



MCG
Study Guide
Daniel 9
April 18th – 24th



Prayer Requests:

Wednesday April 18th – Fasting (By NBBC’s Veronika Bankuti)

Reading Daniel 9:1 - 3

“So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.”

Ever alert for the hippest new trend, New York Times recently reported that fasting has become fashionable. Eating in chic restaurants is out, not eating is in. According to the Times, people are paying over \$3,000 a week to check into health spas where they go without food. All the A-listers from fashion designers to mortgage brokers have joined the fasting trend.

Fasters claim that a four to thirty-day regimen not only helps them lose weight but has spiritual benefits as well. “It used to be that people who came in were talking about weight loss” said Stephanie Paradise, owner of the New Age Health Spa in Neversink, NY. Now, she says it’s about detoxing the mind, body and spirit”. Natalie Rose, a nutritional consultant takes the tried and true route: she appeals to her client’s vanity. She organizes 4-day fasting weeks for women that include “motivational trips” to a fashionable department store “to remind them what it’s all for”¹.

¹ Peter Larson “Fashionable Fasting” the PRISM E-pistle.

Daniel was fasting for a vastly different reason. “So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.”

Sackcloth is a coarse, black cloth made from goat’s hair that was worn together with the burnt ashes of wood as a sign of mourning for personal and national disaster, as a sign of repentance and at times of prayer for deliverance.

Daniel was hurting to the core of his being. Hurting, because he realized that all the disasters and curses that came upon Israel have been promised by God if the nation turns from their God and aligns itself with their pagan neighbours. The fact that his nation could be unfaithful to God, even after He proved to them time and time again that they were the “apple of his eye”, was almost unbearable. To express his pain, mourning over the multiplied sins and repenting from the heart on behalf of this wayward nation, he gave himself fully to intense confession in earnest prayer.

Have you ever been in this situation? Have you ever thought about your own personal sins and got to the point when you fully realized their gravity? If so, you understand Daniel’s intense pain.

We have each been given an invitation by our Father:

“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land”²

Now may be a very good time to decide to do just that!

Meditation/Application

In Psalm 35:13 the Psalmist says, “I... humbled myself with fasting.” Why not plan a fast to humble yourself before God? Fasting can take different forms. Ask God if you should consider a fast for a period of time.

² 2 Chronicles 7:14

Reflecting on the reading:

What does this passage tell you about Daniel's attitude towards Scripture?

Prayer Points:

As you pray for your church family, community, MCG and yourself, please remember these prayer requests:

- KIDS CLUB talent show is next Wednesday evening. Pray for the parents, leaders and children as they conclude the season.
- How might you pray or fast today? Start. Try. Taste & See
- Room below to be creative (draw or create while

Thursday April 19th – Confession

Reading Daniel 9:4 - 11

“I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed.”

Confession of sin sets us free and now there is a study that supports this.

A new study has found that the average person is holding on to 13 secrets, five of which they've never told a living soul. It's not the secret itself that will haunt you - it's all the mental energy you spend thinking about it. New research shows that some people actually feel physically heavier when they're burdened with a secret, and that extra "weight" can skew how you navigate your surroundings.

When participants were asked to judge the slope of a hill or the length of a distance, those who were preoccupied with keeping secrets judged the hills as steeper and the distances longer than they really were. Michael Slepian, a professor at the Columbia Business School told The Atlantic, "We found that when people were thinking about their secrets, they actually acted as if they were burdened by physical weight."

Slepian and his team examined 13,000 real life secrets, to figure out what people are keeping secrets about, what it's like to have a secret, and why secret-keeping has overwhelmingly been viewed as a negative human experience. These secrets involved things like telling a lie, harming someone, drug use, theft, violating someone's trust, sexual infidelity, or a secret hobby.

They who are conscious of their own sins have no eyes for the sins of their neighbours.
Abbot Moses
(10th century)

The team then asked the participants how often their minds wandered to think about those secrets in the past month, and how often they found themselves in situations that forced them to actively conceal

these secrets. Secrets were far more likely to come to the fore when people were alone with their thoughts than in social situations. In other words, we spend way more mental energy mulling over our secrets on our own time than actively trying to conceal them.³

When we confess our sins, even if it is only to God, when we whisper out loud what we have been trying to hide or deny, we begin to shed light in the darkness. When we call out what in essence we've been protecting, and name it for what it is - sin - only then do we begin the process of being set free from the burden that carrying it and hiding it has had upon us.

