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B0951 – December 20, 2009 – Doctrine Of Prayer

Alright, we're working through the last event in the OT, the Partial Restoration. And before we finish it I want you to look at the fourteen events of the OT. They're not the only events of course, but they're the big events, the events the great saints keep mentioning in their prayers, their speeches, and their sermons. This is not an arbitrary selection of events; these are undoubtedly the most prominent events in Scripture. And that's why we call this class a framework; we're covering the large scale frame that sets the tone for the details of Scripture. So let's look at these OT events. These are what you should have knocked out by memory in the next four or five weeks. Before we get to the NT events you want to be able to recite these by memory. I encourage you to do this; you will have a much greater appreciation for Christ if you really work with these events. We say that because these are the events that the Holy Spirit taught pre-the Lord Jesus Christ. And He did that for a reason. The Holy Spirit isn't stupid, the Holy Spirit is omniscient and He knows what categories we need to think properly about the Lord Jesus Christ and these are the events which set the categories. So I encourage you to learn this, to teach this to your children, to teach it to your grandchildren, teach it to someone.

The first great event is Creation and the Creation establishes the Creator-creature distinction. That's the most fundamental thing you can say about the Bible. The Creator is not the creature, they are qualitatively different, and there are two levels of reality not one. The world says there is only one level of reality, the Continuity of Being, all is one and God, if he exists, is under the same all encompassing oneness that you and I are under. That's the distinguishing mark of paganism, it will always, always hold to some form of the Continuity of Being, whether it's the ancient Egyptians or the modern Darwinists. It is all the same thing when you boil it down to the

lowest common denominator. Our ultimate environment in paganism is impersonal chance and man is a victim. The Bible says our ultimate environment is a sovereign person and man is responsible. And those two positions are totally opposite, there's not one iota of continuity between those positions.

The second great event is the Fall and the Fall explains evil and suffering. Why is there pain and suffering? Because we sinned. It wasn't there when God created the world. We brought that in by a rebellious choice. The pagan view says it was always there and always shall be there. Evil and suffering are part and parcel of the one level of reality, there is no escape. Paganism, when you think about it, is really a hopeless situation. Evil has always been and always shall be. It's never over, there is always sickness, forever suffering. You want to talk about depressing. If I believed that I'd be depressed. The Biblical view says there is a beginning to evil and there's an end to evil, eventually they are going to be separated out. It's not going to be separated by a peaceful negotiation between nations; it's going to be separated out by God's judgment. People don't like the idea of heaven and hell, the idea of a judgment, but that's the only way the problem is going to be resolved. So if you don't like the judgment then you must like the idea of eternal suffering and pain better. Personally I don't like that better, I like this better because at least then a subset of man and nature are not subjected to eternal suffering.

The third event is the Flood and the Flood is a picture of judgment and salvation. The Flood is the big picture of a number of fundamental truths. If you will just picture these events in your minds they'll protect you from pagan imagination: the idea that if a person is sincere in his religion then God will accept him, all paths lead to God. Excuse me? How many arks were there? One. Well, if there's only one ark there's only one way of salvation. It couldn't be any simpler. Other truths we learned there like grace before judgment. God gave the human race 120 years to respond to His grace. He didn't just send a global flood, He warned them well in advance. Perfect discrimination, when it did come time to judge everything inside the ark was saved and everything outside was judged and that's a perfect line of demarcation which shows you that God is a perfect divider of that which is aligned to Him and that which is not. And finally, a new world was ushered in. The Flood was global, even cosmic if we read Peter's commentary in the

NT, that brought in a whole new world, a new environment, a new diet, seasons; so many questions being faced on the political stage today are answered by this event.

The fourth event is the New World Covenant and that's defining the issue of the last 200 years of where do we get stability so we can do science? Where is that stability coming from? It's not coming from natural law, natural law doesn't even exist, it's coming from God's word in the Noahic Covenant. God promised stability and God put His character on the line in that promise and every moment the human race continues to enjoy the stability is a moment that points to His faithfulness.

Then we have the next set of events, the first four are the Buried Truths of Origins, the next set are the Disruptive Truths because here God begins to disrupt man's kingdom building with His own kingdom. The Call of Abraham and the doctrines of election, justification and faith, we'll speed through these. You can thank God for calling Abraham out because if He didn't do that then that's it for the human race, the whole thing would have gone down the tubes thousands of years ago. So without this event we aren't even here and we certainly aren't saved. Election, justification and faith are truths to be thankful for.

