

Daniel 9:7-11

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/dan/dan-9/daniel-97-11/>

While praying to God, Daniel emphasizes the righteousness of the Lord contrasted with the sinfulness of His people. Daniel, an exile, admits that God's punishment is just.

Daniel is praying. He is in the midst of confessing sin and asking God if the punishment toward Judah will end soon. Jeremiah the prophet prophesied that the land of Judah would be empty for seventy years and its people would live in exile (Jeremiah 25:11). Daniel is one of these exiles, and after reading Jeremiah's prophecy, he prays to God in hopes that the time of exile will end soon.

He compares God to His people. Righteousness belongs to the *Lord*, Daniel confesses. But *open shame* belongs to the Jewish people, because of their rebellion (v. 5). Daniel includes all of the *inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel* in this guilt; even the Jews who are *far away in all the countries to which God has driven them*. Daniel belongs to this category; he has lived most of his life as a captive in Babylon, but has never abandoned his faith or his Jewish identity. This open shame is due to the *unfaithful deeds* that have been *committed against God*. Daniel repeats that *Open shame* belongs to the Jewish people, regardless of their status in the world. The *kings* of Israel and Judah, the *princes*, the *fathers*—all share in open shame *because we have sinned against You*. Daniel includes himself in this shame. Both kingdoms of God's chosen people, Israel and Judah, share this collective guilt.

God is the only one who is able to give *compassion and forgiveness*, because His people *have rebelled against Him*. All sin and disobedience is rebellion against God. All of humankind is in a fallen state of rebellion. Only God can distribute forgiveness and compassion on people, because people have no way of earning favor or making up for their disobedience. The specific sin in this context was disobedience to the *law*.

Daniel's confession is repetitive and thorough. He goes over his and his country's sins again: *we have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, we failed to walk in God's teachings which He set before us through his servants the prophets*. Again, Daniel puts all the blame on himself and the rest of the people. He presents God as fair and clear. All of God's commands and teachings were taught to His people through the prophets. There was no miscommunication or unspoken expectation. The people of Israel and Judah simply disobeyed.

Daniel reiterates that *all Israel has transgressed God's law and turned aside, not obeying God's voice*. They sinned, they violated God's commands, and went another way. The fair consequence to this disobedience was that God's *curse* was *poured out on* the people. Daniel is referencing the *oath which is written in the law of Moses*, where God promises that, "it shall come about, if you do not obey the Lord your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you (Deuteronomy 28:15).

After leaving Egypt, both generations with Israel made an agreement with God. The first generation, which would fail to enter the Promised Land, told God they would obey His commands (Exodus 19:8, Exodus 24:7). The second generation, who did enter the Promised Land, made the same promise (Deuteronomy 26:16-19). God, as the superior or suzerain made a covenant with His vassal, Israel. The clear “deal” was that there would be rewards for obedience and curses for disobedience. Daniel understands this. All of Israel had agreed to the “deal”, Daniel acknowledges that the curses were part of the deal, that God had simply carried out the covenant Israel agreed to.

Within the list of curses, God tells the people of Israel that He will “bring a nation against” them (Deuteronomy 28:49) and that they will “serve [their] enemies whom the Lord will send against” them. This perfectly describes the state of the people of Israel, including Daniel. They are captives serving a foreign nation whom God sent as a punishment for their disobedience.

Biblical Text

7 “Righteousness belongs to You, O Lord, but to us open shame, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of their unfaithful deeds which they have committed against You. 8 Open shame belongs to us, O Lord, to our kings, our princes and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. 9 To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him; 10 nor have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His teachings which He set before us through His servants the prophets. 11 Indeed all Israel has transgressed Your law and turned aside, not obeying Your voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him.