

Daniel 10

One of the most striking truths in Daniel 10 appears in verse 12, where the heavenly messenger tells Daniel that he has come because of Daniel's words, that is, because of Daniel's prayer. This is a remarkable statement. Daniel is not only visited by a heavenly being, but we are also told that this messenger had been delayed by conflict with the "prince of the kingdom of Persia" before finally arriving to speak with him. The implication is staggering: God, in His sovereign plan, responds to the humble prayer of a faithful servant by dispatching a messenger who is actively engaged in spiritual conflict in order to bring Daniel understanding of things to come.

This reality forces a deeply personal question: if God responds so powerfully to humble prayer, why am I not praying more? Why am I not more intentional about humbling myself before God? Daniel 10 presents prayer not as a passive or symbolic act, but as something that genuinely matters—something God uses to accomplish His purposes.

Prayer is one of the most underutilized tools available to believers, and yet many of us neglect it. One reason for this may be our lack of true humility. Often when something goes wrong in our lives, our first instinct is to attempt to fix it ourselves. We rush toward solutions, assuming that with enough effort or control we can resolve the problem. However, the reality is that the issues we face are frequently far bigger than we are. We cannot fully control what happens within our own bodies (they grow old or sick) or even within our dwellings (pipes can burst; roofs leak). If we are not ultimately sovereign over the most personal areas of our lives, what makes us think we should be the primary solution for circumstances beyond them?

Many of us would readily agree to the fact that we ought to further humble ourselves yet still hesitate to before God in practice. One of the strange tensions of modern Christianity is that we can feel—or at least claim—to be deeply concerned about an issue while remaining unwilling to devote sustained time and sacrifice to prayer. We may be emotionally invested, yet reluctant to spend more than a few moments praying or to temporarily adjust our lifestyles in order to seek God earnestly. Daniel, by contrast, humbles himself through fasting and mourning, demonstrating that seeking God often requires intentional self-denial.

This presents a valuable application for students and us alike. Following Daniel's example may mean taking a real problem in our lives to God and humbling ourselves in a tangible way. Practically, this could involve setting aside certain comforts or sources of entertainment. Redirecting even a small portion of that time from pleasing our senses to pleading with God could profoundly reshape our approach to prayer.

One might claim that they live a life that is already more humble than that of the lofty position that Daniel had. But to put things in perspective it is worth noting that a middle school student with a smartphone has access to more entertainment and pleasure than the king himself Daniel

would have served under had three hundred years ago. Therefore, I would argue that all of us in the modern time that we live in can only achieve a humble lifestyle but intentionally stepping back from the standard modern lifestyle.

Another reason prayer is often underutilized—especially among students—is simply that many do not know how to pray. Reflecting on my own experience in middle and high school, there were always moments when a teacher would reference something we were supposed to have learned previously, only to be met with blank stares. While my classmates and I would attempt to though our previous teacher under the bus and claim their teaching was lacking, it is far more likely that we simply did not remember the material. In the same way, it is possible—even likely—that students have been taught about prayer before but still feel uncertain or uncomfortable when they attempt to pray on their own.

Because of this, it is important to ask students directly whether they feel confident in prayer or whether they sense a gap between where they currently are and where they would like to be. Teaching prayer requires patience and repetition. A helpful reminder is the saying: “The time you become exhausted from saying something is around the time people are hearing it for the first time.” Just as students repeatedly ask where a passage is in the Bible, they need repeated instruction and modeling in prayer. We need to guard ourselves from growing discouraged by the need to teach and re-teach this foundational practice.

Daniel 10 also confronts us with the reality of spiritual warfare. In many ways, modern believers have been both helped and hindered by Enlightenment rationalism. While it has produced tremendous advances in science and mathematics, it has also trained us to trust only what we can observe empirically. As a result, spiritual warfare is often reduced to internal feelings of temptation or emotional struggle. Daniel 10, however, presents spiritual conflict as something far more concrete—real beings engaged in real conflict with real consequences.

Finally, Daniel 10 reminds us that the glory of God can be overwhelming. Daniel encounters this vision while already weakened from fasting, but even beyond that, he is physically undone by what he sees. The experience leaves him powerless until he is strengthened by God. This teaches an important lesson: there may be times when God’s work in our lives is deeply good and spiritually beneficial, yet still physically and emotionally exhausting. God’s provision of strength does not mean we will never feel tired; rather, it means that when we reach the end of our strength, He supplies what we lack so that we can continue.

In Daniel 10, prayer, humility, spiritual warfare, and divine glory are all woven together. The chapter challenges believers to take prayer seriously, to recognize the unseen spiritual realities around us, and to trust that God is at work—even when obedience and faithfulness come at a personal cost.

Who's who Consensus Summary

Figure	Identity	Consensus Level
Daniel	Historical prophet	Universal
Man in linen	Angelic messenger (possibly Gabriel)	Majority
Prince of Persia	Demonic power associated with Persian empire	Near-universal
Michael	Archangel; guardian of Israel	Near-universal
Prince of Greece	Demonic power associated with Greek empire	Strong
Daniel's companions	Humans affected by divine presence	Universal

The chart above explains who the people are in chapter 10 and how strong of consensus there is about those in the theological community. As you can see there are varying opinions about exactly who the differing people are in the passage but there is overall a fairly strong general consensus.