The great event of the Exodus and here we see the doctrine of judgment/salvation again, like the Flood, but it expands it by bringing in the substitutionary blood atonement. Remember the blood over the door? So now we're linking salvation in with blood atonement very clearly, you can see this is the Holy Spirit preparing the world for Christ's atonement.

The great event of Mt Sinai: God speaks into history in human languages. Think about that one, God spoke to 2 million people out in the Sinai in the Hebrew language. Anyone could have heard it. They could have recorded it. Can God communicate with man? You bet He can. He did and everyone at the bottom of that mountain knew what He said.

The event of the Conquest and Settlement, this introduced sanctification, how do God's people grow up spiritually. Sanctification has five aspects we've covered ad nauseum; the three phases of position, experience and ultimate. The aim which is to learn loyalty to God, the dimensions which are the

existential moment, you're either in or out of fellowship and the long-term. The means, both law and grace, law the standard, grace the means to reach the standard. Very clearly Joshua and his armies had enemies in the OT and they were any and everyone in the Promised Land. For us, we have enemies too, the forces of darkness, our own flesh, these truths transfer over.

Then we had the Rise and Reign of King David, the key truth there is in sanctification, we amplified the existential dimension. David's the key example of a man who gets back in fellowship after he wipes out spiritually and he's restored. So that truth we attach to King David.

The Golden Era of Solomon, Israel's zenith of power and glory so far in history, the wealth, the art, the poetry, the music, and the science was world renown. And this teaches us in the area of the aim of sanctification which is to learn loyalty to God in every area of life. Not to bottle ourselves up to some religious sphere, but every area is God's area of life and we should learn to expand into these other areas and think His thoughts.

Then the kingdom heads into decline with the Kingdom Divided and the truth here also is in sanctification, what this shows is that when you start committing sin over and over and over then it gets very hard to confess your sin and be restored. It's simply a negative by-product of our sin that it becomes increasingly difficult to confess because our view of God is distorted. So we want to avoid this and be more like David, get with the program.

Then the Kingdom goes into Decline and this is when we add to the phases of sanctification. Early on we emphasize position and experience. In this period the prophets emphasize the nation's ultimate sanctification. They're not going to turn around and obey God so God is going to have to give the nation a new heart, that's the new covenant.

Then the Exile and this is the severe discipline. This is when Israel was booted out into the pagan world and so here they are - God's people having to live in the world system. Here we learn how to be separate, how to be in the world but not of the world. We have to develop in every area of life, we can't leave the arts and sciences, but we can't suck up the world's arts and sciences either, we have to handle them in a distinctly Christian way.

Finally the Partial Restoration, a portion of the nation was restored and this is setting us up for the NT. It gets some of the Israeli population in the land so there's a nation for the king to come to. It gets the Messiah's tribe in position so He can be born in the land and it gives us a foreview of the final restoration to follow. Finally the entire nation will be restored. We'll be looking at the nature of that final restoration and the timing of it as we close the OT. The end of the OT is probably the best place to discuss the millennial issue, the question of a-millennialism vs post-millennialism vs pre-millennialism, that's an important issue for understanding the King's arrival in the gospels and His message to repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. So we'll be getting into some eschatology in the next few weeks.

But today we want to finish up the doctrinal fallout of the Partial Restoration of the nation with the doctrine of prayer. By 450BC, the curtain of her miraculous history had fallen, there were no more sign miracles occurring and therefore that period of God's relative silence is closely parallel to the environment we live in today with God no longer doing sign miracles. God is silent today and so in this atmosphere of silence we want to look at four principles of prayer. These are basic principles; we're only making broad strokes in this series, we're not giving detailed analysis of prayer. Obviously we could spend six or seven weeks on prayer but we just want to give the general outline of prayer.

To do this let's review our event of Creation. The event of Creation is what sets up a proper understanding of prayer. So let's go back to the Creator-creature distinction. Gen 1:1 sets up what is forever the most fundamental and profound truth in the Bible, "In the beginning God created..." Before that, take yourself back, do a thought experiment, take yourself back in time and put yourself one second before Gen 1:1. Gen 1:1 is the beginning of time, we'll say Gen 1:1 is t_0 and the second before t_0 is $t-1$. At t_1 what is there? God is there. Is there anything else there? Is space there? Is matter there? Is darkness there? No, all those things are things. And there was nothing there but God. So at $t-1$ we have God and God alone, no space, no light, no darkness, none of that. Then we have t_0 , "God created the heavens and the earth..." Now, at t_1 what do we have? We have God, God is still there. But now we also have the creation. The creation was not there, now it is there. So we have God and the creation. Has God changed? God remains forever unchanged. God is still sovereign, righteous, just, loving, omniscient,

