

# Seventy Sevens (Part 1)

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're now ready to move into Daniel chapter 9.

If you know anything about chapter 9 without looking, then you might be disappointed because everybody, when they think of chapter 9 of Daniel, they think of Daniel's 70 weeks or 77s and that prophecy that is really quite amazing.

Well, sorry, but we're not going to get to that prophecy tonight because there are other things that appear in chapter 9 that we want to deal with. But one thing, first of all, what we'll be focusing on tonight that's very important, and that is prayer.

And we can learn a great deal from Daniel's prayer because that's really how this chapter begins. What a lot of people don't realize because they love the part about the prophecy and love to speculate on that and love also to study and have explained what that prophecy means to us, not only today but all the way into the future.

A lot of people don't realize that the prophecy came as a result of Daniel's prayer. Daniel's intercessory prayer, really, for the people of Israel, though he included himself in their need, their sin, their rebellion.

[ 1 : 48 ] And it's kind of interesting, we'll get to this eventually, but at the end of the prayer, of course, Daniel has a visitation from Gabriel, the archangel.

And what's interesting to me is Gabriel said, the moment you started praying, God sent me. So he was on his way while he was praying. And so it's right after the prayer that Gabriel appears and gives this prophecy to Daniel that is really quite amazing.

So next Wednesday we'll get into prophecy, but tonight we'll look at the prayer. So Daniel's 70 sevens or Daniel's 70 weeks will be really ultimately the focus of our study of this chapter.

So let's begin with Daniel's prayerful request. That's what I've named the first point. Daniel's prayerful request.

He's making a request. He's ultimately going to offer up a petition to the Lord in behalf of God's people. He being included. All right, so we want to consider three elements of this prayer.

[ 2 : 59 ] And when we get to the third one, I'll just go ahead and tell you, we're going to learn what really ought to be a part of our prayer life. A perfect model of some of the elements of prayer that we ought to have in our own prayer life.

It's very simple. And I don't have any doubts that most of you, when you pray these, at least these three things are part of your prayer life. So we'll look at Daniel's prayerful request.

And first of all, these three elements, first of these three, the circumstances of his prayer. All right. So I've waited to read the entire text.

I really thought about reading all of chapter nine, but I thought, no, I'll just read it kind of as we go along. And I, again, have included the text into your notes. So the first thing we want to consider the circumstances for his prayer.

What's going on at this time when Daniel is praying? And there are two things. First of all, there's a new power, new power in Daniel's life and the life of Israel, really.

[ 4 : 07 ] A new power. Now, let me just remind you that we finished, took us quite a number of weeks, finished two of the visions that Daniel had.

And, you know, the vision of the beasts coming out of the sea and then the vision of the goat and the ram and all of that. And what those visions mean, how they applied to the people of Israel.

And remember, both of those visions pertained to some of the coming powers that would be dominant in the world. The empires that would be dominant.

And, of course, during the time that Daniel's having the vision, the Babylonian empire is the superpower of the world of that day.

But in Daniel's vision, God allows him to see not just the next empire that is coming, but the next one and the next one after that. And the next one, you remember, is the Medo-Persian empire. [ 5 : 16 ] And so the circumstances of this prayer involve that empire. That's the new power in the world of Daniel's day.

Verse 1 says, In the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus. Some versions, by the way, have Xerxes there. Really, it's not a name, it's a title, but we're not going to get into that tonight. So the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans. Now, a few things about this, and if you, I didn't put this in your notes, you can jot them down if you want to, or just listen to them.

But a few things about this first verse, which pertain to the circumstances out of which Daniel is praying. The events of this chapter, chapter 9, occurred 12 years after Daniel had that second vision.

So we spent, what, I don't know how many weeks studying through chapter 8, that second vision. Now, we fast forward 12 years. 12 years have passed since that vision, and a rough estimate would put Daniel at about 85 years old.

[ 6 : 39 ] So he's a pretty old man. Old man in any context, by any standard, but in his day, I'm just thinking not many would reach the age of 85 during Daniel's day.

