



DEVOTIONAL TIME

05-11-2015 @ 0900

“Are You Praying for God’s People?”

Daniel 9:1-4

Surely the Presence

Surely the Presence of the Lord is in this place;
I can feel His mighty Power and His Grace!
I can hear the brush of angels’ wings, I see glory on each face;
Surely the Presence of the Lord is in this place!

Daniel 9:1-4

“Darius the Mede, who was the son of Xerxes, ruled over the kingdom of Babylonia. In the first year of his reign, I was studying the sacred books, and thinking about the seventy years that Jerusalem would be in ruins, according to what the Lord had told the prophet Jeremiah. And I prayed earnestly to the Lord God, pleading with Him, fasting, wearing sackcloth, and sitting in ashes. I prayed to the Lord, my God, and confessed the sins of my people.”

QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Have you ever experienced a time you were in dire need of prayer, received great blessing, and had someone you didn’t even know come to you, saying, “I’ve been praying for you”?
- Did you ever awaken in the middle of the night with someone’s name on your mind, and later wonder, “Should I should have prayed for them”?
- How often does your prayer contain elements of repentance and reparation for sin, whether those of your own, or the failings of others?

Prayer is life; the rest is “details”. “Spiritual life” demands constant contact with Divinity, rejoicing in praise and thanks, interceding often on behalf of others, or it becomes a “hollow shell” of devotional pretense. Such false devotion primarily involves incessant “give me”; “I gotta have”; “touch me”; “Heal me”; “Supply me”; “I need help”; me, me, me, I, I, I, and very little (if any) time spent truly praying for the benefit of anybody else. Now Daniel portrays another aspect of the character of God that has developed within him. This “character” needs to develop within each of us. John writes that God is love, and one of love’s main aspects lies in its unselfish generosity. Love thinks of the “other” first, and cares for the “other” lavishly. See how Daniel reaches out to God on behalf of all of God’s other children. As we look around societies in this world today, and even some that call themselves “churches”, “temples”, or other “worship centers”, what sorts of “needs” do we see them address? Are needs mainly “within their own walls”, or do they routinely concern themselves with more global events and universal issues? As they present us with these “challenges to care”, are we likely to grumble, “What? Another campaign?” Will we complain, (“They must think I’m made of money!”), or do these needs drive us to our knees in prayer for guidance and fortitude? (“How would You have me assist, Lord?” “What resources of time and effort would You ask me to sacrifice here?” “In what ways can I address genuine need most effectively?”) How shall we lift our brothers/sisters/pastors in prayer, (rather than “have them for lunch on Sunday afternoon”...in a figurative sense, of course!)? See how Daniel willingly admits Israel’s sins, and confesses to the Lord they have messed up badly. Here is true love at work, interceding without complaint. This is genuine devotion, unselfishly pleading on behalf of those who cannot, or will not, ask forgiveness for themselves. God, grant us the Grace of Selfless Concern. Enable us to take on a burden for needy brothers and sisters. May our prayer rise like Daniel’s, accompanied by fasting and penitence. As he did, make us willing to completely humble ourselves in the Your Presence, O God, to plead for Strength and Wisdom to meet the needs of others. Heal us of selfish tendencies, and give us hearts of love, minds of mercy, hands of hope.



DEVOTIONAL TIME

05-12-2015 @ 0900

"Your Prayers Have Been Answered!"

Daniel 9:20-23

Surely the Presence

Surely the Presence of the Lord is in this place;
I can feel His mighty Power and His Grace!
I can hear the brush of angels' wings, I see glory on each face;
Surely the Presence of the Lord is in this place!

Daniel 9:20-23

"I went on praying, confessing my sins, and the sins of my people, Israel, and pleading with the Lord, my God, to restore His holy Temple. While I was praying, Gabriel, whom I had seen in the earlier vision, came flying down to where I was. It was the time for the evening sacrifice to be offered. He explained, 'Daniel, I have come here to help you understand the prophecy. When you began to plead with God, He answered you. He loves you, and so I have come to tell you the answer. Now pay attention while I explain the vision.'"

QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Have you ever prayed and prayed over a particular situation or need, but seeing no "result", or feeling no "action", became certain "God wasn't listening", since "nothing changed"?
- Did you finally recognize an "answer"? (Maybe one that had been there all along? How many such "answers" have you recognized by hindsight?)
- Who are the "angels of understanding" in your life? Are there people who "show up" at exactly the crucial time of deepest need, bringing a listening ear, encouraging word, or helping hand?

