

As you're turning, I'm going to show you a verse from the middle of the chapter...verse 12. See it on the screens...

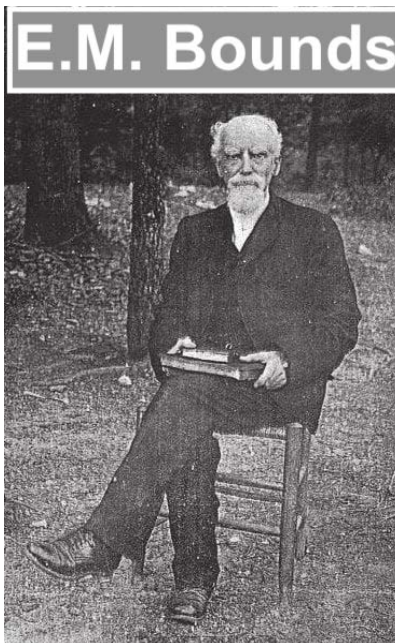
Daniel 10:12

¹² 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.”

Now, in my opinion, this verse is NOT ONLY the key verse to today's passage (chapter 10)...but is also the key verse to the entire book of Daniel...and here's why... Think with me now...Daniel is in Babylon because his people, the children of God, the people of the southern kingdom of Judah, have rebelled against God...they have rejected the pleas of the prophet Jeremiah...they did so for 40 years. He begged them to repent and turn to God and reject the pagan ways of their neighbors, but they refused. Ultimately, God used the nation of Babylon to punish the people for their sins and the best and the brightest were hauled off to Babylon, where they would remain in captivity for 70 years.

You say, “Yeah, we get that...but what's that got to do with Daniel setting his heart to pray.” Everything! Everything...because when you and I are in a world of trouble...we have to pray! When there is trouble on every side and there seems to be no way out...we have to pray!

Jesus said in Luke 18:1 that **men ought always to pray and not lose heart**. It's true, because God has designed prayer as the mechanism through which we can take part in the accomplishing of God's will and purposes. God has designed prayer so that we might affect time and eternity? See this man...

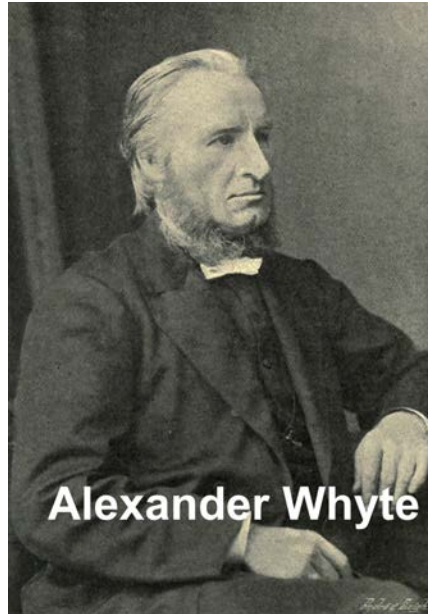


that's E.M. Bounds...the great Methodist Episcopal pastor of the late 1800's. In his classic book on prayer: “Power Through Prayer,” he said this:

“God has of his own motion placed himself under the law of prayer, and has obligated himself to answer the prayers of men. He has ordained prayer as a means whereby he will do things through men as they pray, which he would not otherwise do... Prayer is the one force which puts God to work in earth's affairs... If, then, prayer puts God to work on earth, then, by the same token prayerlessness rules God out of the world's affairs...and leaves man on earth the mere creature of circumstances, at the mercy of blind fate or without any kind of help from

God. It leaves man in this world with its tremendous responsibilities and its difficult problems, and with all its sorrows, burdens and afflictions, without any God at all.” E.M. Bounds, *Power Through Prayer*

Profound! See this gentleman...



