plural personal pronouns are used, Daniel 9:10-11)?

1. Daniel certainly had personal sins for which to seek forgiveness (Romans 3:23), but he is here confessing national sins and praying for the national restoration of God’s people to their land, city, temple, and ordinances appointed by the Lord for worship.

2. This is a prayer for national repentance, national forgiveness, and national restoration (a nation is a moral person that is accountable to God for its idolatry and wickedness that it codifies into law).

3. God is King of nations (Jeremiah 10:7). The Father has given all nations to His anointed King, Jesus, over which to rule (Psalm 2). Jesus is King of kings (1 Timothy 6:15), and is the Prince of the kings of the earth (Revelation 1:5). The Lord judges nations throughout history (not just Israel, but heathen nations as well). He judges them for what? He judges them for heinous and repeated violations of His moral law that they wickedly approve and codify in constitutions and laws. All nations and rulers of nations have God’s moral law either written upon their heart or written in Scripture or both. Nations, families, churches, and individuals are all accountable to the King (to whom much is given, much is required).

4. Israel was given much by way of God’s written revelation, and much was required. Western Europe (especially the nations of the Reformation) were greatly blessed by King Jesus in setting them free from spiritual Babylonian captivity to which they had been subjected in papal Rome. Particularly the nations of Scotland and England and their posterity were bound by covenant to the Lord in the Solemn League and Covenant, 1643—they have been given much by way of Scriptural revelation, and much is required of them. The United States has been given much light throughout its history; as heirs of the Reformation and as the posterity of Great Britain we have been blessed with much light, therefore, much will be required (just as with Israel and Judah).

5. Just as Daniel prayed for national repentance, national forgiveness, and national restoration for the many violations of God’s law by Judah, so we must confess our national sins and pray for national repentance, national forgiveness, and national reformation. Gentile nations (not just Israel) are required to kiss the Son in their constitutions and laws, lest the Son bring His judgment upon that nation (Psalm 2).

6. Nations, churches, and families are not neutral or indifferent to Jesus as King. The Lord Jesus saves and brings families into His gracious covenant (Genesis 28:14). He also judges families that do not call upon His gracious and holy name for salvation (Jeremiah 10:25). If nations and families are not neutral or indifferent to Jesus as King, certainly any religious organization is not (First Commandment). The one true living God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) does not have a religious liberty exception in the First Commandment. The Bible does not teach religious liberty (where every person can practice whatever religion they choose to practice). That may be taught in the First Amendment, but that is not taught by God in the First Commandment. The Bible does not teach religious liberty; it teaches Christian liberty. We have a liberty from

God to walk in His gospel and in His commandments, not to walk in disobedience to His gospel and to His commandments.

## **VI. Daniel Pled with God (Daniel 9:16-19).**

A. Daniel's plea is for the Lord to turn away His just anger from His people (as families, as a church, and as a nation), to grant them repentance, forgiveness, and to restore His people to the holy land, to the holy city of Jerusalem, and to the holy ordinances within the holy temple. Note the following two observations in Daniel's plea.

1. Daniel appeals to God to grant his plea for the Lord's own name's sake, for His righteousness (in being faithful to His promise), and for His mercy (Daniel 9:16,18,19). Daniel's prayer is not based upon Israel's goodness, but rather upon God's goodness. Daniel pleads with the Lord on the basis of God's nature, attributes, character, and promise. This is how our petitions should likewise be framed. The focus should be upon God, not upon us. Any mention of Israel in these petitions is only a mention of Israel's need, dependency, and covenant relationship with the Lord. It is Jehovah that is exalted and magnified, not Judah.

2. Daniel's appeal to God is urgent—not casual, detached, or indifferent as if it were no big deal whether the Lord granted his plea (Daniel 9:19). We are not to demand God to do whatever we want Him to do as if He were our servant, but we are to cry out to Him expressing the urgency of our need (the Parable of the Friend who has unexpected guests show up at midnight, Luke 11). If our petitions are not pleading and crying out to the Lord, they must not be very serious or urgent. Daniel pleaded with the Lord in prayer—so should we (especially for repentance, forgiveness, and reformation).

### **B. Application**

1. Our country and the countries of this world are in a state of rebellion against King Jesus, against His commandments, against His religion, against the biological difference between male and female, against the lawful authority of parents over their children, against the sanctity of life, against the sacredness of marriage, etc. We must be careful as Christ's Church (or as families, or individuals) not to judge ourselves by the standards of the world. We may look better than the world (which is in a free-fall into corruption), but we must not justify our sins because we are not as bad as this or that. Daniel did not compare Israel's sin to the sin of Babylon or Persia, but rather according to God's Law (1 John 3:4—"sin is the transgression of the law").

2. It is God's law that shines its light upon our sin and that the Spirit of God uses to convict us of our sin, but it is God's mercy that breaks our heart over the sin that we have committed against our gracious and loving God and His covenant of love/mercy. It is not an either/or (God's law or God's mercy); it is a both/and (God's law and God's mercy). We need God's law to show us our sin; and we need God's mercy because we have broken God's law.

3. Even as we turn to our beloved Lord Jesus and behold His suffering on the cross, we see God's justice and mercy kiss. Only when I realize the eternal condemnation in hell that my sin deserves and do not justify it in the least will I be ready to receive the mercy and forgiveness of God in Christ Jesus. It is God's mercy that continues to break my heart before the Lord and to bring forth joy through His covenant of grace. Praise God for both His holy law and His bountiful mercy. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound (Romans 5:20). There is nothing more important in all of your life than fleeing to the mercy of God that is found only in Jesus Christ. Do not wait until it is too late. Do it now.

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