So he's an old man. Darius, and you might remember we covered this way back when, it's been a bunch of weeks ago, about the Medo-Persian Empire.

And their first ruler, you know, is his name Darius, or is his name Cyrus? And some scholars say that those are two different people. But most would say that Darius is likely just another name for Cyrus.

So Darius, Cyrus, and he was the first to rule over the Medo-Persian Empire. And when is this happening?

This prayer and ultimately vision is happening, according to verse 2, in the first year of his reign. First year. So this is the first year of Cyrus, or Darius, reign, which means this is at the beginning of the rule of the Medo-Persian Empire on the known world of the day.

[ 7 : 51 ] So that's why I said there's a new power. Now, Daniel says here that Darius was made king over his realm or over the realm.

He was made king. Now, if he's the first king, then who made him king? Well, God did. That's why Daniel used those words, that Darius was made king over the realm.

And so this is a reference to the sovereignty of God who placed him in a position of rulership over the powerful Medo-Persian Empire.

So it was not Cyrus, because Cyrus and Darius are the same person, not Cyrus who made him king, not Ahasuerus or Xerxes, but it was God.

And this is consistent, and this is why Daniel worded it this way, consistent with what Daniel wrote in Daniel chapter 2, verse 21, when he said that he, speaking of God, removes kings and raises up kings.

[ 9 : 00 ] Now, we need to remember that. Now, there have been a lot of pretty wicked kings who have ruled down through the, you know, the corridor of history and even into our day.

And yet God is the one who takes down kings, sets up kings for his purposes and his plan. And that goes for presidents as well. Okay. So this consisted with what Daniel has already said.

So Darius has made the king. God raised him up to be the king. God had all this planned out.

Remember, we understand that from the prophecies. Shortly before the Medo-Persians came to power, God had already prophesied that they would.

And after them, the Greek empire became the world power of the world. And long before the Greeks became the dominant empire of the world, God had already prophesied that they would. And after them, who? The Romans. The Romans. And long before, hundreds of years before the Romans came to power, God had already prophesied that they would.

[ 10 : 08 ] So God is the one who takes down kings, raises up kings. And we could just kind of use that as a cycle. Take them down, raise them up, take them down. God is sovereign. The realm, when it mentions here in verse 1, the realm over the Chaldeans, that's just simply a reference to Babylon.

Or by extension, the Babylonian empire, which was the empire that was dominant before the Medo-Persian empire. And so this is yet just another reference to the fact that Medo-Persians were

in charge of the world.

They had incorporated even the Babylonian empire into their territory. So the circumstances of his prayer, new power, Medo-Persian empire. Second, though, an old prophecy.

An old prophecy comes into play when we consider the circumstances of Daniel's prayer. Verse 2 says, in the first year of his reign, that is, in the first year of Darius' reign, I, Daniel, understood by the books.

That would be, that word literally means writings. And it's a reference to scripture. Understood by the scriptures, we could translate it.

[ 11 : 25 ] The number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish 70 years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

Now, don't get confused that this 70 years is the same as the 70 years that are going to be a part of the prophecy. Because the prophecy is not 70 years, it's 70 weeks.

Something totally different. We'll get to that eventually. Well, next time. All right, so Daniel, here's the point. Daniel was a student of scripture. Well, we would expect that. Daniel was a very godly man, righteous man, knew the word of God, was devoted to the Lord, the student of the scriptures. So he read them and studied them. And he believed that the scriptures were divinely inspired. Now, if he believed that, then we ought to believe that also. And because what did he say?

He said the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet. So it wasn't Jeremiah speaking, it was the Lord speaking. So what Jeremiah, and this really applies to all the Bible, but in this case specifically, you open up the book of Jeremiah, the prophet Jeremiah, and you can know that it is divinely inspired of God, all those words, because God spoke through Jeremiah the prophet.

[ 12 : 48 ] And that's just yet one of many, many, many statements in scripture about itself, about its inspiration. All right, so what did God say through Jeremiah?

Well, Jerusalem basically is saying that Jerusalem would remain in ruins until the Jews, Israel, the sinning Jews, received the full measure of God's discipline, is the prophecy.

