

## Prayer that Reaches Heaven (1)

November 25th, 2014, Kichijouji Bible Study  
Gotthold Beck

天に届く祈り 1

2014年11月25日、吉祥寺学び会  
ゴットホルド・ベック

### Daniel

9:1 "In the first year of the reign of Darius son of Ahasuerus, a descendant of the Medes, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans,—  
9:2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, noted in the Scripture the total years that were assigned by the message from the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem: 70 years.

9:3 "So I turned my attention to the Lord God, seeking him in prayer and supplication, accompanied with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

9:4 I prayed to the Lord my God, confessing and saying: 'Lord! Great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant and gracious love for those who love him and obey his commandments,  
9:5 we've sinned, we've practiced evil, we've acted wickedly, and we've rebelled, turning away from your commands and from your regulations.

9:6 Furthermore, we haven't listened to your servants, the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, to our officials, to our ancestors, and to all of the people of the land.

9:7 'To you, Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us, open humiliation—even to this day, to the men of Judah, the residents of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, both those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the lands to which you drove them because of their unfaithful acts that they committed against you.

9:8 'Open humiliation belongs to us, Lord, to our kings, our officials, and our ancestors, because we've sinned against you.

9:9 But to the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we've rebelled against him

9:20 "While I was still speaking in prayer, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and placing my request in the presence of the Lord my God on behalf of the holy mountain of God—  
9:21 while I was still speaking, Gabriel the man of God whom I had seen in the previous vision, appeared to me about the time of the evening offering.

9:22 He gave instructions, and this is what he spoke to me: 'Daniel, I've now come to give you insight and understanding.

9:23 Because you're highly regarded, the answer was issued when you began your prayer, and I've come to tell you. Pay attention to my message and you'll understand the vision.

Today, I would like to discuss with you the ultimate mission given to believers; in other words, the possibility and greatness of working with the Lord.

It is an unimaginable privilege to work with the Lord and it is nothing but the compassion of the Lord that allows us to work for him. This phrase appears a number of times in the Book of Daniel, "A man highly regarded by God." Daniel was told in 9:23, "You're highly regarded." It can be seen again in 10:11;

### Daniel

10:11 He told me, 'Daniel, man highly regarded.' When he spoke this statement to me, I stood there trembling.

10:19 and said, 'Don't be afraid, man highly regarded. Be at peace, and be strong.' "As soon as he spoke to me, I gained strength and replied, 'Sir, please speak, now that you've strengthened me.'

All those who were blessed by the Lord and served him had the same wishes and prayed the same prayers, which were, "Lord, please talk to me. Please teach me. Please protect me and please bless me." The Lord will never fail to hear prayers like these. The words in the verses cited above came out of the mouth of the Lord and were truly filled with amazing grace.

The true God would never ever lie. He does not have to exaggerate and show trivial matters to be very critical to our lives. When the Lord speaks, he speaks nothing but the truth and that comes out of his heart. When the Lord called Daniel a "man highly regarded," he must have had a reason. There must have been some specific reason for the Lord Almighty to use such words.

"You are highly regarded." This was the judgment of the Lord himself toward Daniel. What a blessing if we are ever called this way! Of course, it is not only Daniel who is highly regarded by the Lord, but the Bible helps us to believe and be convinced that each one of us is also highly regarded.

I trust you all know this famous verse in the Bible by heart, which is John 3:16;

### John

3:16 For this is how God loved the world, he gave his unique Son so that everyone who believes in him might not be lost but have eternal life.

Actually, you can exchange the word 'the world' in here with your name. What the entire Bible tells us is perfectly summarized in this single verse.

Paul also explained this fact in his letter to the brothers and sisters in Rome;

### Romans

5:8 But God demonstrates his love for us by the fact that the Messiah died for us while we were still sinners.

The Lord Jesus who sacrificed himself on the cross for us miserable sinners is our proof of being highly regarded. John was one of the disciples of Jesus. Other disciples were all slaughtered and died the death of martyrs. Only John was protected. Why was that? I guess that he was left for the purpose of writing the Revelations. He was deported to a small remote island called Patmos, where he was given plenty of time. He came to have ears to hear. He begged, "Lord, please speak," and the Book of Revelation was the consequence. John also wrote;

### 1 John

4:9 This is how God's love was revealed among us: God sent his unique Son into the world so that we might live through him.

4:10 This is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Why did the Lord call Daniel, "the man highly regarded?" It was because he was the one who worked with the Lord, especially on his prayers. He prayed a prayer that reached heaven. Thus, what kind of prayer is a prayer that reaches heaven?

Firstly, it is a prayer that is based on the words of the Lord. Secondly, it is a prayer of those whose lives are themselves living testimonies.

### Daniel

9:2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, noted in the Scripture the total years that were assigned by the message from the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem: 70 years.