Meditation/Application

Take time to confess your sins. Ask like the psalmist:

“Search me, God, and know my heart;
 test me and know my anxious thoughts.
 See if there is any offensive way in me,
 and lead me in the way everlasting.

Reflecting on the reading:

Note all the sins that Daniel lists:

Prayer Points:

As you pray for your church family, community, MCG and yourself, please remember these prayer requests:

- Pray for the Mountainside MCG as they begin to form and meet

³ *Bec Crew, "Science Predicts You're Hiding 13 Secrets - And Nearly Half of Those You've Never Told a Soul," ScienceAlert.Com (5-29-17)*

- Leaders meet tonight at NBBC. Pray for God's presence.

Friday April 20th – Petition (By NBBC's Blair Clark)

Reading Daniel 9:12 – 17

“Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant.”

Most of us are familiar with petitions. We are often asked to sign petitions, or even to initiate them. Here at NBBC, we have on different occasions been asked to sign petitions such as the one a number of years ago appealing to our government to uphold the traditional definition of marriage as being between a man and a woman - a petition that was not granted. Churches have also, for example, petitioned against the deportation from Canada of an individual where the authorities have responded to the petition and rescinded the deportation order. The website *Gopetition.com* will show you how to create an effective petition, and *templatelab.com* has over 30 templates for different kinds of petitions.

The nature of petition is that it is an appeal to a higher authority or power requesting a particular action or judgment on behalf of the petitioner. We normally petition governments or governmental agencies, such as a planning commission or a school board. Lawyers are also said to petition the courts on behalf of their clients. The main point is that the one to whom our petition is directed has the authority to grant what is requested in the petition, and so has more power than the petitioner.

Petitions to the court may be appeals for mercy and leniency, based on other circumstances stated in the petition. In those petitions, the individual may admit guilt, and so it is not an appeal for justice. In other cases, when there is a strong sense that a person has not been treated justly, the petition may assert one's innocence and asks for justice. Daniel's prayer, recited in verses 4-19, is one of the great prayers included in Scripture, along with prayers of Solomon (I Kings 8:22-53) and Jesus (Matt.6:9-13). Not only is it clearly a prayer of petition, but it is also a wonderful template for us to use in our own prayers of petition,

because effective prayers of petition have essential components to them. An acrostic that I learned as a teenager is instructive on this. The acrostic is ACTS and it stands for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication (modern versions use the word petition as a synonym for supplication, the word used in the King James version of this passage).

We see this pattern in Daniel's prayer, where he begins by stating the greatness of God. For much of the prayer, though, he contrasts God's praiseworthy qualities and acts with confession of his people's many acts of disobedience and failure. Like the petition of a guilty person before the judge, Daniel's petition is a request for mercy, forgiveness and restoration. In affirming the authority of the individual or body to whom the petition is being presented, the petitioner is humbly acknowledging his or her lower position. A petition can also include other precedents where the authorities have granted similar petitions as a basis for this petition being granted. Such examples are really an affirmation of the authorities and their goodness. Thanksgiving is less obvious in Daniel's prayer, but verse 15 which recounts God bringing them out of bondage in Egypt can be considered a statement of thanksgiving.

Essential elements of effective prayers of petition include our affirmation of God's power, holiness, justice, mercy, etc; acknowledgment of our unworthiness, disobedience, guilt and need of His intervention; expressions of thanks for the many times and places that we have experienced God's mercy and grace; and finally, a clear statement of our petition, whether for ourselves or on another's behalf. It is both an unbelievable privilege and a great responsibility that we have been given whereby we can petition the Lord God Almighty on behalf of ourselves and others. Let's take it seriously.

Meditation/Application

Take time to use the A.C.T.S. acrostic for your prayer time this morning and remember to give thanks as God answers your petitions.

Reflecting on the reading:

Daniel says that the disaster that came upon his people was, in part because, “we have not sought the favor of the Lord our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth.”

How might this be relevant of Canada?

Prayer Points:

As you pray for your church family, community, MCG and yourself, please remember these prayer requests:

- ADORATION: God’s character, gifts, power & authority
- CONFESSION: personal, neighbourhood, country & world
- THANKSGIVING: forgiveness, grace, blessings & mission
- SUPPLICATION: desires, needs, Spirit-directed.

Saturday April 21st – Pleading

Reading Daniel 9:18 – 19

“Lord, listen! Lord, forgive! Lord, hear and act!”