That's the great Scottish preacher of the 1800's, Alexander Whyte, said this about prayer: **“Prayer is princely work. Prayer, at its best, is the noblest...the most magnificent and stupendous act that any creature of God can perform on earth...”** Alexander Whyte, Scottish Preacher

Church, we know this to be true, yet prayer is one of the most neglected parts of our lives. None of us pray enough and we know it. Prayer is often our last resort, instead of our first line of defense. Prayer is often seen as little more than crossing our fingers and hoping it all works out. Unfortunately, most of our prayers aren't offered in faith, but in futility and almost hopelessness... Many would rather put their trust in “good luck,” finding a four-leaf clover or seeing a shooting star...than to get on their knees and go into the war room of prayer.

Well, not Daniel...this man of prayer believed God would move if he prayed and God did. Let's look at verse 1 of chapter 10, as we see today, “A Look into the Spiritual Realm.”

Daniel 10:1

¹ 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.^[a]And he understood the word and had understanding of the vision.

Now, we just read we're in the third year of the reign of King Cyrus of Persia (536 BC), and you'll remember, the Medo-Persian Empire conquered Babylon...see the statue of Nebuchadnezzar:



Babylon was the head of gold and then the arms of silver representing two people groups...the Medes and Persians. The Medes, via Darius would take over, but ultimately Cyrus of Persia would take over as the ultimate ruling power. It was Cyrus who gave the decree in his first year of reigning as King, to allow the exiles of Israel to return home...in my mind...all because of the counsel of Daniel. Cyrus was pagan...why would he let workers/slaves leave...because Daniel asked him to and Daniel was able to do great things even in the midst of a pagan government.

Well, Daniel got to see the first wave of Jewish exiles return home to Israel...and the prophet Ezra tells us in his writings that 42,000 people went back. You say, "That's a lot of people." Well, not really. Not when you consider the fact that there were probably 10 times that number (after 70 years of living in Babylon). 42,000 is a drop in the bucket. So, why didn't more go back.

Church, think about it, 90% of the people had never seen Israel. That was 70 years ago. Why didn't they go back? They were comfortable. We could say, they were "sufficiently paganized." They were immersed in the pagan society in which they lived. They were prosperous. They been absorbed by the culture. Hmm...that sounds like many Christians in America...absorbed culture. No, these people were too comfortable, even being slaves in a pagan land, to care about going back to the Promised Land, too absorbed in pagan living to care about the rebuilding the holy Temple in Jerusalem.

BTW...when the 42,000 got to Jerusalem, it took them seven months just to clear the rubble off the temple ground, and as they started to rebuild the temple, according to Ezra 4, they were opposed, harassed and mocked with such scorn and derision, they quit. The work on the Temple came to a screeching halt, and wouldn't be restarted for 16 years. The work on the Temple resumed in 520 BC and the Temple reconstruction was finally completed in 515 BC. That's 21 years after they left Babylon.

Well, if we back up those 21 years to the point of Daniel 10 and we know that Daniel is approximately 85 years old. And two years into the return of the 42,000, Daniel, (in his official cabinet position with King Cyrus), is getting reports of all the opposition and backlash and he's greatly distressed. He's burdened. Things aren't going well for his people. And many back in Babylon have refused to go home. So, what does he do? He does what he always does. He prays! But, he does more than pray:

Daniel 10:2-3

² 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 is in mourning. He's fasting...not a total food and drink fast...but no delicacies (likely meat), and he didn't take a bath...no deodorant...he didn't anoint himself...for 21 days... He's serious folks. Prayer is serious work...and he took it seriously. There's something powerful when we fast and pray. Have you ever done that? Daniel is fasting certain portions of his diet. Is that to twist God's arm?

No...it's to say, "Serious times call for serious prayer." It's saying to God...I care more about showing you my fervency than my comfort.