When frustration and pain are pounding on our doors, holding defeat and doom constantly before our eyes, it can be very difficult to maintain an effective level of faith. In fact, it can appear to us that God has not even *heard* us, let alone answered us. We live now in a world hooked on instant gratification. Not only do we "want what we want", we want it when we want it, "now", (if not "yesterday"), and if we are made to wait, we often act as if our world is coming to an end. (Just stand around and watch the people at any fast food restaurant, and you can see that for many it isn't coming fast enough. When we bring this attitude into our prayer life, it can form a "speed bump" on the "highway of faith". We need to see clearly what God promises in this passage: "When you *began* to plead with God, He answered you." The answer from God was given the very minute Daniel turned to God in prayer. Daniel couldn't see it, or even feel it, but nevertheless, it was done. Our problem is we often want it the way we want and we want to feel it the way we want to feel it. When it doesn't happen this way we start to "assume" God hasn't answered. This is where Daniel was...until the angel arrived to put his assumptions to rest. We have a loving Heavenly Father, who is ever listening for us, waiting for us to call upon Him. When we do so with real faith, He doesn't just listen, he answers...always! Why? Because He loves us as only a good father can. We need to "grasp this aspect" of our Heavenly Father, and start "living in hope" as those who are "treasured royalty"! God, grant us the Grace of Royal Recognition! Remind us that we are "the children of the King of Kings", and therefore, a unique royalty in the Love and Life we share with You! Restore us as Your "Holy Temple", a living Edifice of Praise and Thanks, ever rejoicing in Your Presence. The "royal line" You've established will endure eternally, for You are ever on the Throne of Mercy, ever listening, always answering every prayer.



DEVOTIONAL TIME

05-13-2015 @ 0900

**"In the Midst of Your Fears, Remember...
God Loves You!"**
Daniel 10:7-11

Surely the Presence

Surely the Presence of the Lord is in this place;
I can feel His mighty Power and His Grace!
I can hear the brush of angels' wings, I see glory on each face;
Surely the Presence of the Lord is in this place!

Daniel 10:7-11

"Those who were with me did not see anything, but they were terrified, and ran and hid. I was left there alone, watching this amazing vision. I had no strength left, and my face was so changed that no one could have recognized me. When I heard his voice, I fell to the ground unconscious, and lay there face downward. Then a hand took hold of me and raised me to my hands and knees; I was still trembling. The angel said to me, "Daniel, **God loves you**. Stand up, and listen carefully to what I am going to say. I have been sent to you." When he had said this, I stood up, still trembling."

QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Have you ever faced an awesome "manifestation of power" that left you feeling terrified and completely insignificant? Did your terror spur you to "run and hide", or "scare you stiff"?
- Would you really want to "meet God" in all His Holiness, Majesty, and Glory? (In ancient times, there was common belief that such an encounter with the "All-Holy" would mean death!)
- Do you think your terror would give way to "absolute devotion" if you sensed the depth of the Divine Love beneath all that Majesty, a Love delighting in "standing you straight" in freedom?

"See God, and die!" That was the conviction of many ancient faiths. Face-to-face encounters with Divinity did not tend to work out well for "mere mortals" in most myths and legends. Even those who did walk away from such encounters were left "reeling in shock", ready to "bolt in terror to the nearest refuge, however flimsy", and yet utterly petrified at the same time! This is Daniel's condition in our passage for today. He has been granted insight into the Divine Design. With but a few bits of "holy info"; his vision has completely "rocked his world", and totally rearranged his world view. Abandoned by humans, he is now left to bear the full brunt of visions of God's Power, and the fate that awaits the puny foes who reject and mock the Lord. When all the worldly powers fall before One who is the "living Face of Heaven's Grace", even one as faithful and just as Daniel is gripped with fear so frantic "his own mother wouldn't know him"! Facing fear that sears the soul is tough enough when there are friends who will stand by you, but addressing "overwhelming terror" all alone is horror unspeakable! There is only "one way out" of this nightmarish confrontation, and Daniel receives it...when the Angel of the Lord assures him, "God loves you!" No matter how the earth "rocks", and the oceans "roll", we can trust God's Love for us. Secure in Divine Devotion, we are never alone. God knows no "hopeless situation", and we are never beyond HIS reach, or out of His sight. God, grant us the Grace of Inner Vision! When the social situations are chaotic, and global issues threaten to overwhelm us, remind us that You are still our Wisdom and Strength. When we are most in need, You deliver us, either by direct intervention or angelic ministry. In You, and You alone, Your Faithful Ones know victory. Only in You do we find the courage to "STAND" and "LIVE" as "overcomers"!



DEVOTIONAL TIME

05-14-2015 @ 0900

“Be Faithful to the End!”

Daniel 12:4, 5, &13

Surely the Presence

Surely the Presence of the Lord is in this place;
I can feel His mighty Power and His Grace!
I can hear the brush of angels' wings, I see glory on each face;
Surely the Presence of the Lord is in this place!

Daniel 12:4, 5, & 13

“He said to me, ‘And now, Daniel, close the book and put a seal on it until the end of the world. Meanwhile, many people will waste their efforts trying to understand what is happening.’ Then I saw two men standing by a river, one on each bank. One of them asked the angel who was standing further upstream, ‘How long will it be until these amazing events come to an end?’ ...And you, Daniel, be faithful to the end. Then you will die, but you will rise to receive your reward at the End of Time!”

QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Have you ever been a part of a project/mission/operation that seemed to be going “haywire” in a hurry? As things went from bad to worse, did you simply want to “reboot”, or just quit?
- In those “horrific times”, did you receive “words of encouragement” that restored your sense of purpose? Were you given “insight” that was not meant for “general distribution”?
- How were things “working out” between you and the Lord in these moments of mayhem and mystery? Did His Word promise you prevailing Providence and eventual eternal Reward?

Life is “mystery”, a constant manifestation of the “unexpected” and “inexplicable”! We often find ourselves remarking, “I never saw *that* coming!” When “the next big thing” hits the market, it’s so common to hear, “I just don’t get it!” “This makes no sense!” or “How does that work?” Isn’t it amazing how life appears in those moments to be “unworkable”, even *hostile*? At this point, we have a crucial choice to make: Do we “give up”, or “go on”? The “fear-full” give up; the “faith-full” go on! The fear-full believe all of life is conspiring against them, while the faith-full believe there is One to whom they can turn for understanding and strength. The fear-full find themselves out of options, resources, and patience, and usually “throw in the towel”. The faith-full look to the One who opens all options, controls all resources, and empowers the patience born of Love Divine! As Daniel considers all the visions he has received, with the horrifying terrors that await “the Lord’s Own”, he wonders just how long it will all go on, and when it will finally end. This is where the Lord’s Angel brings a Holy “Word of Courage” to enlighten and empower him to “stand fast” and remain “faith-full”. This is a Message many of us need to receive. In the depths of our need, we may just want all the horror to end, and the terror to leave us alone, as faith brings us light, and hope lifts us in peace. The Lord’s Word to us is: “... be faithful to the end!” God, grant us the Grace of Enduring Faith! Send us holy messengers who proclaim You haven’t forgotten us, or turned Your back on us. Help us sense You are right here...right now... in the midst of all we must endure ‘til You manifest the fullness of Divine Love as You reveal the Eternal Kingdom You planned from all eternity. Hold us in a Spirit of True Faithfulness to the Task we must complete to the Glory of Your Name and the sanctification of our selves and our world. Bring us to trust in You fully, standing strong and faithful all the way to the end. Will we ever see the end of all the troubles? Maybe not in this life, but You will see us to the End!



DEVOTIONAL TIME

05-15-2015 @ 0900

"Don't Worry...God's Got It!"

Daniel 12:4, 5, &13

Surely the Presence

Surely the Presence of the Lord is in this place;
I can feel His mighty Power and His Grace!
I can hear the brush of angels' wings, I see glory on each face;
Surely the Presence of the Lord is in this place!

Daniel 12:4, 5, & 13

"He said to me, 'And now, Daniel, close the book and put a seal on it until the end of the world. Meanwhile, many people will waste their efforts trying to understand what is happening.' Then I saw two men standing by a river, one on each bank. One of them asked the angel who was standing further upstream, 'How long will it be until these amazing events come to an end?' ...And you, Daniel, be faithful to the end. Then you will die, but you will rise to receive your reward at the End of Time!"

QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Have you ever found yourself worried about this "issue", and that "situation", and that other "crisis"...until you were sure your life was in total disarray, completely out of control?
- Do you sometimes fret about "what tomorrow may hold", not just for yourself, but even more for your children and grandchildren? Do you fear what you think they may have to face?
- Where is God in your "vision of the future"? Can you envision any "place" for God there at all? If so, what level of "control", (or even "influence",) does the Lord command? If not, why not?

"Don't worry about the world ending tomorrow; it's already 'tomorrow' in Australia!" "I know not what my future holds, but I know Who holds my future!" "The future holds no fear for me, for God is already there!" While these statements, or affirmations like them, are sometimes voiced from a variety of venues, others present much gloomier prospects. For them, the "future" is a dark, and nearly hopeless, wasteland. Civilizations vanish. Humanity faces extinction. Colossal forces arise to crush us and all for which we stand. Sometimes, heroes step up to save the day. Other times, "ordinary" folk band together in unlikely alliances to achieve a new lease on life. It's not much, but it's a start. Believers can build on that, but it's important to build on the correct "Foundation". Too many modern "disciples" spend far too much time and effort trying to discern the "Day of Deliverance", and locate the "Hour of Redemption". Always on the watch for the next book, tape, or disc on Daniel, Ezekiel, or Revelation, they want to know the latest predictions, interpretations, and formulas of calculation to indicate the "End Time" with precision. In contrast, Daniel is told to "close the book, and put a seal on it until the end of the world." God wants Daniel, (and us,) to stay calm and "live ready", undisturbed that these events will occur God's way, on God's time, under God's control. If we truly trust God with everything, that would include every aspect of life, today, tomorrow, into the lives of our children and grandchildren. God, grant us the Grace of Timeless Trust! Engage in us a complete conviction that You are fully sovereign in all the events of our world, even the ones that baffle us the most. When our fears spark doubt, remind us of the Love with which You sent Your Son to redeem us. Give us an ongoing confidence in a future of delight in a Kingdom in which Love banishes all fear, and Truth overcomes all error. When "crisis moments" appear, remind us, "I've got this, because I love you, and I will always bring you through the trials I reveal. Trust Me, and march on!"