

## **Divine Assistance**

Daniel 10

When I was a young Police Officer in the 13<sup>th</sup> district, my partner and I were on patrol in the Humboldt Park Area. While monitoring the Police radio, we heard a call for assistance from a fellow officer who was struck in the face by an adult male who she had just stopped for a traffic violation. We learned later that he was driving a stolen vehicle. While responding to the call, we spotted the offender fleeing on foot down a residential street. I jumped out of the squad car and pursued the offender.

After jumping a fence and running through a dark gangway, I was able to tackle the offender in the backyard of a residence. While the offender resisted arrest, I tried to call for assistance and realized I had lost my radio during the foot pursuit. But instinctively my partner, knowing the direction I was running, had already informed the dispatcher. Within a few minutes, which seemed like an eternity, I could hear the assisting officers approaching as I struggled with the offender. I yelled out, "I'm in the backyard." Hearing my call for help, they came to my aide, helped to subdue the offender and take him into custody.

As a Police Officer in the performance of my duties, I had certain powers delegated to me by a higher authority that gave me access to fulfill my responsibilities to serve and protect the city of Chicago.

Similarly, we are going to see that Daniel, who was on assignment for God, had a spiritual authority that made him an enemy of the forces of darkness, but more importantly gave him access to the divine realm. In response to Daniel's prayers, this divine realm assisted Daniel in overcoming the invisible forces of evil so that he might serve his people and light up the darkness in Babylon.

**Main idea:** Light bearers behind enemy lines can count on divine assistance to fulfill their kingdom assignments.

This morning we are going to consider what believers in exile must receive from the divine realm to light up the darkness and fulfill their kingdom assignments.

### **1. Light bearers receive answers from the divine realm to know the plans of God.**

Daniel was a light in the darkness because foremost he received answers from the divine realm to know the plans of God. In verse one we read: *“In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar. And the word was true, and it was a great conflict. And he understood the word and had understanding of the vision”* (Daniel 10:1).

Before we unpack this revelation that was given to Daniel, it's important to note that he received it in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia. If you recall, the foundational seventy week prophecy recorded in chapter nine, which Daniel received in response to his prayers, came in the first year of Darius the Mede. There's some speculation as to whether Darius and Cyrus were co-regents (reigned at the same time) or were actually the same person. The scholars that believe they were the same person suggest that the name Darius, which means kingly, is more of a title and that Cyrus was his proper name.

Whichever is the case, the third year of the reign of Cyrus brings us to 536 BC. This date was around the time that Cyrus issued the decree that allowed some of the Jewish people to return to Jerusalem and rebuild, which was an answer to Daniel's intercession. Remember, Daniel knew to pray for the return of the Jewish people from God's word.

Daniel was a light in the darkness because God's word was a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path. Daniel epitomized Proverbs 3:5, *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths”* (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Daniel didn't live by the modern proverb that says, just follow your heart. How many of you know, that's really bad advice. Your heart and your feelings will lead you astray. As someone has rightly exclaimed, "Feeling are great followers but terrible leaders." We must not doubt in the dark what God has revealed to us in the light.

Daniel didn't get swallowed up by the darkness because he walked by faith not by sight. He sought answers from God's word and he clung to the promises of God. Because he responded to the light that God gave him, God gave Him more light. When he didn't understand what's was going on or how to respond to visions from God, he again turned to God in prayer with great reverence and humility.

In the same way, if we are going to overcome the darkness and shine the light that can turn others to righteousness, (Daniel 12:3), we must walk in the light. And walking in the light doesn't mean that we will have all the answers, but that we are obeying what God has clearly revealed in His word.

In the Bible today we have even greater revelation than Daniel did. How many of you know, the scriptures are sufficient for all of life. Like Daniel, God has assigned a specific plan for each of our lives and spiritual gifts to carry them out. But the way to discover the ways God wants to use us, which may not be revealed specifically in the word, is by obeying what is clearly revealed in the word for us all.

Notice that concerning the revelation that Daniel received, which involved a great conflict, Daniel *understood the word and had understanding of the vision (v. 1b)*. And according to verse 12, we learn that his understanding came in response to setting his heart to seek the Lord. If we are going to grow strong in the Lord, we must set our hearts to know the Lord. We must get into the word of God so that the word of God gets into us.

