

Daniel Discussion Questions 4.09.17

Leader Prep Section

Take time before your small group meeting to prepare by reading through the questions and scripture passage so that you can select 4-5 questions that are best suited to your group.

Try to work through at least one question from each of the sections - Hook, Book, Look, Took in order to move from observation to application.

When possible spend time in prayer for each member of your group.

Hook - Ice breaker type questions to help make the transition into the study time.

1. What similarities have you seen in the actions of Daniel and those of Jesus?
2. Our time of waiting for Jesus to return will end one day. What are you most looking forward to when Jesus returns?

Background

One of the differences between ancient Hebrew authors and modern authors is that ancient Hebrew authors were not all that concerned about chronology. This fact becomes very clear in a book like Daniel. The author had his reasons for why he structured the book the way he did, it was not an accident or proof of a sloppy author. He was using the order to help make his point. Our job as modern readers is to identify what the author was trying to accomplish so that we understand the meaning of the book. Between chapters 5 and 9 there have been several disruptions of the chronology, so with markers and others without. Belshazzar was introduced to us in chapter 5 and he took over as king from his father Nebuchadnezzar. Chapter 6 introduced us to Belshazzar's replacement as king - Darius the Mede and we get the story of Daniel in the lion's den. Chapters 7 and 8 are chronologically out of order since they took place during Belshazzar's reign. Chapter 9 takes us back to the first year of Darius' reign over Babylon and we are going to see a glimpse of Daniel's response to the continued exile of Israel in Babylon. Another interesting thing about ancient Hebrew authors is they did not shy away from sharing the good, the bad and the ugly about the people in the stories they were writing. Daniel stands out in that throughout this story we do not see any of his flaws. That is not to say he did not have any, but the author purposely does not include them in his narrative.

Read Daniel 9:1-19

Questions

Book - These questions are designed to get you into the text itself.

1. How did Daniel determine the length of Jerusalem's desolation?
2. What was Daniel's response to the continuing exile?
3. What is the main theme of Daniel's prayer in verses 4-14?
4. Beginning in verse 15 what does Daniel appeal to as the only hope of ending Exile?

Look - These questions will take you on a deeper look at what the passage means for us today.

1. Daniel looked to the Scriptures and found there was going to be an end of Exile. As we look to the Scriptures what can we learn about what is to come when Jesus returns?
2. Who else modeled prayer that was not just for himself, but for all of humankind? What benefit would there be if we prayed like Daniel and Jesus?

3. Why is corporate repentance necessary?
4. Daniel points to the Exodus as evidence that God has marked Jerusalem as His city and the Jews as His people. What evidence would you point to as proof that God has marked those who follow him?

Took - These questions are focused on applying the big idea from the text to our lives.

1. How can looking in the Scriptures broaden our prayer lives?
2. Daniel prayed for all of Israel not just for himself. How can we emulate that and why is it important?
3. How can we follow Jesus' and Daniel's example and pray corporate prayers of repentance?
4. What would it look like to pray the way Daniel prayed, by putting all the hope in God who has already rescued Israel and who can do it again?

Closing

Take time together to pray corporately, following Daniel's lead. Look to those parts of the Bible that inspire you to put all your hope in the One who has given everything to pay the price for our sins.

Reminder: Our allegiance is first to the Kingdom of Heaven, but held in tension with the fact that we are called to love this world and those who live in it. Total disconnection is not the answer, we must find a way to be in the world, not of the world.