

The Unseen Battle

Daniel 10:1–21 (ESV)

OPENING ILLUSTRATION: Our world has been locked in a battle with an unseen enemy for over 4 months now. Not to overstate the situation, but It effects literally every aspect of our life. It has changed the course of history as we know it. It has *ravaged* our economy, *shaken* our government, and most tragically it has taken the lives of thousands of our fellow citizens. It's name? COVID19.

Well our text today tells of another **unseen enemy** - far more sinister, far more intelligent, but no less real and relevant.

Just as some people act as though Covid is not a threat, most of the planet is oblivious to the enemy we are looking at today. If you have been saturated by a godless worldview, today's sermon may seem like lunacy to you.

But please understand, when you were saved, you gained three new enemies that you didn't have previously.

1. **The World** - That is your external foe
2. **The Flesh** - That is your internal foe
3. **The Devil** - That is your infernal foe

That last enemy is the one we see in today's text. Jesus taught that prior to your conversion you were at perfect peace with Satan. He even went so far as to say you were of, "your father the devil".

But once you made **peace** with Christ, you made **war** with Satan.

You see, scripture teaches that **1/3** of the angelic race fell in league with a rebellious arch angel named Lucifer, we know this fallen angel as Satan.

Peter tells us in - 1 Peter 5:8 (ESV)

⁸ Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your **adversary** the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

That word Devour means to swallow completely. To Satan you look like lunch. Where I see a congregation of saints, Satan seems a buffet.

Now there is much we don't know about Satan and Demons, and in the absence of revelation some have substituted a myriad of fanciful speculations. Today however, we are going to stick to what the scriptures reveal to us about our enemy.

ILLUSTRATION: Any good athlete will pour over the game tapes of his competition prior to the game. We are told that Sam Walton often walked the aisle of Kmart, in order to make Wal-Mart better.

Well today - Daniel draws the curtain back for us and shows us what's happening in the unseen world.

CONTEXT: By the time **Daniel 10** occurs Persia is the dominant power on the face of the Earth. Cyrus the Great is now, humanly speaking, the most powerful man on the planet.

STORY: *Tradition tells us that the grandfather of Cyrus has a terrible dream that one day his soon to be born grandson would destroy his Kingdom. So when Cyrus was born the order was given for him to be put to death. The official charged with his execution and disposal took pity on young Cyrus and secretly adopted him and raised him as his own son, but always remembering that this child was the rightful King of Persia.*

One day in his boyhood years a man disciplined young Cyrus for misbehavior, causing his adoptive Father to strike the other man. When law enforcement arrived and asked why he violently struck his fellow man, the father answered - "Because he spoke down to the future King of Persia".

The story was out, Cyrus was taken back into the Royal family and he did ultimately ascend to the throne.

His adoption, and the kindness of his adoptive family had a profound effect on Cyrus. When he came into power - he ruled with greater kindness and tolerance than his predecessors.

Rather than oppress conquered people, Cyrus would allow them to maintain their dignity, their culture - he even allowed the Jews to return to Israel and worship at the soon to be re-established Temple.

Daniel however was too old for such a Journey. In his late 80's or early 90's he would one day die in Persia. Chapter 10 begins as Daniel is fasting and praying for those brethren who would return home without him...

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. And he understood the word and had understanding of the vision. 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.

Think of Daniel's state of mind. His brethren were returning to Israel but he was quarantined in Persia. He couldn't go to church. Sound familiar? His social distancing was extreme. He wasn't eating the things he normally ate. It was then that he had one of the most significant revelations of his life.

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.

This is the Pre-Incarnate, eternal Son of God, Jesus Christ - very similar to the vision of the risen Glorified Jesus in Revelation 1. Keep in mind, Jesus was **begotten** on Christmas morning, but he did not **begin** on Christmas morning. Jesus said it this way, "before Abraham was, I am". Jesus was very much alive and well, here at the time of Daniel.

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.

Now this hand touching Daniel is not the hand of Jesus, but of this messenger, an Angel. **Hebrews 2:2** tells us that words of Prophecy came through the medium of Angels. They delivered the message to the Prophet.

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.

Now what he says next is new and important information and that is what I want us to focus on today: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,**

So Gabriel was dispatched in answer to Daniel's prayer but this demonic troop - the prince of Persia and the Kings of Persia war against him hindering him from bringing Daniel God's response. He is not speaking of Earthly Rulers, but rather Demonic Rulers.

Think of what we see there:

Demonic Organization - There is a government. There are demons assigned to political powers, regions, governments. There was a Prince of Persia and there were Kings of Persia.

- One would suppose there are demons assigned to Washington D.C.
- There are demons assigned to Tallahassee, FL.
- There are demons assigned to Fernandina Beach, FL.