omnipresent, omnipotent, immutable and eternal. God's character never changes. But now we have something else we call the creation. So we have the Creator-creature distinction, the most fundamental thing you can say in the whole Bible. God is not the creation. God is distinct from the creation such that we have two realms, two levels of being. And so what finally must you say from this distinction about God? Finally you must say that God is in control, God is sovereign. If God created all things by the word of His power then God is sovereign over all things. If He's not sovereign over something then He didn't create it and then we have a problem. So the doctrine of creation necessitates that God is sovereign over all.

After we've established the Creator-creature distinction we have a second distinction inside the creation and that's the man-nature distinction. There are only two things in creation, either something is man or something is nature. Nature is animals, plants, rocks, stars, etc...man is not those things. Man is not an animal. Evolution says man is an animal. Animals are not made in God's image, only man is made in God's image. So we have the man-nature distinction and the difference of man and nature is in the image of God. The image of God in man. Did that evolve? C'mon. How many changes in the DNA molecule did it take before it became the image of God? Give me a break. So we have man uniquely in the image of God and that means, among other things, that man is responsible to God. So in the Creator-creature distinction God as Creator is sovereign and man as the creature is responsible. Both of these are fundamental truths.

Now if we are to think biblically about sovereignty and responsibility we must always keep the Creator-creature distinction intact. The moment you think there's a contradiction you've already denied this distinction because what you've said is that sovereignty and responsibility operate on the same level such that the two can't co-exist, a violation of the Creator-creature distinction. Anyone can see that once you violate that distinction and make sovereignty identical to something inside creation such as cause-effect, then there's a contradiction. We don't deny that would be a contradiction. We deny that sovereignty is identical to cause-effect in creation. So the Creator-creature distinction is saying that God's sovereignty is something like human responsibility, if it wasn't we wouldn't have the foggiest notion of what God's sovereignty was like. But it's not identical to what we have as responsibility. Similar, yes, identical, no.

Then we have the three divine institutions given at creation, this is all preparatory for prayer. Divine Institution #1: Responsible Dominion or Labor. Divine Institution #2: Marriage. And Divine Institution #3: Family. Those are all creation ordinances or institutions that hold for the entire human race, believer and unbeliever alike. Let's look closer at Divine Institution #1 and ask what this is saying? Man is to have dominion, to rule responsibly, we are to subdue the earth by cultivating it, keeping it, making it productive. We are under lords of history responsible to God for proper management and cultivation of His earth. Now how do we do that? Do we just sit back and say, well God is sovereign, He controls whatsoever comes to pass and therefore it's going to get done? It's just going to happen?. Obviously not. Obviously there are *means*. For one we obey God, we respect what He has revealed about His earth and we follow that. Adam didn't follow that too well, which is what got us in this predicament to begin with. We also use wisdom, wisdom principles from the word of God, rotating crops every seven years to give the soil rest, to allow time for rejuvenation of nutrients in the soil. What are these? These are *means*. God sovereignly runs His universe through means. What's another one of those means? When you're out there on the job, at home, you want to do your work as to the Lord what do you do? Do you just sit there and say, whatever will be will be? No, you pray. We ask God what should I do here, we inquire of Him. So part and parcel of the very first divine institution of responsible labor is that to be responsible in this situation I need to pray to God.

So from the very beginning of Genesis God controls whatsoever comes to pass but man is also responsible because the way in which God controls whatsoever comes to pass occurs through means. So prayer is built in right at creation. We need God's help to responsibly have dominion over the creation. So we pray for His help.

Now if you have a fatalistic understanding of God's sovereignty and you think God's sovereignty means *que sera sera* "whatever will be will be," then logically you're not going to pray. Why pray if God is going to do His will anyway? So this is our first principle of prayer. Prayer Should Avoid Fatalism.

To see this turn to Daniel 9. Daniel 9 is one of the longest prayers in the OT and we're going to use Daniel's prayer as a model and see what we can pull out by way of principles. Daniel 9 comes before the Partial Restoration, Daniel is in Exile, but his prayer exemplifies prayer out in a Gentile pagan culture where God wasn't ruling in the same way He had ruled in Israel and so it's a valuable model for us learning how to pray since we too live in a pagan culture where pagan thought dominates.