Now what motivated Daniel's prayers for insight and understanding? Last week we learned that it was the prophecies he read in the book of Jeremiah that prompted his prayers to God for the return of his people to Jerusalem (Jeremiah 29:10-14). And two years later, Cyrus

the Persian King issued a decree to allow the people of God to return. But although the decree was written, according to verse one, Daniel understood from the vision that there was great conflict. What was this great conflict?

We know from the book of Nehemiah that in addition to many logistical challenges in returning to and restoring Jerusalem, there would be opposition from people in the visible realm that did not care about the welfare of the people of God. But greater than the physical challenges, Daniel also learned from the visions that there was a cosmic battle in the invisible realm regarding the affairs of his people that were directly influenced by his scripture saturated prayers.

Furthermore, Daniel would learn that although his people would return to the land, the persecution of the Jewish people would continue as other rulers would come and go, as we will see in the concluding chapters of Daniel.

Now with this in mind, beginning in verse two we read: *“In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks. 3 I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks”* (Daniel 10:2-3).

In regards to the vision of great conflict, what was Daniel mourning about? If the decree by Cyrus was given that allowed the Jewish exiles to return, wasn't this a time to rejoice?

One commentator explained, “Unfortunately, the number who returned [to Jerusalem] was small, and opposition arose almost immediately to the rebuilding program. Daniel was not there, having remained in Babylon (perhaps because of old age or to assist through support, encouragement and prayers); nevertheless he had received reports from the homeland. His heart was heavy, so he went into mourning for three weeks (v.2). He also chose not to anoint himself with body oils that would soothe and refresh his skin in dry climate. Whether he did this publicly or privately we do not know. What we do know is that God heard his prayers and saw his humiliation.” (Danny Akin)

Daniel didn't come to understand all things, but what he did clearly understand is that the prayer of God's people really matter in the unfolding and outworking of His redemptive plans. The vision and amazing prophecies he received encouraged Daniel's faith in the sovereignty of God and moved him to intercede with great faith and conviction.

There's some disagreement today on how to interpret the prophecies of Daniel and how they relate to the end times. But whatever the disagreements are, if we are seeing the big picture as we ought to, the evidence will be in us not leaning on our own understanding and strength in this life. Rather we will be humbled before God's sovereignty and seek His answers to our deepest needs and the needs of others in the word and in prayer. When we know God and see our neediness in light of His worthiness, our hearts will be burdened with what burdens God's heart.

This brings us to our second point.

## **2. Light bearers receive anguish from the divine realm to know the passion of God.**

In addition to receiving answers from the divine realm to know the plans of God, **light bearers receive anguish from the divine realm to know the passion of God**. After fasting and praying for 3 weeks because of the vision of great conflict, we read beginning in verse 4:

*“On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river (that is, the Tigris) 5 I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. 6 His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude. 7 And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves. 8 So I was left alone and saw this great vision, and no strength was left in me. My radiant appearance was fearfully changed, and I retained no*

*strength. 9 Then I heard the sound of his words, and as I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face in deep sleep with my face to the ground. 10 And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees” (Daniel 10:4-10)*

While Daniel, who had been fasting and praying for 3 weeks, was standing on the Tigris river, He saw a vision of a glorious divine being. There's some debate about the identity of this being that Daniel saw. Some suggest that he was an Angel reflecting the glory of God. Others believe that the dazzling and glorious person Daniel encountered was a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus.

Those who lean towards the vision being an appearance of Jesus, also suggest that the divine being that later touched and spoke to Daniel in verse 10 was not the pre-incarnate Jesus, but another being; an angel that came along with the pre-incarnate Christ.

Because the dazzling description of the vision that Daniel saw with legs like bronze, a face like lightning, and eyes like flaming torches resembles the description given of Jesus in Revelation, I lean towards Daniel's vision being a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus.

Whatever the case, what we do know for sure is that the glimpse that Daniel was given into the invisible realm and his encounter with the glory of God, drained him of all his strength. And although the other men with Daniel did not see the vision, they trembled and fled. What came to mind as I read this was the Apostle Paul's encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. His companions could hear a voice, but did not see the glory of Jesus (Acts 9:7).

