

God of mercy and forgiveness

Daniel 9

- BEFORE the growth group gathers

Read Daniel chapter 9 and make some notes



What shines out?



What is hard to understand?

- WHEN the growth group gathers

Discuss - “God is a ‘God of wrath’ in the Old Testament but a ‘God of love’ in the New Testament.”

Read Daniel 9.1-3, Jeremiah 29.1-14:

1. What did Daniel discover from reading the letter from Jeremiah? When would it take place?

2. The first year of Darius places this chapter about 65-70 years after the start of the Exile. What feelings and expectations might Jeremiah's letter raised for Daniel? What was Daniel's response?

Read Daniel 9.4-19:

3. What was the cause of the Exile? (cf Leviticus 25-26; 2 Chron 36.20-21)

4. What was Daniel's request? Why could Daniel make this request?

5. Is Daniel's prayer a prayer Christians could imitate, why/why not?

Read Daniel 9.20-3

6. What does this tell us about God and his willingness to respond to prayer?

Read Daniel 9.24-27

These periods of 'sevens' are notoriously difficult to understand. In the Law of Moses the Israelite life-cycle of obedience to God was organised in sevens (a Sabbath day, a Sabbath year, and Jubilee was a Sabbath of Sabbaths) and interestingly their disobedience would be punished in sevens (Leviticus 25-26). It seems these verses are designed to remind Israel of the need for ongoing obedience after the exile:

7. If the reference to 'sevens' was to point Israel to the issue of obedience more than a literal timeframe do you think these verses hold out hope for Israel's future obedience? Why/why not?

8. If the idea behind the 70 years/70 sevens of exile is the complete and full punishment for Israel's disobedience, the repayment of the debt of Sabbaths to the promised land, and a new start symbolised by the new temple, what might the forecast of 69 sevens mean? Where in history do we see God's complete and full punishment fall, if not on Israel? [cf Rom 3.21-26, 4.25; Heb 9.15; 1 Jn 2.2]

Prayer - take a moment to reflect on Daniel's prayer and in view of our privileged position having in Christ Jesus received the greater revelation the God who great in mercy, compose a prayer for yourself.

The following headings may be helpful:

Adoration

Confession

Thanksgiving

Supplication