We can see from this verse that Daniel read the Bible on a day-to-day basis. The Bible, the words of the Lord, occupied much of Daniel's mind. When Daniel read the words of the Lord with prayers, he kept his own thoughts away from his mind. He learned the Bible earnestly not just to build knowledge on the Scripture, but in order to understand the true intention of the Lord and put it into practice. When Daniel prayed, his prayer always reached heaven.

It was because Daniel understood the Lord's will precisely. In the era of the New Testament, Paul traveled all over the world to spread the gospel, tried to get to the believers at every corner of the world and served all the people he met. However, the Lord sent Paul away to the wilderness all of a sudden. Why was that?

I believe that the Lord gave Paul time to contemplate in order for him to understand what the Lord wanted from the people of those days. If we look closely at the Epistles Paul wrote from prison to Ephesians, Colossians and Philippians, we will see how the eternal principle of the Lord was revealed through Paul in these letters. That is to say, believers are members of Christ's body; they are heavenly people who have Jesus as their head. After all, many people sadly do not understand that the flock of believers is all heavenly, spiritual and universal. Paul wrote in his epistle to Ephesians, 6:18;

### Ephesians

6:18 Pray in the Spirit at all times with every kind of prayer and request. Likewise, be alert with your most diligent efforts and pray for all the saints.

We are commanded to continue to pray, to pray in the Spirit at all times and pray for all the saints. As I just mentioned, prayer that reaches heaven is a prayer based on the Bible, and secondly, it is prayed by someone whose life itself is a living testimony. Daniel's prayer was heard.

Why was it? Daniel kept all things away that were against the Lord's will in all aspects of his life. Daniel did not want to please himself. He actually stayed far away from everything that pleased him.

If we pray only for what we wish and do not care about the purpose of the Lord, our prayers will never reach heaven. Purposes of our own simply constitute an obstacle to true prayers. Daniel threw away all things that may have possibly pleased him. His desperate wish was for the Lord to stay at the center. "Lord, please speak. Your servant is listening."

Paul wrote to the believers in Philippi.

### Philippians

2:21 For all the others look after their own interests, not after those of Jesus the Messiah.

This exactly was the pain Paul faced. He wrote in his epistle to Philippians;

### Philippians

1:21 For to me, to go on living is the Messiah, and to die is gain.

Daniel was thoroughly separated from the worldly way of living. He refused to compromise with gentiles because their purpose and practice totally conflicted with the Lord. How about the believers living today? Many of them conform to this world, don't they? Let us look at some verses from the Book of Daniel. This is a wonderful testimony.

### Daniel

3:16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego

answered King Nebuchadnezzar, "It's not necessary for us to respond in this matter.  
 3:17 Your majesty, if it be his will, our God whom we serve can deliver us from the blazing fire furnace, and he will deliver us from you.  
 3:18 But if not, rest assured, your majesty, that we won't serve your gods, and we won't worship the golden statue that you have set up."

Many believers pursue the respect of people and want worldly praise instead of seeking the prize from above that will never wither away. This is nothing but a tragedy. Let us look at what Daniel did. He never feared men. He was not even afraid of the King, who had absolute authority in those days.

#### Daniel

1:8 Daniel determined within himself not to become defiled by the king's menu of rich foods or by the king's wine, so he requested permission from the chief officer not to defile himself.

Although the King's menu of rich foods must have looked so fascinating, Daniel refused it. He must have thought that he would rather starve.

#### Daniel

6:10 When Daniel learned that the written document had been signed, he went to an upstairs room in his house that had windows opened facing Jerusalem. Three times a day he would kneel down, pray, and give thanks to his God, just as he had previously done.

6:11 The conspirators then went as a group and found Daniel praying and seeking help before his God.

6:16 At this point, the king ordered Daniel brought in and thrown into the lions' pit. The king spoke to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve constantly, will deliver you himself."

6:23 The king was ecstatic, so he gave orders for Daniel to be released from the pit. Daniel was taken up from the pit, and no injury was found to have been inflicted on him, because he had believed in his God.

If we fear and obey men, we would never be able to have the power of Daniel. We would never be able to pray a strong prayer like Daniel did.

Furthermore, Daniel was not affected by any human relationship in this world. Daniel and his friends refused to become involved in any worldly affairs. It was such a courageous decision for them. Because of this refusal, Daniel was thrown into the lions' den and his friends were thrown into the blazing fire furnace. Before it happened, there were two different ways before them.

One was a way to compromise with this world and choose to live comfortably. And the other was the way that led them to the lions and the blazing fire furnace. They chose the way of the Lord. They refused to compromise; instead they devoted themselves to the Lord and did not care about their own lives. The Lord heard their prayers and revealed his glory. When Daniel stayed away from all things that were against the Lord, his mind was set to one clear goal;

#### Daniel

10:12 'Don't be afraid, Daniel,' he told me, 'because from the first day that you committed yourself to understand and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard. I've come in answer to your prayers.'

