

September 14 Answers

- 1) The return of the exiles to Jerusalem under the leadership of Sheshbazzar, Zerubbabel, and Jeshua. In the first year of Darius (aka **Cyrus** the Great), Daniel realized that the **seventy**-year exile in Babylon was drawing to a close (Jer 25:11–12; 29:10). This prompted him, not to celebrate, but to turn to God in **prayer**. He clothed himself with **sackcloth**, put **ashes** in his hair and observed a **fast**. He humbled himself and offered a confession of Israel's sin, asking God for mercy, forgiveness and restoration. This passage teaches us several lessons. First, Daniel was thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures. He was reading the prophecies of **Jeremiah**, and he was familiar with Solomon's dedicatory prayer for the temple (1 Kgs 8:47) and the **curses** against Israel in the law (Deut 29:18–29). Daniel **knew** God's Word, and we should as well. Second, rather than rejoicing at the thought of Judah's restoration, Daniel **humbled** himself in mourning for Judah's sin. He recognized that the exile was the result of rebellion against God, and that Judah's return would be robbed of its **spiritual** significance if the people didn't reflect on and mourn for the wickedness which had destroyed Jerusalem in the first place. This teaches us to never **forget** the sin for which God has forgiven us, for that memory will keep us from pride and future disobedience. Third, Daniel did not "name and **claim**" God's promise to restore Jerusalem, nor did he presume to "hold God to His word." Instead, he humbly asked God to hear and forgive and act, not for Israel's sake, but for the sake of His great **name** (Dan 9:19). This teaches us to bring our requests before God in a spirit of humility and with an attitude that values His name and reputation above our own wants and desires.