

LIGHTHOUSE GROUP CURRICULUM

Daniel 9:1-19

LEADER'S STUDY

I Have a Confession...

Daniel 9:1-19

What is happening?

In about 597 BC, Daniel was taken from Judah by the invading army of Babylon into exile along with thousands of other Jewish exiles (2 Kings 24:8-16; Daniel 1:1-4). We don't know his age at the time, but he was likely a teenager. He quickly made a name for himself as a person of godly wisdom, and even after Babylon itself fell to the Medo-Persians (Daniel 5, v. 30 in particular), he remained an influential figure in the government. You can read how God used him as a powerful voice for His truth in chapters 1-8 of this book.

When chapter 9 opens, Daniel has been reading the writings of Jeremiah. (The two lived at the same time, but there's no evidence they knew each other.) Unlike Daniel, Jeremiah was left in Jerusalem to witness firsthand the horror of its fall to Babylon in 589 BC, as described in 2 Kings 25:1-21 and Jeremiah 52:1-27. The Lord revealed to Jeremiah that, devastating as this disaster was, He would return the Jews to their homeland after they'd lived in exile for 70 years (Jeremiah 25:1-12). That prophecy is what prompted Daniel's prayer here.

Where is the gospel?

The gospel isn't mentioned specifically in this passage, but Daniel's prayer is based on its foundation: that is, our sin and need for a savior—a need that God, in His unmerited love, promises to meet by forgiving any and all who repent and throw themselves upon His abundant mercy. Though in a foreign land, Daniel trusts God because of who God is. He confesses that God is sovereign over all, and that His judgment against sin is fair and just. He knows Judah will be redeemed because God promised to do it, and is able to do it. And that pretty much sums up what the gospel is and how it works: we confess our sin and our worthiness of God's wrath; we learn of how the merciful God paid the penalty of our sin Himself through Jesus' death on the cross; and we trust in that work to redeem us. Daniel died in Babylon, an old man separated from his people and his homeland. But he was never separated from his God. God rewarded that faith, as indicated by His personal promise in Daniel 12:13. (Also see Hebrews 11:6.)

As you prepare for this week, ask yourself questions like these: Does reading God's word ever prompt me to pray? When I reflect on the sin of unbelievers, do I blame others for the state of the world, or do I pray in humble repentance, as Daniel did? Did Daniel's prayer change the course of world events? What reward has God promised for my faith today? How is God calling me to think and to live differently? How does this change my perspective today? How is God calling me to respond based on this scripture?

Spend some time reading and meditating on these truths as you prepare for your meeting. Be willing to share this with your group and invite them to join you in sharing how God is asking them to respond to His word. Be willing to share areas that He is calling you to "follow Him" and make clear "I" statements about how you are going to align with Him.

Some helpful scriptures: 1 Kings 8:46-53; Ezra 9; Psalm 51; Proverbs 28:13; John 9:18-23; 12:42-43; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Timothy 6:12; James 5:16; 1 John 1:9-10. What other places in scripture speak this same truth?

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INTENTIONAL BIBLE READING

READ Daniel 9:1-19
and meditate on it.

Read in the ESV or similar word-for-word translation. Read it again in the NLT or other thought-for-thought version to get a different perspective.

Consider the historical context:

- 1- How does this book fit into the historical timeline of Israel?
- 2- Who was Daniel?
- 3- Who was Jeremiah, and which of his many prophecies is Daniel looking at here?
- 4- What was Israel's political situation at the time?
- 5- How might Daniel have had access to Jeremiah's writings?

Try to summarize the passage in your own words.

How does this apply to the church today?

POTENTIAL STUDY QUESTIONS

These are just questions you might ask to help your group discussion. Don't feel like you need to answer all of these as a group

Why is Daniel so determined to pray about something that God has already said He would do, v. 3?

What does Daniel say belongs to God, and what belongs to God's people, vv. 7-8?

When God's people sin, what does that say to unbelievers about God? (This is suggested, but not stated, in vv. 16-18.)

What seems to be the main point of these verses?

In the Bible, "confession" simply means agreeing with what God says-- not only with what He says about my sin, but also about Himself, what He's done, and what He will do. What such confessions does Daniel make in this prayer?

What do you learn about God from this passage?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Is our nation under condemnation by God? Why or why not?

Do I pray with the same intentionality that Daniel displays here?

What can I learn from Daniel's prayer concerning my prayers for our nation?

Is it better for a Christ-follower to focus on society's many sins, or on the extravagant grace of the Savior?

Is God honored more when we're quick to condemn, or when we proclaim His mercy?

What is your "I will" statement?
(rather than "we" or "us" or "Christians")

With whom are you going to share what you have learned?
(If we can share it with someone else, it means we really understand it, it cements it in our own minds, it makes us accountable to the truth, and it blesses the one who hears it. Rom 10:17)

Based on this passage, how should we pray?