

SHARING SCRIPTURE

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From Confession to Consolation

For use: March 1 - 7

Texts: Daniel 9; Jeremiah 25:11, 12; 29:10; 2 Kings 19:15-19; Matthew 5:16; James 5:16

Last week, Crispin—an inmate at the Weld County jail in Greeley, Colorado—filed a red flag petition against County Sheriff Steve Reams and some of his deputies for carrying shotguns while walking through the jail. (A red flag law is a gun control law that allows police or family members to petition a state court to have firearms temporarily taken away from a person who might be a danger to themselves or someone else. A judge reviews such petitions and decides if they are reasonable after considering the statements and actions of the gun owner who is in question.)

“Crispin had argued that the jail is his household, and that Reams, as sheriff, posed a significant risk of injury to himself or others by having a gun at jail.” The judge threw out the red flag petition “because the inmate did not prove a threat.” The judge added that the shotguns carried by jail deputies carry “less-than-lethal” projectiles. [1]

The sheriff, who opposed the law, feels it was a huge waste of time for the judge to deal with frivolous petitions. Reams explains, “People who support the red flag law will say well actually you weren’t actually red-flagged, the system worked, the judge didn’t go to a hearing. My problem is that this inmate was able to at least petition the court and provide that he believes that he has standing.” [2]

In this week’s Sabbath school lesson, “From Confession to Consolation,” Daniel petitions the Lord to hear his plea, not for himself so much as for his people. The prophet carefully studied the law—the Scriptures—to determine when Israel’s “jail sentence” would end. Daniel was not trying to find a loophole or take advantage of God’s mercy, nor was he looking for a more comfortable environment while his people “served time” in Babylon and

Persia.

Moved by the amazing prophecy of the 2,300 days presented to him in Daniel 8, the prophet pleads that the Lord will graciously forgive Israel and fulfill the promise to release the Hebrews and allow them to return to their homeland. The prayer-petition of Daniel 9 acknowledges that the Lord was right in allowing Israel to reap the results of its idolatry. In fact, this upright leader does not even pray “they have sinned” (speaking of his rebellious ancestors), but cries “we have sinned” (Daniel 9:5).

This selfless petition was acknowledged by the Lord, and in response to Daniel’s heartfelt prayer, God presented the beautiful 70-week prophecy, a message that a Messiah would come and the sanctuary will someday be cleansed. The Judge did not throw out his request, but responded with assurance that justice would forever be restored on earth and in the universe.

~Curtis Rittenour

[1] <https://www.thedenverchannel.com/news/local-news/weld-county-inmate-files-red-flag-petition-against-sheriff-but-judge-throws-it-out>

[2] <https://www.9news.com/article/news/local/next/steve-reams-weld-county-red-flag-petition/73-05cdf109-aaef-4f74-96ec-90e7b185e9d9>

For Reflection

Connecting: Have you (or someone you know) gone to court to petition a judge to change his or her mind about a case? Were you successful in your plea?

Sharing: Read through Daniel 9:1-19. See if you can identify different parts to Daniel’s earnest appeal. Reflect on how the prophet’s prayer could guide you in your own prayer life.

1. Daniel’s time in prayer was prompted by time in the Scriptures (vv. 1, 2).
2. The serious nature of his request led him to fast in sackcloth and ashes (v. 3).
3. Daniel acknowledges the greatness of God at the beginning of his prayer (v. 4).
4. He then spends time in confession for sin (vv. 5-15).
5. Finally, the prophet petitions God to forgive Israel to restore the people and sanctuary (vv. 16-19).
6. Other...

Applying: You are asked to give the main prayer for the worship service at your church. Outline a prayer based upon what you read and understand from Daniel’s prayer in this lesson.

Valuing: How has your prayer life been lately? Do you need to more earnestly petition God for help in your life? Pray with one other person for God’s continued guidance this week, especially in petitions for God’s grace and forgiveness.

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