Daniel 9:1 gives us the time table. It's 538BC, it's the first year of Darius the Mede. So Babylon has already passed from the scene as the world's superpower, the Medes have taken center stage. Daniel went into captivity in 605BC so if you do the math in verse 1 he's been in captivity for about 67 years. So with that background let's see what's going on with Daniel. "In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans—²in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was *revealed as* the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, *namely*, seventy years." So he's studying the book of Jeremiah, Jeremiah was a contemporary of Daniel, he was a prophet. He may have known Daniel and Daniel is reading his book. And Jeremiah says seventy years to complete Jerusalem's desolation. So Daniel is sitting there, it's 538BC, it's been 67 years and he says to himself we're nearing the end of the seventy years and that stimulates verse 3. "So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek *Him* by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes." And Daniel goes into his big long prayer that God would restore Jerusalem to its former glory. But wait a minute. What does Daniel already know is going to happen in history? Go back to the Daniel 2. What did Daniel already know about the course of world history from Daniel 2? Daniel 2 is the great statue that Nebuchadnezzar saw. The great statue depicted four successive Gentile kingdoms are going to come in history. Four Daniel, not two. You're only in the second kingdom Daniel. And Daniel knows this but he also knows that Jeremiah said seventy years of Jerusalem's desolations. So you can see the difficulty Daniel is facing but Daniel doesn't do like some people do and just write off the Bible as a contradiction. Oh, it can't work out, the Bible is wrong. No, Daniel knows the word of God doesn't contradict. We may not understand it right off but don't write it off. How does Daniel get these two truths together? On one hand God has sovereignly declared four Gentile kingdoms, on the other God has sovereignly declared seventy years of

Jerusalem's desolation. Does Daniel say, well, there's no use praying because God has said there's going to be four Gentile kingdoms and there's only been two so it's a waste of my time to pray? Does Daniel have the mentality that well, God is sovereign and whatever will be will be? Or does Daniel pray? Not only does he pray, he launches into one of the biggest, longest prayers of the entire OT. So obviously Daniel didn't have a fatalistic view of God's sovereignty, otherwise he wouldn't be praying. So here we have a man modeling for us that Prayer Should Avoid Fatalism. That's our first point. Prayer is killed by the heresy of fatalism. Fatalism says whatever will be will be regardless of the means of getting there. And so if you want to be a truly effective prayer warrior the first thing you have to avoid is a view of God's sovereignty that is fatalistic. Evidently prayer can be a means by which God's sovereign will is enacted.

Let's look at another one, this one from the NT, James 4:2. Why pray if God is going to do His will anyway? Let's think through the implication of the very end of James 4:2. "You do not have because you do not ask." Fatalism would have to say that verse is wrong. Fatalism would have to re-write that verse to say, "You do not have because God doesn't want you to have." But that's not what it says. What's the implication of this verse? It's inescapable if words have meaning. Some things are conditioned on prayer.

Turn to 2 Sam 12. 2 Sam 12 is the passage where David has sinned, he's committed adultery with Bathsheba, he's had Uriah knocked off, David is really cookin' here. And finally Nathan the prophet comes to him, David's convicted of his sin. Let's pick up in verse 13, "I have sinned against the Lord." So he confesses his sin. "And Nathan said to David, "The Lord also has taken away your sin, you shall not die." So David has been restored to fellowship. So whatever repercussions follow in verse 14 aren't because David is out of fellowship. David is in fellowship now but there are consequences to our sin and verse 14 is some of the consequences. "However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die." Now look at that, the child shall surely die. Is that the sovereign decree of God through the prophet Nathan? Yes it is. Is that surely to come to pass. Yes. But look at verse 15. "Then the Lord struck the child that Uriah's widow bore to David, so that he was very sick ¹⁶David therefore inquired of God for the child; and David fasted and went and lay all night on the ground." David inquired of God?

What's to inquire about if the child is surely going to die? What does David have to believe in order to pray this prayer? You can't say David is out of it. David is with it. David confessed his sin, he's in fellowship and he prays this prayer? What did David believe? Evidently he believed that God could be persuaded to change His mind. Look at verse 22. "While the child was *still* alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child may live.'" In David's mind as long as the child was alive he kept on praying because maybe God would change His mind. Maybe God was doing with David what He had done with Moses in Exod 32. Maybe He was prodding David to start praying so that He would be gracious to him. In this case the prayer wasn't answered but obviously David didn't think that just because something was sovereignly declared means I don't pray.