And according to Jeremiah, this time of discipline or desolation, the ruin of Jerusalem will continue 70 years. And you can look it up, Jeremiah 25, 11 to 12, and also referenced in chapter 29, verse 10 of Jeremiah.

All right, so Daniel's reading the prophet Jeremiah. And he reads again the prophecy concerning the time period in which he's living, Israel's living.

They're in captivity. Jerusalem has been sacked and ruined and desolated. And so he's reading Jeremiah, and he's encouraged, because Jeremiah, or God said through Jeremiah, 70 years, 70 years.

[ 14 : 07 ] All right, so through the study of scripture then, Daniel realized that the 70 years had, was about to draw to a close, about to come to an end. Actually, possibly, if we get our dates right, and of course, it's not always easy to take some of the prophetic scriptures and actually assign dates, exact dates to them, because the Bible didn't include dates.

They didn't use dates in those days. You know, they marked time according to historical events. You know, things that happened, and who reigned, and you know, when this was built, and such and such.

So they don't have any dates. But we can pretty much see that Daniel's revelation, the revelation that we're going to see in this chapter, occurred in 538 BC.

And we can pretty much pinpoint that because of the nature of the prophecy. The prophecy names some things that are going to happen, and how many years are going to transpire after a certain thing is done, and then another thing is done.

So you can kind of mathematically pinpoint the timing of it. So 538 is when Daniel has this revelation, is going to have this revelation, and it's in Darius, or Cyrus, is going to release the Jews from their captivity in 538.

[ 15 : 26 ] 538 or 37, somewhere in that time frame. So we may be talking about months out when Jeremiah's prophecy will be fulfilled.

And by the way, Daniel took Jeremiah's prophecy literally, which is another lesson for how we ought to approach scripture. He didn't take this symbolically or figuratively.

God said 70 years. And guess what? It was 70 years. Indeed, 70 years. Not some symbolic 70 years or period of time.

But, you know, and usually you can pretty much use this as a rule of thumb. When the Bible mentions specific times or dates or numbers, it means for it to be taken literally.

And Daniel certainly did. And so that's a lesson for us today as we study God's word. So the circumstances of his prayer. A new power has come into the world.

[16:27] That would be the Medo-Persian Empire. But it's also the circumstances also that precipitated his prayer time was an old prophecy that he reacquainted himself with.

Next, or B, the character of his prayer. The character of it or characterization of it. Verse 3. Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

We see that a lot in scripture, don't we? All right. Now, first of all, his prayer was one of determination. He was very determined.

He said, I set my face toward the Lord God. Now, that's kind of a, I guess we'd call that a colloquialism. And I think, you know, even though it may not be, you know, something that we use in our culture, but I think we can kind of understand how determined this is, how deliberate.

I set my face toward the Lord God. That means he was very serious about this prayer. Very determined. And then as we kind of read through the prayer, as we're going to here in a moment, we kind of get the tenor of that from the prayer, that he was very serious, very deliberate, very determined, really to the point of pleading with God about it.

[17:59] So, his prayer was one of determination. Second, his prayer was one of directness. And he said, I set my face toward the Lord God.

So, it's very, very direct to make a request. And so, he's coming before the Lord. By the way, you know, this may, you know, to set your face toward the Lord to us may sound a little presumptuous or maybe a little prideful.

But, you know, and I've mentioned this before, the posture of prayer has changed quite a bit from culture to culture.

And I'm not sure, I don't know if anybody's ever done a study about when it became the right thing to do to bow our heads and such.

I think probably you could look to some things in scripture that, that, in some examples that might lead us to that. And there's nothing wrong with that. I mean, to, in fact, sometimes even on our face before God, in humility.

[19:09] But the Hebrews didn't pray that way. They prayed usually standing. And they prayed usually with their faces lifted up toward heaven and their arms out like this.

And very seldom, though there are occasions, you can read the Psalms and find David in a humble posture. But generally, this was the customary way for Hebrew to pray.

And so we can just kind of imagine that Daniel, very determined, is very serious, this prayer he is, this petition for God's people.