Now we need to understand, nowhere does the New Testament command followers of Jesus Christ to fast. But fasting is very prominent in the Old Testament. In fact, the Jews fasted on the Day of Atonement every year. We know that Nehemiah fasted before rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. Queen Esther fasted when the Jews were in danger of being massacred by Haman. King David fasted over his sick child. In the New Testament, we know Jesus fasted for 40 Days and 40 Nights. The church at Antioch fasted before setting apart Paul and Barnabas for their first missionary journey. Paul told the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 7 that a married couple may even fast intimacy for a brief season of time to concentrate on prayer. So, from that we know that fasting doesn't have to be food. It can be other things...you could fast social media, you could fast TV, you could fast dessert or soft drinks. But, if you fast food and you have a medical condition, you should consult with your doctor first.

The bottom line about fasting is this: people in the Bible fasted and prayed because they wanted something specific to happen. They either wanted God to change them, to change their circumstances, or to reveal something to them. Ultimately, fasting is far more about focus than food. Fasting is not about manipulating God, because fasting will not cause God to do something that is outside of His will. Fasting is all about—changing us, not changing God. In Scripture we see fasting this way...the more critical the situation, the more critical the call is for fasting and prayer.

And this was true of Daniel. He was so burdened for his people that he cried out to God. And James, the half-brother of Jesus tells us that it's that kind of heart attitude and that kind of spirit that gets a response from God. **James 5:16 says: "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."** How about you? Are you a righteous person? Not perfect...but seeking God with all you've got... See it again:

"Prayer is princely work. Prayer, at its best, is the noblest...the most magnificent and stupendous act that any creature of God can perform on earth..." Alexander Whyte, Scottish Preacher

And yet, we don't pray and neglect it to our own detriment. Maybe today we'd be stirred to pray. Verse 4...Daniel's answer to all of his praying is coming...

Daniel 10:4-6

⁴On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river (that is, the Tigris) ⁵I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. ⁶His 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.

Now this isn't a dream or a vision... Standing right in front of Daniel is a being that literally sent him to his knees. The question is: Who is this? Well, some scholars say it's Jesus in a preincarnate theophany...because the description of the person is very similar to the description of the person the Apostle John sees in Revelation chapter 1 and chapter 19.

But I'll tell you...I don't believe it's Jesus, and it's because this being is going to need help from the archangel Michael to get to Daniel because of demonic interference...and Jesus needs no help to overcome demons. No, I believe this is the angel Gabriel, whom we saw identified in chapter 9 verse 20...but if it's not Gabriel, I'm convinced it is an angel. Watch what happens to the men with Daniel...

Daniel 10:7-10

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,^[b] 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.

Church, here's an 85-year-old man with his face in the dirt. Most of us wouldn't put our face on carpet, much less dirt. He's lying there like a dead man and he's alone. Alone before a representative of heaven. ALONE. Most people don't like being alone. That's why people like bars and nightclubs...and parties...they want to escape loneliness. ALONE. Oh, there's something about being alone before God. Being still and knowing that He's God. Listen...be okay with being alone with God. It's a good thing! I talked about this with the ***Iron Men on the Go*** this week. Check it out.

Well, the angel touches him and all he can muster the strength to get on his hands and knees. He's seeing someone from heaven and he's dumbfounded. When's the last time you've been dumbfounded before God? You're so enthralled by his presence that you're dazed...rocked to your core...

Church family, as I read this...I had to ask myself, "Why do you rush so much when you pray?" I rush in prayer to get it over with...to more important things... There is nothing more important! I'm working myself to death...yet, if I would just pray...I could save myself a lot of trouble.

Daniel...this 85-year-old prophet of God, with dirt on his mouth is on his hands and knees...shaking all over...

Daniel 10:11-12

¹¹ 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. ¹² 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."

And there's that verse we started with this morning. That verse of fervency...DANIEL HAD SET HIS HEART... Church, that's got to be us! We have to set our hearts!! We have to get serious about praying! And when we do...we don't have to be afraid! FEAR NOT the angel said. I HAVE COME BECAUSE OF YOUR WORDS!

