

## Prayer – Why Bother?

(September 20, 2021)

Back in 2015, I wrote a 19-part series on **Daniel 11**. The first set of articles are here: [Daniel parts 1-10](#) and the second set of articles are here: [Daniel 11-19](#).

**Daniel 11** is really a continuation of **Daniel 10** (which is a continuation of **Daniel 9**), where Daniel receives a message from an angelic being. The unnamed angel came to Daniel after he had been praying, fasting and mourning for 21 days (v 2). The messenger tells Daniel that his prayers had been heard and a response was dispatched to him immediately, but for the prince of Persia who kept the angel from arriving to Daniel immediately (vv 12-13). This insight helps us better understand Paul's assertion in **Ephesians 6:12**, that we "...do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." Paul is talking about the activity and beings in the spiritual realm, noting that our real problem lies not in a fight against other human beings, but against those powerful beings who exist in the heavenly realm, whose goal it is to thwart God's purposes. While it may appear to us at times that human beings are *the* problem for us, in truth, people are simply being motivated by unseen spiritual forces, much the way God is able to motivate Gog to do something that Gog actually thinks is his own idea (**Ezekiel 38:10-11**).

As I was reading **Daniel 10-12** this morning, I was again struck with a number of questions. First, while I understand that prayer, on its most rudimentary level is *talking with God*, it is actually far more than that. In this instance, Daniel had been praying and fasting and mourning and did so for twenty-one days (three full weeks). Why? We can assume it was because of Daniel's concern for his own people, Israel. It may well have been God who prompted Daniel to pray in such a way. The fact that the prince of Persia harassed the angelic messenger, keeping him from getting the answer to Daniel immediately (which was *not* the case in **Daniel 9**), seems to indicate that. Of course, it may also have been that God wanted Daniel to develop another layer of patience.

What follows in **Daniel 11** is the *detail* of future prophecy related to Israel from Daniel's POV. There is tremendous minute detail shared with Daniel and all of it *before* it happens. Of course, it is this same level of detail that prompts liberal theologians to deny that *the* Daniel actually wrote this book before things happened, but that it was actually some second century person who simply took the name Daniel, and looked backward to record then history. These type of theologians seem unable appreciate the fact that God is God and therefore omniscient, omnipotent and everything else that aligns with His eternal character.

God exists outside of our time, but certainly can come into it whenever He wants without corrupting His own character. Since He normally resides outside of our time, everything that occurs *within* time is seen by Him as always in the eternal *present*. How hard then would it be for God to move people or design things so that humanity still maintains their "free will," yet God still gets things done His way? It wouldn't be difficult at all. Satan, at best, can only watch and try to learn, but in the end, he is seriously hampered solely because of a lack of omniscience.

So the messenger tells Daniel what is to occur and even though no names are mentioned in the text, it has been relatively easy for historians and Bible experts to ascertain who these individuals were in history. The end of **Daniel 11** is believed to provide details of the rise and fall of the future final global ruler, Antichrist after highlighting the failures of Antiochus Epiphanes IV, a *type* of Antichrist. Even if you disagree that this last section of **Daniel 11** foretells of the Antichrist, surely you stand in awe of the accurate information contained in **Daniel 11**.

*But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.*

The above verse (**Daniel 12:4**, emphasis added), indicates that all the information shared with Daniel was not *for* Daniel because everything revealed to him was for a *near* future (relatively speaking) and a *far* future ("*until the time of the end*"). All that was revealed to Daniel points to God *appearing* to let things play out *without* being directly involved, but at the same time, He certainly could've been involved.

In **Daniel 11** we see a true *game of thrones* with plenty of intrigue, deception, double crossing and massacres of innocent people because of the warmongering minds of a few rulers. In spite of all this, God seems to have done *nothing* overt to direct or change these events, but He *could* have without it being stated or implied in the text.

There are so many facts here; the individual rulers of the "north" and "south" kingdoms (relative to Israel), the specificities of rulers including the first three Antiochus rulers to Antiochus Epiphanes IV, Berenice, Laodice, Cleopatra, etc., etc., etc.! Much of **Daniel 11** is an amazing future history from Daniel's perspective and a fulfilled past history from ours! Yet, God could've done exactly what He does with Gog in **Ezekiel 38-39** without telling us.

But all of this brings me to the subject of *prayer*. Daniel was a man of prayer. He spent much time communing with God. What is notable is that many of the things revealed to him did not necessarily affect him directly, but would affect the people of Israel in years to come. Yet, God chose to enlighten Daniel and in turn, God has enlightened us.

So where does prayer come in? Honestly, it is not an easy thing for me to answer for *myself*. Yesterday, I took a 7-mile hike with my dog in a local state park. It was enjoyable and got me out of the office and out of the house. While on the trail, I talked to God. I considered that *IF* the coming Tribulation is around the corner, there is nothing that will change that. The path has been decided. I can pray asking God to grant the world a reprieve, but He is under no obligation to grant that request. In that case, I can pray that if it is *not* His will to rebuke globalists, that He will grant instead ability for me and all Christians the ability to bear up under it with the strength to continue to serve Him.

Most are aware that Biden, Pelosi, Fauci and others originally stated that mandating the vaccine for everyone is **not** something the federal government can do (they are on record in videos as stating that). Yet, all of a sudden, mandating vaccines for 80 million people **is** something the federal government can do. A vaccine mandate is now on the table, forcing businesses to comply

with the federal government or face thousands of dollars in fines. In reality, the federal government does *not* have the type of power they are attempting to wield and individual states are starting to push back. There is something unprecedented about this.

