

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, January 21, 2018

Passage: Daniel 9:20-27

Memory Passage: Daniel 9:24

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Dan. 9:20-27.** A bit of introduction—Last week we investigated Jeremiah 25:1-11 & 29:1-14 in an effort to understand what Daniel learned about the length of his captivity and why he might have begun his investigation of Scripture at this particular time (cf. v. 1). Today we will investigate Jeremiah a bit more so we can see concepts beyond the 70 weeks that he would have learned from his study. This context, and the context of his prayer, are crucial to understanding vs. 24-27.

(b) **Read Jer. 23:1-8, 31:31-24, & 33:14-26.** We could read many more passages, but these are indicative of Jeremiah's emphasis on God's covenant, both old & new, with his people. Jeremiah spends much time pointing out the ways in which Israel broke the covenant and God's faithfulness both to punish & redeem them based on His covenant faithfulness.

(c) Write down everything you learn about (1) the responsibilities of God's people with regard to the covenant, (2) God's responsibilities with regard to His covenant, and (3) the differences between God's old covenant and God's new covenant with His people. Also, make a list of words and phrases that appear as "covenantal language" in these passages.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Dan. 9:1-20.** As you re-read Daniel's prayer (and his summary in v. 20), make note of (1) how his prayer is driven by what he learned while studying Jeremiah concerning how God relates to His people through covenant (i.e. the same things you learned yesterday), and (2) key words and phrases that remind you of God's covenant promises and the people's covenant responsibilities. To think of this another way, marshal evidence for the veracity of this statement: "The *timing* of Daniel's prayer is prompted by Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 weeks of captivity coupled with Babylon's fall, but the *content* of his prayer is driven by both God's faithfulness and Israel's unfaithfulness to the covenant."

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Dan. 9:20-27.** What is the importance of the repeated thought: "While I was speaking and praying . . . While I was speaking in prayer . . . At the beginning of your pleas for mercy?" How should you apply this idea to your own life (e.g., Is this a universal principle? Does God always send out an answer to every one of our prayers as soon as we utter them?)?

(b) About what does Gabriel come to give Daniel "insight and understanding" (remember Daniel's requests in 9:16-19!)?

(c) Though we will see this again (10:11, 19), take a moment to meditate on the message "for you are greatly loved" (v. 23). What must this have meant to Daniel? What must it mean to *you*, that *you* are greatly loved?

(d) Though Gabriel tells Daniel he has come to give him insight & understanding, he also tells him he must "consider the word and understand the vision." Note the tension: God has spoken, but Daniel is still to work, think, ponder, and study. How do these same concepts govern you in your daily walk with God and study of the Scriptures?

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Dan. 9:20-27.** Remember that a mark of apocalyptic is numbers often having symbolic meanings. Given what you have learned so far, what could the idea of “seventy weeks” or 490 years symbolize (cf. the literal use of “seven weeks of years shall give you 49 years” in Lev. 25-8-17 and its spiritual fulfillment (7 x 7 x 10), or the symbolic use in Matt. 18:22)?

(b) Daniel is expecting information concerning 70 years of captivity, but surprisingly Gabriel says 70 weeks are decreed concerning his prayer for his people and his holy city. What should this tell you about the upcoming vision/prophecy?

(c) Explain each of the items listed in v. 24, how they answer Daniel’s prayer, and when they happen (e.g. are they all yet future from our vantage point, are they all accomplished in our past [but Daniel’s future], can they be “already-but-not-yet”)?

(d) One last point of information: the ESV follows the Masoretic text which has an accent after the Hebrew words translated “seven weeks” in v. 25 that dictates a break between the “seven weeks” and the “sixty-two weeks” whereas the NASB follows ancient versions which lack this accent. Though the accents in Hebrew were not added until the 1st millennium AD there is strong evidence to accept the accent and translate this as the ESV and RSV do. But in either case, one must seek to understand why Gabriel separated the first 7 from the 62 sevens instead of saying “69 weeks.”

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Daniel 9:20-27.** Now you are ready to take a shot at discerning the meaning of vs. 25-27! There are many differing opinions on what these verses mean and to what events they point, so many that I hesitate to give you all of the possibilities! So today you will keep your hermeneutical principles close at hand and do your best to “consider the word and understand the vision” (v. 23). Remember that context is important and your interpretation must fit the context. Remember the characteristics of apocalyptic and the rules that apply to interpreting this genre. Remember to interpret Scripture with Scripture (as opposed to interpreting Scripture with theological systems or concepts). Remember to interpret less-clear passages in light of clear passages.

(b) What is the primary importance of vs. 24-27 for Daniel? What is the primary importance for you?

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Seventy Weeks Are Decreed