He's interceding for sinful Israel. And he, very direct in his face, he sets his face toward the Lord. So, very deliberate, very determined, very direct.

And his prayer was one of devotion. So, if there's any doubt that Daniel was humble, any doubt about that, the very next part of the verse clears that up.

[20:19] By prayer and supplication with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. When's the last time you did that? Have you ever done that?

Well, fasting maybe. I've done that many times over the years. But I've never done the sackcloth and ashes thing. And so we might, you know, you might be amused by that.

And difficult for us to imagine that. These were just simply symbolic expressions of humility. A kind of inner humility and submission.

So, this is what Daniel did. So, we can see it's very serious here in this prayer for God's people. All right. So, prayerful request. The circumstances of his prayer.

The character of his prayer. And then, finally, under this part of it, the contents of his prayer. And here's where we can learn a great deal.

[21:22] And I don't really even need to comment very much. And so, what I did was just to include the scriptures there in your notes. And a few little parenthetical notes there that may explain some key parts to each of these verses.

But here's the first element of his prayer. Adoration. Adoration. Verse 4. And I prayed to the Lord.

And, by the way, and I brought this out in putting the scriptures in your notes. And you look at your Bible and it's the same way. The Lord in all capital letters.

You notice that, right? And I've mentioned this a number of times before. And I'm sure probably all of you know this. But, you know, most of the translations will help us a little bit with just what Hebrew word is being translated here.

And it doesn't include the word. But anytime you see in your Bibles, L-O-R-D in all capital letters, it is to represent the sacred name for God.

[ 22 : 36 ] Which is technically in the Hebrew, Yahweh. Yahweh. I don't want to get into how that morphed eventually into Jehovah.

It's not important. But this is the name for God. In fact, really, it's the one and only name for God. You say, well, there are all kinds of other names for God. Well, there are titles for God and expressions of his character and his nature.

But Yahweh is his name. His name. And I might also mention that Yahweh, you know, just the pronunciation of that's the best that we can come up with.

Because you don't really know. Because if you were to look at the Hebrew text, you'd find out that it is a four consonant word in the text.

I don't know about you, but I don't think I can't pronounce words without vowels. Can you? I mean, how do you pronounce four consonants? Now, the Hebrew language, every word is built on three consonants.

[ 23 : 37 ] Then they have, you know, little symbols and such that help us with the vowel points and such so that they can pronounce them. But the name for God is the only four consonant word in the Hebrew language, in the biblical Hebrew language.

And it is the, what do they call it? The tetragrammaton, or it's four consonants. And it's unpronounceable. And it's supposed to be unpronounceable.

In fact, to the ancient Hebrews, they would never pronounce it, never speak it, never utter it. In fact, they wouldn't even write it. Because they believed it to be so sacred that they would never write that name.

And instead, when the copyist came to that name, well, they wouldn't write it, but they would put special other kind of letters and superscript above them.

The letters for Adonai. Now, Adonai is a title for God. Descriptive of his character, his sovereignty, his Lord. Adonai.

[ 24 : 46 ] So when the copyist would come to Yahweh, and I misspoke, they do put the, write the name there. Some have said that they usually pick up a new quill to write the name because they so honored it.

But they would write in superscript letters the word Adonai just above it. So that when they're reading scripture in the services and they read out loud or wherever, they wouldn't, they would make a mistake and try to pronounce the name God.

They would just say, yeah, Adonai. Adonai. Adonai. So this, this L-O-R-D in capital letters, that's Yahweh. That's his name.

And then it says, Lord, my God, my God. And you see that combination quite often in scripture. It's Yahweh, my Elohim, my Elohim, my ruler, the ruler of my life.

All right, so, and I prayed to the Lord. See how direct he is to the Lord, Yahweh himself, my Elohim, the ruler of my life. And made confession and said, O Lord.

[ 25 : 57 ] Now there's another word. L-O-R-D, but this time, you know, not in all caps. And put this in your parentheses there.

It's Adonai. Adonai. Some spell it differently than that in the English, but when you bring the Hebrew straight into the English, that's the way you would spell it.