Let's go on to the second principle of prayer. The first is to avoid fatalism. The second principle is that Prayer Should Be Built Upon God's Immutability. What do we mean by immutability? We mean God's character never changes. God has a certain character? God is sovereign, God is righteous, God is just, He's loving, He's omniscient, He's omnipresent, He's immutable and He's eternal, and those things never change. As James 1:17 says He changeth not. So go back to Daniel 9 and watch how Daniel picks this up. Dan 9:4. "I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed and said, "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him..." Now look at the words keep covenant and lovingkindness. Keeps covenant? What attribute? God is faithful. He's faithful to His word. It's not one on our list but which one is it derivative of. Go through the attributes. What does faithfulness mean? It means stability. What attribute in our list is saying God is stable? Immutability. God's character is forever perfectly stable, it doesn't change. So when God makes a covenant He's faithful to the covenant. If God made a covenant God is going to do what He said in the covenant. Now what does this mean for the way we pray? Let's think about it. If God is faithful to His word then isn't it true that the best prayers will be well-thought out prayers that center on the word of God? You can argue all day that well you just pray from the heart however God leads you; just open your little carnal heart and start pouring it out before God. I don't see that kind of prayer in the Bible. I see well-thought out prayers. You know how I know they're well-thought out? Because they are filled with Scriptural vocabulary. They quote Scripture. Let's look at Daniel's prayer. Daniel 9:4, "Alas, O Lord, the great and

awesome God,” great and awesome God, quote from where? Deut 7:21. That’s right out of the Law. The rest of the verse, “who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments,” quote from where? Deut 7:9, also from the Law. Daniel’s prayer is just full of the Torah. Daniel 9:7, “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,” quote from where? It refers to the Exile, quote from Deut 4:27. This is all falling out of the Torah. Come down to verse 11, “Indeed all Israel has transgressed Your law and turned aside, not obeying Your voice; so the curse has been poured out on us,” the curse has been poured out, quote from where? Deut 27:15-26. Verse 13, “As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us;” all this calamity, an allusion to what chapters of the law? Lev 26 and Deut 28 the cursings that would come on them for disobeying the law of Moses. We could go on and show other citations from the Law in Daniel’s prayer. What’s the obvious conclusion? Daniel didn’t just open his mouth one day and go blah, blah, blah. This is a well-thought out prayer, so well thought out that scholars say that the structure shows it was actually written down before he prayed it to God. The Bible is not against well thought out prayers, even written prayers. We’re not saying copy other people’s well-thought out prayers, we’re not saying go down to the local Christian bookstore and order the book of common prayer and just read the prayers, those aren’t your prayers, those are someone else’s prayers and that would be thoughtless prayer, the exact opposite of what we’re saying. We’re saying meditate on the word of God, think about the word of God and fill your prayers with Scripture. That’s what it means to pray in the Spirit, it means to pray the word of God. Because if God is faithful to His word then why not pray His word? Wouldn’t that be the best way to pray? That’s what Daniel did. That’s what Solomon did in his dedicatory prayer of 1 Kgs 8. All the great prayers of Scripture are well-thought out and just full of Scripture. So the second principle of prayer is that we should build our prayers upon God’s immutable word.

Let’s go on to the third principle of prayer which is Prayer Should be Thoroughly Grace Oriented. What do we mean? Well, when we say grace we mean unmerited favor. So we’re talking here about our attitude when we pray. When we come to the Lord in prayer are we coming to Him with the attitude that you owe me God because I did this for you and I did that for

you? Just fill in the blank. I went to church every Sunday last year, I taught Sunday School, I gave money and therefore you owe it to me God to answer my prayer. That's not grace oriented prayer, that's works oriented prayer. And in this scenario I've got everything oriented around me and what I do and God is obligated to respond to me because of what I do. Wrong. It's arrogant to come to God with that orientation. God is interested in someone coming to Him oriented to His grace. Someone who recognizes that the only reason He's accepted is because of the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's not because of me, it's because of Jesus Christ, that's orientation to God's grace. And so in grace orientation we're admitting that we're sinners, we're admitting that everything we have is due to His grace. Let's look at Daniel 9:5, what's one of the very first things out of Daniel's mouth, "we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances." It's not we are so great that you owe it to us, it's we are a wicked and rebellious people. "Moreover," verse 6, "we have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes, our fathers and all the people of the land.