When I was in Bible College I had the privilege of meeting James Edwin Orr, a missionary and a promoter of revival and renewal. He spoke at our chapel service about revival so earnestly and with such passion that I found myself quite moved. I asked him afterwards what we need to do in order to see a revival in Canada. “Plead the promises of God,” he answered, “plead the promises.” Pleading is the desperate expression of a heart that knows it is undeserving.

Our best prayers for God’s favour rest not on our merits and how deserving we think we or the one on whose behalf we plead are, but rather they rest on God’s word and His character.

There is a story told about a mother who came to Napoleon on behalf of her son, who was about to be executed. The mother asked the ruler to issue a pardon, but Napoleon pointed out that it was the man's second offense and justice demanded death.

"I don't ask for justice," the woman replied. "I plead for mercy."

The emperor objected, "But your son doesn't deserve mercy."

"Sir," the mother replied, "it would not be mercy if he deserved it, and mercy is all I ask."

Her son was granted the pardon.⁴

It seems that God’s people have become too busy to plead. We find it awkward, time consuming, humiliating. We satisfy ourselves by tacking on requests around our grace over meals, and then we bemoan the fact that God does not answer. Shouldn’t the fervency of our prayers reflect

⁴ John Koessler, in the sermon "Blessed Are the Merciful," *PreachingToday.com*

the importance of our request? If we never take time to plead our case, appealing to the promises of God, does this not suggest that our request is really not that important after all? Why would God answer?

Meditation/Application

The last Thursday of every month (next Thursday) NBBC hosts an online prayer meeting. Why not consider joining with others for 1 hour, that we might plead to God together? (go to: freeconference.com and familiarize yourself with the online sign in process below.

Reflecting on the reading:

What reasons does Daniel give to God to answer his prayer?

Prayer Points:

As you pray for your church family, community, MCG and yourself, please remember these prayer requests:

- REAL: Relevant, Enthusiastic, Authentic & Loving: pray through these four core values for NBBC



NBBC PRAYER GATHERING ONLINE
LAST THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH

LONG DISTANCE IN CANADA CALL**
(647) 946-8253

OR

INTERNET VIA PC OR MOBILE
WWW.FREECONFERENCE.COM

ROOM ACCESS CODE
8051842

**ONLY CALL IF YOU HAVE FREE CANADA WIDE CALLING



Sunday April 22nd –

Reading Daniel 9

Sermon Notes:

Meditation/Application

As you think about today's sermon what is one action point that you are taking away?

Prayer Points:

As you pray for your church family, community, MCG and yourself, please remember these prayer requests:

- Discuss with another person your action point from the sermon and be brave enough to pray together.

Monday April 23rd – Angels (By NBBC's Bob Wilkins)

Reading Daniel 9:20 – 24

“...while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight...”

These verses in Daniel 9 introduce us to one of the very important symbolic expressions in Daniel - “seventy sevens”- which was to be explained to Daniel by the angel Gabriel. One of the interesting things is that the expression and its meaning was delivered by an angel. As we read through the Scriptures we frequently encounter angels, most of the time without explanation. It is simply assumed that angels are an important part of reality and experience. From the point of view of the Bible there is a whole reality and dimension which includes angels. There is more to the universe than rocks and trees, people, and planets, stars and black holes. There are also angels with names who do all sorts of things.

Probably the best definition of an angel is found in Hebrews 1:14. “Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?” Peter also reminds us that there are also fallen angels, angels who rebelled and sinned against God. He writes about fallen angels in 2 Peter 2:4, “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment...” Such fallen angels are often referred to as demons.

In the book of Daniel angels are mostly seen in a positive light. The three Hebrews in Daniel, three that were cast into the fiery furnace, were delivered from the furnace by an angel (Dan. 3:28). Daniel himself was delivered from the den of lions by an angel of God (Dan 6:22). However, Gabriel recognized that he was hindered in delivering the answer to Daniel’s prayer by an evil angel referred to as “the prince of the Persian kingdom (Dan. 10:13).” But another angel named Michael came to his aid and so Gabriel was able to come and minister to Daniel. From the book of Daniel it is clear that behind the earthly battles that we can see and engage in, there are also spiritual battles going on that are intertwined with the earthly ones.

Paul recognized that the real battle in the Christian life is not against “flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Eph. 6:12).” It is good for us to know that the angelic hosts of light engage in that battle with us. So, we are encouraged by Paul, “Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand (Eph. 6:13).

Meditation/Application

Have you ever had an encounter with what you later believed was an angelic being? How did it make you feel? If there are both good and evil angels in the universe how does that help us to understand many events that take place or experiences we have? What do you think about angels delivering answers to prayer as was the case with Daniel?