Now when Daniel heard the words of the glory of God before him, which was like the roar of a multitude, he fell on his face in a comatose like state. Like the prophet Isaiah when he encountered the Lord, Daniel was undone before the blazing light and thunderous sound of the glorious vision. (Isaiah 6)

After being overcome by the vision and falling to the ground unconscious, in verse 10 an Angel touches Daniel and he rises to his

hands and knees awake, but trembling. While on his hands and knees trembling, the Angel speaks words of encouragement to Daniel:

*“And he said to me, “O Daniel, man greatly loved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you.” And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling” (Daniel 10:11).*

While Daniel is still trembling on his knees, the Angel assured Daniel that he was greatly loved and that he was to get up because the Angel was sent to him not to condemn him, but to give Daniel greater understanding. And in verse 12 he makes it clear that he was sent to Daniel in response to his humble and biblically informed prayers:

*“Then he said to me, “Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words” (Daniel 10:12).*

Before we look more into the spiritual warfare that transpired in the unseen realm in response to Daniel’s prayer (v.13-15), listen to Daniel’s response to the Angel in verse 16. After going mute due to the insight he received of the conflict transpiring in the invisible realm, which Daniel’s prayers provoked, we read in verse 16:

*“And behold, one in the likeness of the children of man touched my lips. Then I opened my mouth and spoke. I said to him who stood before me, “O my lord, by reason of the vision pains have come upon me, and I retain no strength” (Daniel 10:16).*

It’s important to note that the insight that Daniel received from the Angel into the spiritual realm, continually overwhelmed Daniel. Repeatedly, the Angel, who some suggest was Gabriel, had to strengthen Daniel so that he could have the capacity to receive what was being revealed to him.

Furthermore, the vision didn’t just physically drain Daniel, he was in pain and in anguish over it. Before receiving the strength that he

needed to handle the revelations that he would later be given, Daniel not only came to the end of himself, but his heart was broken for the things that break God's heart.

Now this is not only true of Daniel but of all the saints that God uses greatly to be lights in this world. Like Daniel, we must set our hearts to seek the Lord. And as God reveals Himself to us in the word and in answer to prayer, we will see our neediness in view of his worthiness. Our hearts will break for what breaks His. And as we pray about those things that break God's heart, God will give us even greater insight into what He's up to in very specific ways so that we might join Him in His work.

Sadly, as I've shared before, many Christians today are being disciplined more by cable news and social media than they are by Jesus Christ. Consequently they're more passionate about politics and the cares of this life than they are about advancing the cause of Christ in this world. And because we are so consumed with the passions of this world, often when we do pray, we seek worldly comfort more so than a worthy cause. But as Hellen Keller said, "True happiness... is not attained through self-gratification, but through fidelity to a worthy purpose."

This brings us to our final point.

### **3. Light bearers receive assistance from the divine realm to know the power of God.**

Light bearers not only receive answers and anguish from the divine realm to know the plans and passion of God, they receive assistance from the divine realm to know the power of God. After the angel reassures Daniel, who was overwhelmed by the revelation the Angel was sent to give him, beginning in verse 13 we read:

*"The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, **14** and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for*



*days yet to come.” 15 When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and was mute” (Daniel 10:13-15).*

Notice that the Angel, who was dispatched to give Daniel understanding of what was to come for his people, reveals that he was delayed by resistance from the prince of the kingdom of Persia. The prince of Persia here is a reference to a demon that was influencing the rulers of the Kingdom of Persia.

Interestingly, this demon delayed the angel sent to Daniel for 21 days, which was about the same amount of time that Daniel was fasting and praying (v.1). Its been said, God’s delays are not always His denials. Persevere in prayer. More is happening than you even realize.

Now, as Daniel was praying, the Angel, who was sent to assist Daniel and is being opposed by a demon, is joined by Michael, one of the chief princes, who came to help him.

Daniel Henderson often says, “When a church gets serious about prayer, we pick a fight with the devil at a whole new level.” I would also add that when we get serious about prayer and our prayers are in tune with the purposes of God, they can provoke a fight between angels and demons.

Regarding spiritual warfare in the unseen realm, one commentator writes: “Several years ago it was popular to talk about “territorial spirits,” demons assigned to particular regions, governments, and institutions. Peter Wagner of Fuller Seminary wrote a book titled *Engaging the enemy: How to fight and defeat territorial Spirits* (Regal, 1991). While some have run the risk of preoccupation and speculation about angels and demons, we play the fool if we make light of or ignore the spiritual reality. Daniel 10 makes clear that (1) angels and demons exist. (2) angels and demons engage one another in spiritual combat, (3) certain demons, and probably certain angles are given particular geographical and governmental assignments, and (4) our prayers in some genuine measure enter into and affect the battles being fought.