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." Look at the humility of this man. He says, look, if anything is going to happen here God it's not because of who we are, it's going to be because of Your grace. There's not an ounce of You owe it to us mentality, it's a confession that we've really blown it here Lord. In verse 9 he turns to the character of God and mentions more of their blowing it. ⁹"To the Lord our God *belong* compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him; ¹⁰nor 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." There's the big long confession. Verse 12, look what he brings in here. ¹²"Thus He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us and against our rulers who ruled us, to bring on us great calamity; for under the whole heaven there has not been done *anything* like what was done to Jerusalem." Has God been faithful

to His word? 100%. God said He was going to do it and God did it. He's faithful to the covenant. Verse 13, "As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us; yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth. ¹⁴"Therefore the LORD has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us; for the LORD our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done, but we have not obeyed His voice." See, God is in the right, we are in the wrong, this is proper orientation to God's grace because what Daniel is saying is we don't have any merit, we don't have any merit, we don't have any merit, over and over and over, we're bankrupt, but you O Lord, you are righteous, you O Lord, you forgive. That's the proper attitude in prayer. And if we have any desire for our prayers to be answered we have to come to God with this grace orientation. God doesn't owe us a thing. So we don't come to Him in prayer saying you owe me. He doesn't owe you. He graciously accepts you and provides for you through the Lord Jesus Christ. But He doesn't owe you.

The fourth and last principal we'll cover is what's the ultimate objective? What's the ultimate goal of prayer? Is it to have my prayer answered? Put another way, is prayer for us or is prayer for God. This one is really not well-understood in Christian circles. With the introduction of psychology into the church in the 1960's we've heard this more and more. People say well, prayer is for us not for God. That's the psychologizing of prayer. I've heard this, you've heard this, over and over prayer is for us not for God, and it's almost become a mantra. Excuse me? Since when was anything for us? The ultimate objective of prayer is not for man, The Ultimate Objective Of Prayer is The Glory Of God. All the great prayers of Scripture have as their goal that God would be glorified. That God's nature would be revealed to man. Let's look at Daniel's prayer again for a model of this. Despite Daniel knowing that we've got to have four Gentile kingdoms here he's been praying a prayer of confession for the nation, confession of sin results in restoration to fellowship, that's what Daniel's been praying for. Daniel knows that for God to bless the nation it has to be in fellowship and so he's confessed the sin of the nation. Now he comes to verse 17. And as we read this just ask yourself, what is Daniel's ultimate objective? "So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, and for Your sake, O Lord, let Your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary. ¹⁸"O my God, incline Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Your

name; for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own,” what did we say earlier about prayer? It has to be grace oriented not works oriented. There it is, if we’re restored Lord it’s not because of any of our merit. Why is it? Because “of Your great compassion. ¹⁹“O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name.” How many times did we read in there, do it for Your sake, not for the sake of Israel, do it for Your city and do it for Your people who are called by Your name. It’s all about God’s name, it’s all about making His name known to all the earth. It’s not so that Israel can get restored That is not the final objective. And when we pray, ultimately back of all our prayers should be the objective that however God answers our prayer it’s His name that is glorified, not that we get our little toy. Obviously we want our prayer to be answered, we’ve crafted our prayer carefully according to Scripture, but ultimately if we’ve really crafted it Scripturally it should have as it’s goal that God be glorified. So the point is that there are higher purposes in prayer than what we want and that’s what we’re after ultimately.

Let’s look at one more for this, Matt 26:39. This is one of Christ’s prayers. Look at the mentality underlying this prayer. Jesus is in a stressful situation. He knows the hour is at hand for his betrayal. And He’s in prayer in the garden of Gethsemane, the disciples can’t stay awake, they keep dozing off. It says, verse 39, “And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.” Notice the attitude of Christ. If it’s possible for Your plan Father to be fulfilled by avoiding the crucifixion, let it be done, yet not as I will but as You will. Jesus recognized his humanity, because he’s praying here out of His humanity, and He realized that there are higher purposes going on than what He may want. And He had the spiritual maturity to say Father, ultimately I want what you want, ultimately not My will be done but yours. And that’s the proper attitude in prayer.

That very quickly is four principles of prayer. We’ve brought it in at the partial restoration of the nation because this is when the curtain fell on Israel’s supernatural history, they’re not going to have many more prophets, they’re not going to have all the signs and wonders, they’re kicked out among the nations and God is going silent and so prayer becomes very prominent in this period.

So with that the OT comes to a close. Next time we'll get into the millennial issue and we'll try to introduce it next time just to get an overall on the discussion.

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