Adonai, which again, it can be translated Lord, sovereign Lord, King, my Adonai.

Great and awesome God. And God is again, is Elohim. Who keeps his covenant and mercy with those who love him and with those who keep his commandments.

So this is, he's praising him. This is adoration. This is part, a part of his prayer. It ought to be a part of our prayer life. Praise God. And even in the words we use, you know, we would necessarily use, may not use Yahweh and Elohim and Adonai, but we would express in our adoration what those names mean.

[ 27 : 07 ] My King, my Lord, sovereign God. And, you know, you're great and awesome. You're a covenant keeper. You never break a covenant with me.

You never break your promises. So adoration is first part, first element of prayer. Then number two, confession. Confession. All right. Is that part of your prayer life?

It ought to be. And I'm sure it is for all of us. We may spend more time confessing sins than we do anything else. Well, for the exception of maybe the third thing we'll get to, and that is petition.

But that's jumping ahead. So confession was part of it. And this is a rather lengthy part of the prayer. And so let me just read through it. And you can pick up on a few things there.

But verse five, starting with verse five, we, and Daniel included himself here. All right. He's confessing sin in his prayers, what he's doing personally as well as nationally.

[ 28 : 15 ] He includes himself with his people. We, all Israel, myself included, have sinned and committed iniquity. That is, we've broken your law.

We have done wickedly and rebelled. Even by departing from your precepts, your word. We could also put in the word of law there.

Law is a more inclusive word. It's not just simply the Ten Commandments. It's God's word. So, his precepts. So, you know, what have we done?

We've departed from them. Your precepts and your judgments. What you have said in your word about what's right and what's wrong before you. Neither have we heeded your servants, the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers, our ancestors, and all the people of the land.

We didn't listen to them. You know, America needs to listen to her prophets. The Lord's prophets. Not prophets in the same sense, but the proclaimers of God's word.

[ 29 : 30 ] 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, all Israel, those near and those far off, and all the countries to which you have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against you.

O Lord, to us belongs shame of face. Which is an interesting expression. And, you know, this was an Oriental culture.

And like today, when you go to the Oriental, whether it's near East, far East, you know, it's a shame culture.

And so he's saying we were shamed. Shamed of face. Why is that? Because the sin, sin they had committed, the rebellion against God, had resulted in their captivity.

Shameful, that is. And not just captivity, but the destruction of Jerusalem. Their holy city. And, I mean, that's bad enough as it is. But for Israel personally, this is a shame to them.

[ 30 : 48 ] To our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we, every one of us, have sinned against you. So this is confession. Stephen Miller, one of my old professors from seminary, he wrote, To the Lord, our God, belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against you.

Meaning, there's yet hope. He's a merciful God. Ready to forgive. We 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.

Yes, 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.

And this is a reference to Deuteronomy. I gave that to you, didn't I? Is that in there? Deuteronomy 28, 15, following. And it would have included, this would be the curse that God would lay upon his people if they rebel, do not do his precepts, rebel against his law, crop failure, poor crops, infertility, fertility, disease, lack of rain, defeat before enemies, and the worst of all, expulsion from the land of Canaan, which is what happened.

God said, this is what I'll do to you if you depart from me. And he did. God's man of his word, God of his word.

[ 32 : 42 ] And he has confirmed his word, that is, God does not lie, which he spoke against us and against our judges who judged us by bringing upon us a great disaster.

In this case, exile from the land. For under the whole heaven, such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem. As 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.

That is, the nation had still not repented. You know, I'm always constantly, I read passages like this, compelled to make comparisons with our own nation.

Although we're not Israel, right? We're not, in any sense, God's chosen people like Israel was God's chosen people. But God does care about the way a nation conducts itself and a nation that rebels against his word, especially a nation like ours that was founded upon the principles of God's word. The more we rebel against it, and still there's no repentance. And I don't know, actually, what would have to happen, actually, to bring us to repentance. I almost convinced you, after 9-11, I've almost come to the conclusion that I don't think there's anything that could happen that would actually bring America to her knees.