John Piper would agree with my theological assessment and summarizes it well: 'I would conclude that there are high-ranking demonic powers over various regimes and dominions and governments and realms of the world: and that they work to create as much evil and corruption and spiritual darkness as they can. They strive to interrupt Christian missions and ministry as much as they can (Angels and Demons)' (Danny Akin)."

Notice also that after Daniel was weakened again by the glimpse he was given into the invisible realm and no doubt the opposition demons posed to the people of God, again he needed to be strengthened. Beginning in verse 18 we read:

*"Again one having the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me. 19 And he said, "O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage." And as he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me" (Daniel 10:18-19).*

The fiercest and most wearisome battle we will face as Christians is to be engaged in spiritual warfare. We will reap if we do not lose heart. But to persevere we must be strengthened in the Lord. Daniel was strengthened and encouraged by being reminded once again that he was greatly loved. This is why seeking God's face first and not just His hand must be the priority of our prayer lives. We must be reminded of who God is, and especially that in Christ we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

After being strengthened once again in the love of God, the Angel continued with his revelation to Daniel:

*"Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come. 21 But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince" (Daniel 10:20-21).*

Together with the assistance of Michael, and the persistent prayers of Daniel, the Angel reaches Daniel to fulfill his assignment of giving him insight into what was to come for the people of God. Before he departs for his next divine assignment, he informs Daniel that he is going to give him further understanding about what is written in the book of truth.

It's important to note here that much of the Angel's time with Daniel was about preparing him for the revelation concerning God's plan for Israel and the kingdoms that would continue to rule over them until the end times (v.14).

Similarly, to grow in our capacity to understand and obey God's truth we must be prepared. And the primary way that we are prepared today is by growing in intimacy with God and in meaningful fellowship with the bride of Christ, which is the church.

Amazingly, before departing, the Angel also gives Daniel insight into his next assignment. As one commentator explained: "The Angel asks Daniel a rhetorical question: "Do you know why I've come to you?" The answer had already been given, at least in part, in verses 12 and 14. Parenthetically, the Angel informs Daniel that he has to return to fight against the prince of Persia. The Persian Empire lasted from 539 to 331 BC. After he battles the Persian demons, he will then engage the spiritual forces of Greece. That empire would exist, in some form from 331 to 63 BC. As with Persia, evil powers would be working for Greece in the unseen [realm], engaging the good forces (angels) of God in a battle for the kingdoms of this world and for the souls of men.

Before [Gabriel] leaves, he provides one more final word: as I go to fight on Israel's behalf, only "Michael, your prince," is with me. Why [only Michael]? Was it because no one else was courageous enough? God has an untold number of angels to do his bidding. A lack of courage never appears to be a problem for them, [as one bible translation suggest]. No, the reason is because no one else was needed. Gabriel and Michael, [who was assigned to Israel] would be more than sufficient to carry out God's plan and purposes." (Danny Akin)

The revelation from the Angel strengthened Daniel to continue to be a light in the darkness. And amazingly, the prayers of Daniel assisted Angels in the fulfillment of their assignments.

Keep in mind, Daniel was not only encouraged by the Angel to persevere by revealing that his prayers were being heard by God who greatly loved Daniel, but Daniel also learned to encourage himself in the Lord with the book of truth, the same book that the Angel used to encourage Daniel.

On this side of the cross, we have the full revelation of the word of God which includes all that Daniel learned and so much more. And the main truth that the book of truth is meant to convey from Genesis to Revelation is that on the cross Jesus solved man's greatest problem, namely sin and won the victory. Through His death on the cross and resurrection, Jesus triumphed over all demonic principalities and power. (Col. 2:13-15)

Our greatest battles will be won on our knees. The ultimate victory however is not determined by our prayers, but by the victory Jesus won on the cross. And because of the victory of Christ, all believers get to participate in the unfolding and outworking of God's redemptive plans in the world. We don't fight for victory; we fight from victory.

Because of the blood that Jesus shed on the cross, Samuel Chadwick's words ring true: "Satan dreads nothing but prayer. His one concern is to keep the saints from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, he mocks our wisdom, but he trembles when we pray."  
Samuel Chadwick

## **Conclusion**

May the revelations of *the book of truth* strengthen us daily to be light bearers who receive divine answers to know God's plans, divine anguish to know God's passion, and divine assistance to know God's power for the greater fame of Jesus.