Reflecting on the reading:

What emotions do you think that Daniel would have felt when:

- Daniel was petitioning God?
- When Gabriel appears to Daniel?
- When Gabriel tells Daniel he is highly esteemed?

Prayer Points:

As you pray for your church family, community, MCG and yourself, please remember these prayer requests:

- Pray for that neighbour or family member that might be difficult
- Youth drop-in is after school. We are still praying for future direction in leaders. Might you know of someone?

Tuesday April 24th – Knowledge and Understanding

Reading Daniel 9:25 – 27

“Know and understand this...”

In 1889, American journalist and humourist Edgar Nye introduced the phrase "A mile wide and an inch deep." He was referring to a river found in the Midwestern and Western United States, called the Platte River. The Platte is a muddy, wide, shallow, meandering stream with a swampy bottom. These characteristics make it too difficult to ever be used as a major navigation route. Though the Platte is an important tributary system in the Missouri River Watershed, it was disqualified from use because of its lack of depth.

There is a cult of ignorance in the United States, and there always has been. The strain of anti-intellectualism has been a constant thread winding its way through our political and cultural life, nurtured by the false notion that democracy means that “my ignorance is just as good as your knowledge.”

Isaac Asimov, *Newsweek*,
21 January 1980.

Nye wrote that the river "had a very large circulation, but very little influence. It covers a good deal of ground, but it is not deep. In some places it is a mile wide and three-quarters of an inch deep."

And so the phrase was born. It's not meant to be a compliment. In fact, it quickly began to be used in politics, academia, and other fields to describe people whose knowledge is superficial.⁵

It seems that the increasing amount of information available through the internet has not created an increasing amount of knowledge. Search any topic and you are sure to get “fake news” as well as true. But how does one know? I find myself increasingly frustrated with people who use the phrase “agree to disagree.” Sure, there may be times when discussing matters of opinion

⁵ *Brandon Hatmaker, A Mile Wide (Nelson Books, 2016), page xi*

when this phrase is apt, but I find that it is increasingly being used to dispute matters of fact. One person presents reasoned, thought through, substantiated reasons for their belief and the other person, without reason or evidence blithely says, “agree to disagree.”

Throughout the Bible we are constantly being encouraged to reason and learn, to be wise and knowledgeable, to gain insight and understanding. Some critics may present Christianity as being anti-intellectual, but in fact it is completely the opposite. God encourages us to gain knowledge; we are to love God with all our minds. Of all people Christians ought not to be “an inch deep and a mile wide.”

Preparing for your MCG

As you come for you MCG be prepared to share:

- **POTLUCK:** Be mindful about a story you might share regarding the importance of MCG regular group meeting together (ie what it means to you, or how the group has seen God work in or through them)
- **STUDY:** Share from your time of Meditation/Application from each day’s study. What from chapter 9 of Daniel made an impression on you or what confused you?
- **PRAYER WALK/ACTIVITY:** be creative and intentional as you pray/work together.



CALENDAR, PEOPLE and DETAILS HERE:

<https://nbbc.churchcenter.com/groups>

Missional Community Group (MCG) Covenant

We desire to grow as followers of Jesus who represent Him and His Kingdom well in all of our life. We recognize that God's plan is for us to grow in and through relationships with other like-minded disciples. As those who identify as neighbourhood missionaries we enter into this covenant so that we might be transformed by God's grace and that together we might be transforming agents in our neighbourhood.

To this end, this year, we therefore covenant to:

- Meet regularly for weekly encouragement, accountability, and fellowship in our Missional Community Group and corporately with all of NBBC.
- Seek to grow in likeness to Jesus by engaging in NBBC MCG's shared practices.
- Nurture loving relationships within our Missional Community, accepting others as Christ has accepted us.
- Faithfully steward the resources that God has given us: time, abilities, resources and energy.
- Together discern where God is at work and join Him in His mission to bring the Kingdom of God to our neighbourhood.

In all that we covenant, we recognize that we are dependant upon the grace of God to enable us and so we joyfully enter this covenant in hope of what He might do in and through us.

Missional Community Group Shared Practices

1. Daily engage in reading Scripture and pray for God to bless NBBC in its missional calling.
2. Weekly purposely and intentionally bless another person.
3. Monthly practise table fellowship with someone in your Missional Community.
4. Respond to the Spirit's prompting as you sense Him leading and directing.
5. Share with others the stories of what God is doing in your life as opportunities arise.