[ 34 : 18 ] Therefore, the Lord has kept the disaster in mind that is always in mind since he said this is what he would do. It's always been there to do if Israel acted in a certain way.

And so he brought it upon us. For the Lord our God is righteous, that is, he's just in all the works which he does, though we have not obeyed his voice, as his judgments are always just.

So God dealt very seriously with Israel because of their sin. And terrible things happened to them. Multiple thousands and thousands were killed. The rest of them, most of them, were taken into captivity, made slaves. Jerusalem, the city, the temple, destroyed.

God did all that. Now, he used the foreign power to accomplish that, but God did that, and he was absolutely just in doing it. God's always just. All right, so these are the contents of the prayer.

[ 35 : 22 ] Adoration, confession, and then I've already given you the third one, petition. Petition. Petition. These three things. So starting with verse 15, he petitioned God on the basis of his covenant.

Now, you know, when we start reading this, we may get the idea that, you know, maybe in prayer we're supposed to kind of make deals with God, kind of use certain words, remind him of certain things.

You read some of the prayers in scripture and you get that idea. That, you know, like Moses, for many examples, reminded God that, you know, if your people are destroyed, it will look bad, you know.

The rest of the world will see this and they say, well, their God is impotent. You know, Moses was always reminding God of that kind of thing. You know, it's difficult to see a crossover how maybe that ought to be a part of our prayer life.

But Daniel used this. He petitioned God on the basis of his covenant. That is, that is the nature of God to be a covenant keeper. Verse 15. And now, O Lord, our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand.

[ 36 : 31 ] May I remind you about that, God? That's kind of what I'm saying. Don't you remember when you did that? Well, of course he remembered it. And made yourself a name as it is this day.

We have sinned. We have done wickedly. So, we've sinned. But remember what you did with your people, delivered them out of Israel.

And why did he do that? Because of his covenant that he made with Abraham. And this is what Daniel is bringing up before God. You know, the fault lies with Israel.

They were the ones who sinned. Daniel reminds God that he delivered Israel from Egypt in order to fulfill his covenant with Abraham. So, that's part of his prayer room.

He petitions God on the basis of covenant. He petitioned God on the basis of his character. The character of God. Verse 16. Oh, Lord. According to all your righteousness.

[ 37 : 29 ] So, he really highlights and brings up in his prayer the righteous character of God. I pray let your anger. So, according to your character.

The character of righteousness. I pray let your anger and your fury be turned away from your city Jerusalem. Your holy mountain because of our sins. And for the iniquities of our fathers.

Jerusalem and your people are a reproach to all those around us. So, Daniel petitioned God on the basis of his righteous character. Now, justice.

So, this basically what he's saying. He's saying justice has been served. God. Seventy years. Israel has been punished. According to your righteousness.

Punished for our sins. And now. And he's appealing to God's character. And now it would be righteous. It would be just. For you to restore us.

[ 38 : 26 ] And this is part of his petition. Verse 17 also says. Now, therefore, our God, hear the prayer of your servant and his supplications. And for the Lord's sake. Cause your face to shine on

your sanctuary.

Which is desolate. For the Lord's sake. Again, it's appealing to the character of God. For your sake. And then the petition God on the basis of his compassion.

Compassion of God. Verse 18. Oh, 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 do not present our supplications before you. Because of our righteous deeds. But because of your great mercies. He appealed to him on the basis of his mercy.

His compassion. For his people. And then finally. He petitioned God on the basis of his connection. Connection to his people. Verse 19.

[ 39 : 29 ] Oh, Lord, hear. Oh, Lord, forgive. Oh, Lord, listen. And act. Do not delay. For your own sake, my God. For your city.

Your city. And your people. Are called by your name. This is. You know. You know. We don't remind God of things.

Because he knows all things. We don't inform God in our prayers. But. We have plenty of examples in scripture. Of people praying.

By bringing promises. That God has. Has written in his word. Things God has done in the past. And bringing those into our prayer.

And God. Wants us to do that. And so this is what. Daniel did. So the contents of his prayer. Pretty good model for us. Adoration.

[ 40 : 24 ] Confession. And petition.