Daniel was very sincere and his mind was totally focused on the accomplishment of the Lord's purpose. Are our hearts blessed for the assembly, which is the pure virgin engaged to Jesus? Is the joy of our hearts expressed in our prayers? Paul understood the Lord's will and prayed;

#### 2 Corinthians

11:2 I am jealous of you with God's own jealousy, because I promised you in marriage to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to the Messiah.

The Lord blesses, not a mind floating around purposelessly, but the mind that is set to do his will. This was exactly what Daniel experienced. When each one of us believers gathers with clear conscious awareness that this is the church of the living God headed by Jesus and we become single-minded in our prayers, the window of heaven will open and our prayers will be heard abundantly. The feeling of Paul is expressed well in these verses from the First Epistle to the Corinthians;

#### 1 Corinthians

9:24 You know that in a race all the runners run but only one wins the prize, don't you? You must run in such a way that you may be victorious.  
 9:25 Everyone who enters an athletic contest practices self-control in everything. They do it to win a wreath that withers away, but we run to win a prize that never fades.

#### Philippians

3:14 I keep pursuing the goal to win the prize of God's heavenly call in the Messiah Jesus.

#### Hebrews

12:1 Therefore, having so vast a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, and throwing off everything that hinders us and especially the sin that so easily entangles us, let us keep running with endurance the race set before us.

Daniel was a great servant of the Lord. Why was that? As I just mentioned, first of all, it was because he determinedly rejected all things that were against the Lord. Secondly, his mind was totally focused on the pursuit of one clear purpose. Furthermore, it was because he had patience.

Daniel

10:12 “Don’t be afraid, Daniel,’ he told me, ‘because from the first day that you committed yourself to understand and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard. I’ve come in answer to your prayers.

10:13 However, the prince of the kingdom of Persia opposed me for 21 days.

Daniel continued praying sincerely before the Lord for 21 days. Praying for 21 days is not something just anyone can do. What about us? Have we ever offered a prayer as sincere as this?

We often come to the Lord with some specific problem in mind and pray about it for a moment, then just move on. Such prayers would never be answered. Daniel stayed in front of the Lord patiently and continued to pray for one purpose. It takes such patient prayer to have an amazing experience like Daniel had.

Let us look at what the Bible says about Abraham, who was called the father of faith.

Genesis

18:22 Abraham remained standing in the presence of the Lord.

He did not want to move away from the Lord. “Lord, please speak. Your servant is listening.” This was his desperate desire.

Genesis

19:29 And so it was that, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered Abraham and brought Lot out from the midst of the destruction when he overthrew the cities where Lot had lived.

Another reason that Daniel was chosen as a servant was because of his self-control. According to the Book of Daniel, 10:12, Daniel committed himself to be humble before his God. What is described in this verse is the battle in which Daniel has overcome his own self. Daniel refused to give in to his own thoughts, his own intentions and his own emotions but instead conquered them.

We can also see from the Book of Daniel, chapter 10, verse 13, how Daniel suppressed himself. He did not care about his own benefit at all and instead devoted everything to the Lord. We will be truly blessed when the Holy Spirit dominates us and gives us one desire, a passionate sense of mission to accomplish the

purpose of the Lord.

Paul wrote to the brothers and sisters in Corinth.

1 Corinthians

9:25 Everyone who enters an athletic contest practices self-control in everything. They do it to win a wreath that withers away, but we run to win a prize that never fades.

There was yet another reason that Daniel was chosen to serve the Lord. It was the conviction he had. This expression is used in 10:12 of the Book of Daniel, “because your words were heard.” Daniel was convinced that his words were already heard. Not only did Daniel know the intention of the Lord, but he believed and anticipated that the Lord would help him achieve what he prayed for.

For our prayers to be heard by the Lord, it is necessary that we understand his will as Daniel did, anticipate the acceptance of the prayers and be convinced that they will be heard. If we do not understand the Lord's will, we won't know what and how to pray at all. If we listen to the words of the Lord and understand his will, it will absolutely be our strength.

Our most important mission is to work with the Lord. Have we understood what the Lord intends to accomplish just like Daniel knew it? When we do, we will come to sense the power of evil spirits attempting to attack us from nearby. This was what happened to Daniel. Those who know the Lord's will are certain to be exposed to the attack of the devil.

Paul experienced the same thing, that is to say, the devil concentrated his attack on Paul.

Colossians

4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer. Be alert and thankful when you pray.

4:3 At the same time also pray for us—that God would open before us a door for the word so that we may tell the secret about the Messiah, for which I have been imprisoned.

1 Thessalonians

2:18 That is why we wanted to come to you.

Certainly I, Paul, wanted to come time and again, but Satan blocked our way.

If the Lord opens the eyes of our hearts and gives us the sincere desire to sacrifice everything in order to work with him, as he did to Daniel and Paul, it will be a wonderful blessing for us. We will be truly grateful if, one day, we are called by the Lord, “the man highly regarded.”

End