So I prayed. I prayed that my wife's place of employment will not force employees who essentially work out of their homes and never go to work-related conferences or offices, to be exempted from such a mandate. I *could* pray that God will cause that illegal mandate to come to nothing, but honestly, I'm not sure that God would answer that in the affirmative. He *can* however, protect my wife though He May choose to allow her work to force vaccines. I'm not in danger because I'm retired, although if Biden's mandate goes into effect without any push-back, what is to stop him from mandating that retirement monies and social security payments be halted until the receiver is vaxxed? That also could be illegal, but would that stop Biden?

I prayed that in spite of what appears to be coming our way with greater fascism and loss of freedoms that God would give me the ability to handle it as though coming from Him. As I've repeatedly stated, we really do not know how bad things will get prior to the Rapture and the actual start of the coming Tribulation, do we? Even if you do not see either of these events in Scripture you must admit that things are progressively worsening.

Logic dictates that things *will* incrementally worsen in evil, ugliness and greater fascism. This does *not* mean God has no grip on things. It simply means that He allows things to play out on the human scene because He intimately knows everything that *will* occur from all possible angles, yet is able to still allow those things to occur and also bring the perfection of His will to pass. It's a bit mind boggling to consider.

Daniel committed himself to pray in the opening verses of **Daniel 10** and we know why; because of what we know in **Daniel 9**. That chapter begins with Daniel's earnest prayer because of what he had read in the scroll of **Jeremiah** dealing with the 70 years of captivity (which Daniel was experiencing), and realized that those 70 years were almost over. So Daniel prays. Gabriel comes to provide him with much needed information that was at best, an indirect response to much of Daniel's prayer. What Daniel prayed for did *not* occur in Daniel's time. It happened to an extent much later and some of it still remains to occur from our POV until the end.

God answered Daniel's prayer not for Daniel but for us, those living at the end of this age. What I learned about prayer in Daniel is that we must always be careful to pray the same way Jesus prayed: "*...not my will, but thine be done...*" (**Luke 22:42**). We pray really to *learn* and *embrace* God's will. It is not to see God as a Celestial Genie in the sky, Someone who waits expectantly for us to ask Him for anything and if only we have the needed faith, He'll do it! So, the reasoning goes, if we do not get answers to our prayers in the positive, it's because we lack the faith to "make it happen."

This is not what the Bible in its entirety teaches. Daniel prayed for forgiveness for Israel. He asked the Lord to be merciful, reminding God of His great mercy. He was praying that God's anger would turn away and allow Israel to gain freedom where once again, they could worship God in Jerusalem without being under the thumb of another nation/empire.

Gabriel comes to Daniel with a bit of a play on words, telling him that it isn't 70 years, but 70 *times* seven years (or 70 *weeks* of years, totaling 490 years). Imagine how disappointing that must've been to Daniel. God essentially said, "*I've heard your prayer and what you're asking will not happen soon.*" The captivity of Israel would remain even beyond Jeremiah's 70 years of captivity prophecy to the tune of 490 years total though Jews would be allowed to return to their Land. Most conservative commentators believe we are [between the 69th and 70th "week."](#) So it is interesting that while God took the time to respond to Daniel via angelic messenger, it was not what Daniel really wanted to hear, was it?

The many examples throughout the Bible indicate that we must persevere in prayer until we can *emotionally* come to a point of releasing our desires, exchanging them for God's, just like Jesus did in the Garden of Gethsemane ([Luke 22:39-46](#)). But this is not an easy thing to do is it? It may take some time for us requiring repeated going back to Him. Giving up our wants and desires in prayer, exchanging them for what we believe may be God's will is very hard because it involves submitting our will for His. It took Jesus three times in the Garden of Gethsemane. There was no sin in that or failure on His part. He eventually found the victory over His emotions and desires bringing them both in line with the Father's will.

I do not know an easy way to do this, but that is what makes up the struggle we often enter into through prayer.

When my sister was on her death bed in a coma, you can bet I prayed daily that God would heal her. Her eventual death had nothing to do with our faith or lack of it and everything to do with the fact that it was her time to leave this earth in death for the next life. Nothing would change that. No amount of praying would change God's mind. I eventually had to come to a point of accepting what appeared to be His will in the matter, "*Okay Lord, if it is her time to go to be with you, then your will be done.*" It was very painful for me because my sister and I were very close. Yet, she is so much better off now as she is with the Lord and I will see her one day. When I was finally able to release things emotionally and embrace His will, I had peace.

Ultimately, until I learn differently, prayer is what the Christian enters into in order to ultimately come to terms with and accept God's will. We eventually learn to pray for *His will* to happen. "*Not my will, but thine be done,*" should become the attitude of every Christian as we approach our Lord in prayer for all things. There's nothing wrong with asking God for specific things we would like to see occur. However, we should always be willing to set them aside if God chooses another course of action. We are His *servants*. He is the *Master*. We do not dictate to Him. What servant tells the Master what to do? Asking is one thing. Insisting is something else. Submitting and embracing the Master's will is our portion or should be.

I'm dealing with several things that I'm having a difficult time leaving with Him, so I persevere trusting that hopefully soon, I'll successfully leave them at His feet accepting His outcome for these situations.

I don't know if this has been helpful or not for readers. I hope it has been and certainly, it's not the final word on prayer. The Bible is the final word.

May we approach Him with the aim of letting go of the things we cling to and committing ourselves to asking ultimately and only that in all things, His will and purposes will be accomplished in and through us.