

Dear Heavenly Father,

### *Praise*

Daniel said, “O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments...To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness...To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness” (Dan 9:4, 7, 9). I say Amen! How wonderful it is to serve a God who is faithful to his covenant and has mercy on his people! Hallelujah!

### *Today in Your Word*

Today you told me about the return of the exiles to Jerusalem under the leadership of Sheshbazzar, Zerubbabel, and Jeshua. In the first year of Darius (aka Cyrus the Great), Daniel realized that the seventy-year exile in Babylon was drawing to a close (Jer 25:11–12; 29:10). This prompted him to turn to you in prayer. He clothed himself with sackcloth, put ashes in his hair and observed a fast. He humbled himself and offered a confession of Israel’s sin, asking you for mercy, forgiveness and restoration. This passage teaches me several lessons. First, Daniel was thoroughly versed in the Scriptures. He was reading the prophecies of Jeremiah, and he was familiar with Solomon’s dedicatory prayer for the temple (1 Kgs 8:47) and the curses against Israel in the law (Deut 29:18–29). Daniel knew your Word, and I should as well. Second, rather than rejoicing at the thought of Judah’s restoration, Daniel humbled himself in mourning for Judah’s sin. He recognized that the exile was the result of rebellion against you, and that Judah’s return would be robbed of its spiritual significance if the people didn’t reflect on and mourn for the wickedness which had destroyed Jerusalem in the first place. This teaches me to never forget the sin for which you have forgiven me, for that memory will keep me from pride and future disobedience. Third, Daniel did not “name and claim” your promise to restore Jerusalem, nor did he presume to “hold you to your word.” Instead, he humbly asked you to hear and forgive and act, not for Israel’s sake, but for the sake of your great name (Dan 9:19). This teaches me to bring my requests before you in a spirit of humility and with an attitude that values your name and reputation above my own wants and desires.

### *Reflection*

Cyrus encouraged those who remained behind to support those who returned to Jerusalem (Ezra 1:4). Am I supporting your Kingdom by giving to those who are actively working in the harvest fields?

### *Request*

Father, give me the spirit of Daniel. Help me to be more concerned about your Kingdom and your will than my ministry and my will. For your sake, let your face shine on my life! (Dan 9:17).

### *Thanksgiving*

Thank you for all your righteous acts. Even when you discipline me for sin, you are righteous, and your perfect work is always drawing me to Christ and exalting your glorious name (Dan 9:16).

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

*Suggested Hymn: “[Great King of Nations, Hear Our Prayer](#)” – John Hampden Gurney.  
Meditation Verse: Daniel 9:18.*