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GROUP STUDY GUIDE

The Exiled Prophet, Part 10: A Prayer of Repentance (Daniel 9)

TEACHING SUMMARY

Daniel studies Jeremiah's prophecy as the seventy years of exile approach their end. Babylon has been judged, but Israel's restoration is incomplete. Instead of assuming that the passage of time makes repentance unnecessary, Daniel turns to God in prayer.

His fasting, sackcloth, and ashes express grief and humility. He acknowledges the people's sin and their refusal to listen to God's prophets. The exile demonstrates the consequences of covenant disobedience described in the law of Moses.

Daniel contrasts Israel's unfaithfulness with God's righteousness and covenant faithfulness. He does not blame God for the nation's suffering. He recognizes that the people have not properly sought God's favor, turned from iniquity, or gained insight into his truth.

The prayer asks for mercy rather than claiming that restoration has been earned. The teaching connects this appeal with Moses's intercession and with the principle that God's gifts are received by grace. Jerusalem's restoration would also honor God's name.

Gabriel arrives around the time of the evening sacrifice and tells Daniel that his prayer was heard from its beginning. The answer includes the seventy weeks prophecy: restoration will come, but further troubles remain. Its detailed interpretation belongs to the following teaching.

The application follows three responses in Daniel 9:13: seek God's favor, turn from wrongdoing, and understand his truth. Repentance includes actual change, while God's law teaches how to live faithfully. The teaching urges humble dependence on mercy together with willing obedience.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Daniel reads Jeremiah as the exile's seventy years near their end.
- Babylon's punishment does not mean every restoration promise is complete.
- Fasting, sackcloth, and ashes accompany Daniel's confession.
- Israel has sinned and rejected the prophets' warnings.
- The exile reflects covenant consequences described by Moses.
- God remains righteous and faithful despite Israel's unfaithfulness.
- Daniel appeals to mercy rather than his people's righteousness.
- Gabriel arrives at the time of the evening sacrifice.
- The answer promises restoration without removing all intervening trouble.
- Repentance involves seeking favor, turning from sin, and learning truth.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

Basic

1. Daniel learns about the seventy years from the prophet _____.
2. Daniel accompanies his prayer with fasting, sackcloth, and _____.
3. The covenant consequences of disobedience were written in the law of _____.
4. Daniel appeals to God's great _____ rather than the people's righteousness.
5. The messenger who comes to Daniel is _____.
6. Gabriel arrives around the time of the evening _____.

Challenging

1. The Hebrew word discussed for entreating God's favor is _____.
2. The teaching compares Daniel's intercession with Moses's prayer after the golden _____.
3. Daniel 9:13 says the people had not turned from their _____.
4. The same verse says they had not gained insight into God's _____.
5. Gabriel tells Daniel that he is greatly _____.
6. The teaching uses Deuteronomy 30 to challenge the claim that God's law is too _____ to obey.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Daniel pray for restoration even though Jeremiah has already prophesied it?
2. What does Daniel's confession reveal about his view of God and Israel's suffering?
3. How does appealing to mercy differ from claiming restoration as something earned?
4. What does the teaching's comparison with Moses's intercession contribute to its message?
5. How are seeking God's favor, turning from sin, and gaining insight related?
6. What practical change would reflect the teaching's understanding of repentance and obedience?

ANSWER KEY – GROUP GUIDE

Basic

1. Jeremiah
2. ashes
3. Moses
4. mercy
5. Gabriel
6. sacrifice

Challenging

1. challah
2. calf
3. iniquities
4. truth
5. loved
6. hard