But we don't think God will do that for US, do we? It's a lie... We have not because we ask not...but there's something else... "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man." Meaning, we can't be living in sin! Oh listen...don't think God is going to bless you and do what you ask if you're living in sin. Psalm 66:18 tells us: "If we regard iniquity in hearts, He will not listen to us!" So, would you come clean? Right now...whatever it is that you need to repent of it! There's such freedom in knowing that you're clean before the Lord. But for most...they live in constant guilt and that's why they seldom pray, simply because they feel condemned and defeated.

Stop listening to Satan's lies! Why? **Because you are greatly loved!!!** That's what the angel told Daniel! YOU ARE GREATLY LOVED. Now, these next two verses are astounding...

Daniel 10:13-14

¹³ 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."

Church, we're peering into the spiritual realm... That "prince of the kingdom of Persia" is a demon. Satan dispatched one of his demons to fight against Gabriel to keep him from getting the revelation of these visions about the End Times to Daniel. And this shouldn't surprise us because we know...

Ephesians 6:12

¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Church, Satan has his army. He's got his sergeants, lieutenants, colonels and generals...and they have their assignments. There are demons assigned to nations, leaders of nations and people in those nations. These demons never die...they just get reassigned. The demon of Persia was trying to stop Gabriel and it worked for three weeks, until Michael, an archangel showed up...and he was no match for him.

Listen...there are high ranking demons (some call them: territorial spirits) and they're assigned throughout the world. And believe me...they're in Washington DC and they have the ear of many people in that wicked city. They have the ears of people in Hollywood and Google and Apple and the sports world, athletes, those in the entertainment industry and those in academia, in our colleges and universities and now in many of our high schools and elementary schools across this nation...there are demons entrenched in the media and they feed our children a narrative that they soak in with that blue glow on their faces as they stare at screens. Oh, don't be deceived...demons are running most of what's happening in this country by way of the majority of our institutions and sadly, that includes many of our so-called churches.

Oh, Satan is incredibly clever and incredibly deceptive. He has had his network of demons behind all of the atrocities of history. And so it was with Gabriel and this demon of Persia...but Michael fought him off so that Gabriel could get the message of the future to Daniel...

Daniel 10:15-19

¹⁵ When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and was mute. 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. ¹⁷ How can my lord's servant talk with my lord? For now no strength remains in me, and no breath is left in me." ¹⁸ 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."

I was reminded of how Jesus was strengthened by ministering angels after He was tempted in the wilderness desert after 40 days of fasting.

Matthew 4:11

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

Church, we entertain angels unaware, as the writer of Hebrews says. We won't know till we get to heaven how many times we've had angels helping and ministering to us. Sometimes unseen and sometimes perhaps appearing as humans...but, we didn't recognize them. Angels ministering to us, and for Daniel bringing messages from heaven-all because someone prayed. The angel continues:

Daniel 10:20-21

²⁰ 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."

Michael was and is the angel of Israel. Well, who's next in the line of kingdoms after Medo-Persian Empire?



The Greek Empire...and that's another example of the accuracy of Scripture...because the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great would indeed come and a demon would be assigned to that kingdom as well.

Church, Daniel was involved in a war! An unseen battle that became SEEN for him. So, how do we apply this message? That's easy: PRAY and to remember that we don't wage war like the world. Watch...

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵ We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

Church family there are strongholds in our country, there are strongholds in our state and county and there are strongholds in this room. There is sin in this room that's crippling Christians and damning lost souls to Hell. There are people here today who need to be delivered and those of us who are Christians need to be praying for all we are worth...eating dirt...fasting...crying out to God to send angels to fight of the demons who oppress and lie to the lost and to those who are being deceived.

Would you be willing to come and pray today and would this prayer be the beginning of some fervent praying for the lost and for those who have strongholds in their life who need to be delivered.
