***Daniel 9:1-14 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans— 2in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. 3Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. 4And I prayed to the Lord my God, and made confession, and said, “O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, 5we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. 6Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land. 7O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You. 8“O Lord, to us belongs shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. 9To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. 10We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. 11Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him. 12And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem. 13“As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth. 14Therefore the Lord has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for the Lord our God is righteous in all the works which He does, though we have not obeyed His voice.***

So, we are back with Daniel in chapter 9 tonight and we’ll be looking at verses 1-14. We’ve seen prophecy of kingdoms rising and falling, and also end times. Daniel is well advanced in years by now. We join him in the first year of Darius in verses 1-2 *In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans— 2in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.* Recall from Daniel 5:30, Darius the Mede became king when Babylon fell, around 539 BC is the year. The vision of Daniel 8 and the things we’re now reading happened a short period of time apart.

Daniel has been studying the writings of the prophet Jeremiah. From his study, he sees that God has placed the Jews in captivity for 70 years. Toward the end of this time, God will punish Babylon. Jeremiah 29:10 *For thus says the Lord: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place*. Jeremiah 29:14 speaks more about returning from captivity. Jeremiah 25:11-13 speak about punishing the Babylonians. Finally, Jeremiah 51:11 names the Medes specifically as God’s chosen tool to punish Babylon – *Make the arrows bright! Gather the shields! The Lord has raised up the spirit of the* ***kings of the Medes****. For His plan is against Babylon to destroy it, Because it is the vengeance of the Lord, The vengeance for His temple*. Both Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesied Babylon’s fall at the hands of the Medes and Persians 50-150 years before the events.

Now we go into the part of the chapter known as **Daniel’s Prayer for the People**. What a wonderful prayer it is. It’s an example that shows us the kind of desperation we lack in this country today. Verse 3 *Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.*Daniel sets himself humbly, earnestly, steadfastly to seeking God in prayer. This was no, “Lord, help us” prayer. This provides an incredible example of how we are to come before the Lord. When we are desperate for God’s answers, we pray with desperation and God hears that desperation! We ditch our comfort and beg! Are we begging for God these days? In Isiah 29:13, we read *Therefore the Lord said: “Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me, And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men.* I believe that many may draw near to God with words, but few honor God with their hearts. May God forgive us for our haughty and prideful spirits.

Verse 4 *And I prayed to the Lord my God, and made confession, and said, “O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments.* Notice how Daniel starts this prayer. He sets his full attention upon God, eliminates all distractions, gives God his undivided focus – he’s not doing 10 things like driving, watching TV while preparing to pray. He sets his focus. Now, in verse 4, he acknowledges God’s greatness, His awesomeness, His majesty! He recognizes that God is a God of promise and mercy – then he adds with those God loves… and then something interesting – and with those who keep His commandments…. Hmmm. That sounds so very familiar! In John 14:15, Jesus says this - *“If you love Me, keep My commandments.* In John 15:10, Jesus says - *If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.* It almost sounds like that we can’t just run around doing whatever we like. It sounds like we have a direct requirement to keep the commandments of God. If keeping commandments reveals our love of God, how loved does God appear to be in this country today? In churches today?

In Verse 5, Daniel confesses the sins of his people, his nation. W*e have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments.* We have sinned, committed iniquity, done wickedly, rebelled, departed from Your precepts (your rules for our behavior) and judgements. Daniel is offering no excuses.

Verse 6 *Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land.* Not only have we sinned, but we failed to listen to those You sent to warn us! We beat them, threw them in pits, scorned and scoffed.

These two verses could be lifted from Daniel and brought straight to the mouth of any Christian praying for our nation today. We have the commandments, we have the history, we have the Bible, we have teachers and pastors; yet, we revel in our sin and forget our Father.

Verse 7-8 *O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You. 8“O Lord, to us belongs shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You.*God is righteous. When wrongs are done, we need not look far for who must be shame faced! Who is shame faced? All of the children of Israel, all of Jacob’s descendants, no matter where they are! Assyria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Babylon… near or far, all sinned, acted wickedly, rebelled, failed to follow commandments, and thus failed to love God properly. God, to You belongs righteousness. To us, kings, princes, fathers belong shame – because we have sinned against You O God. Again, this can be lifted from that time and dropped straight into this time – presidents, leaders, pastors, Christians – we have sinned. Shame on us.

Verse 9-11 *To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. 10We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. 11Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him.* Daniel continues. God is the God of mercy and forgiveness, even as we’ve rebelled. He is slow to anger, quick to forgive, abounding in mercy. Daniel repeats that we have not obeyed God, we have not walked in His laws (another word for precepts). We’ve failed to hear the words of His servants the prophets. All Israel has transgressed, no matter where they live, and so has departed – ***so as not to obey Your voice.*** Then Daniel recalls Deuteronomy 28 – we won’t read that tonight, but more than 1000 years before Daniel, Moses prophesied blessings when the people sought God and followed His will and curses when they rebelled and deserted God. And so it is the same with us today. When nations forget God, God withdraws blessings.

Verses 12-13 *And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem. 13“As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us;****yet we have not made our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth.***Again, Daniel is recalling Deuteronomy 28. God, through Moses, told how the nation would be blessed and also how it would be cursed. In the end, the nation chose curse. Through prophet after prophet, God warned and called. The Bible tells us to seek God while He may yet be found. Jeremiah 11:11 says *Therefore thus says the Lord: Behold, I will surely bring calamity on them which they will not be able to escape; and though they cry out to Me, I will not listen to them.* Jeremiah 11:14 says something even scarier - *So do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them; for I will not hear them in the time that they cry out to Me because of their trouble.*

Verse 14 *Therefore the Lord has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for the Lord our God is righteous in all the works which He does, though we have not obeyed His voice.* What God speaks will never return void. He warned, Israel and Judah rebelled, God delivered. God’s arm is not shortened, nor His judgement delayed. There is a time coming when judgement will fall – swiftly, righteously, perfectly. No wickedness will escape His notice.

This week, let’s be praying for our nation, for our homes, for ourselves, desperately. God hears the prayers of the righteous. James tells us *The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.* May we set our faces toward God this week. Perhaps like Nineveh in the days of Jonah, God will yet relent and turn His anger away. May we seek Him desperately while He may yet be found.