

## **Praying Toward Jerusalem**

*Dan 6:10 "And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days."*

## **They Prayed "Toward Jerusalem"**

### **Glory and The Temple of Solomon**

When the magnificent temple of Solomon was completed around 953 BC the priest's brought the Ark of the Covenant to its resting place at the new temple in Jerusalem and king Solomon spread forth his hands toward heaven and spoke a prayer of dedication in the presence of all the people as they were standing. During his prayer, he said:

*1 King 8:28-30 "...regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O LORD my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You today: "that Your eyes may be open toward this temple night and day, toward the place of which You said, 'My name shall be there,' that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes toward this place. "And may You hear the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. Hear in heaven Your dwelling place; and when You hear, forgive."*

And when he had finished his prayer fire came down and consumed the sacrifice and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. It was so heavy that the priests could not enter the house of the LORD and all of the people bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement. They began to worship and praise the LORD and were compelled to shout something very interesting:

*2 Chr 7:3 "For He is good, for His mercy endures forever."*

The Presence and glory of the LORD filled them with an awareness of God's goodness rather than fear of judgement because His fire had burned a sacrifice. Ever since this experience the children of Israel would, from whatever distance from Jerusalem, turn toward this holy place and worship, remembering that in whatever circumstance, the LORD would redeem His people and have mercy on them, no matter how distant they were, and how bad the circumstance. As David spoke in the Psalms when he was fearing for his life because all of his enemies and many of his own people wanted him dead:

*Ps 5:7 "But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy; in fear of You (and not them) I will worship toward Your holy temple."*

## **The Destruction of Solomon's Temple**

Solomon's Temple was destroyed by king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon about 450 years later, as a consequence to the idolatry and wickedness of most of the Hebrew kings. Most of the inhabitants of Israel were taken captive to Babylon and Daniel, being one of the Jewish exiles, prayed toward Jerusalem, remembering that the LORD was a God of mercy:

### **Daniel's Example of Remembering Jerusalem**

*Dan 6:10 "And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days."*

### **The Roman Empire**

After the destruction of Herod's temple in Jerusalem by Titus of Rome in 70 AD., and the final dispersion of the Jews, there are records of Jews throughout the Roman Empire praying with their faces turned toward the site of the temple in Jerusalem.

### **The Present Day**

Even in the present day, in Orthodox synagogues, the ark (the case that holds the Scrolls of the Torah) is positioned in such a way that the congregation faces the site of the temple in Jerusalem.