Observation seems to back up this understanding. There are certain sins that seem to grip certain regions more than others. As I've traveled in ministry - I have seen that child abuse seems to be more prevalent in certain regions. Drug abuse in others. Alcoholism in others. Sexual sin in others. It's very clear.

Paul says it this way in Ephesians 6:12 (ESV)

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.

Do you see the organization of rulers, authorities, powers, forces? You may have a demon assigned to your neighborhood. Maybe even your family.

And they love the fact that many of you are clueless. Daniel wasn't clueless... he battles in prayer. He goes to his war room and bows before the Ancient of Days.

¹⁴ and I came to make you understand what is to happen to your people (*that's the Jews*) 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. 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.”

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.

Chapters 10, 11, and 12 are all apart of the same vision. Next week will will move into the substance of the revelation, but today I want to camp out on this glimpse of what's going on in the unseen realm.

Are there really intelligent beings that are warring and plotting our demise? Are there spiritual warriors that come to our defense?

1. The Reality of Demons

In the text we see that Satan and Demons are determined to interfere with Daniel hearing God's Word. Can we all agree with that? That's all they wanted to do.

- They weren't trying to get Daniel to cheat on his wife.
- They weren't trying to get Daniel to play with Wigi Boards.

They were fighting in a death match to keep the **word** away from Daniel. Thankfully, Daniel prayed and they were unsuccessful.

Did you know that is the primary mission of demons? They want to keep you from the untainted truth of God's word.

You see we can operate under the misconception that as long as we are breaking one of the BIG commandments, we are fine! But did you know that Satan doesn't care if you go to Sunday school class every time the doors are open, as long as you aren't digging into the word and prayer.

**A WAR WAS WAGED TO KEEP DANIEL FROM THE WORD,
AND THE WORD FROM DANIEL.**

You've noticed that haven't you?

- You sit down with a cup of coffee and a bible with every intention on getting into the word, but just at that moment, as if it were planned, your phone dings with a new email.
- A kid starts crying, the phone rings, it is suddenly unbearably hot, something crashes in the kitchen.

Now if you are reading Southern Living, none of that occurs. But you pick up the Word of God and 10,000 distractions come alive.

The greatest challenge I have in ministry is finding undistracted time to Study. Our staff has been remarkably understanding. Sometimes I lock myself in the office, turn off my phone, close the computer... and sit there before an open bible.

I've got Michael and Gabriel helping protect me... but I've also got a Shad and a Tommy, a Josh and a Kristina - doing what they can do, so I can do what I must do. Susan serving at the front desk, Michele keeping everything running smoothly. Pieter capturing the message and disseminating it out to untold hundreds of people.

If demons can't stop the word from being preached - they must stop it from being heard. Perhaps it's an issue with technology that has never happened before. Perhaps it's that desire to hit the snooze button just one more time.

LISTEN FOLKS - the battle is real and you are winning or losing.

2. The Reality of Angels

Just as demons are assigned to Nations, Angels are assigned as well. Just as demons are assigned to cities, Angels are as well.

But remember there are twice as many angels as demons... so did you know that angels are assigned to believing families?

Well, we might assume in the same way there are Angels assigned to s

1 Corinthians 11:10 (ESV) tells us that a wife ought to subject herself to the authority of her husband because it is in keeping with the created order. Then look what else he throughs in.

¹⁰ That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.

Have you ever considered that Angels are watching when you fight with your spouse? Sort of embarrassing isn't it? They are perfectly in rank with their God given authority, and when you are not they are bewildered.

There are also angels assigned to children.

Matthew 18:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ "See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.

So with all this talk about Angels and Demons... what is...

3. A Proper Perspective

There are basically two extreme dangers that people fall into when it comes to the study of Satan and Demons –

1. They under estimate Satan and Demons –

I think this happens through the comic versions of Satan that are portrayed in Halloween costumes and school mascots. It makes you think that Satan is at best on par with leprechauns and unicorns and probably doesn't exist at all.

2. The other extreme is to overestimate Satan and Demons and bring them on par with God.

You will find people who get fascinated even obsessed with this sort of thing.

ILLUSTRATION: Someone put it this way – Just as *A quarter lifted over the eye can obscure the blazing light of the sun. A star whose diameter is 865,000. If we allow him Satan will obscure our site so that we forget that God is infinitely bigger and more powerful.*

What is A Healthy Perspective -

William Gurnall offered a healthy perspective when he reminded us, *“When God says stay, Satan must stand like a dog by the table while the saints feast on God’s comfort. He does not dare snatch even a tidbit, for the Master’s eye is always upon him.*

***Remember, the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof.**

- The sea is God’s sea,
- The Sky is god’s sky,
- the storm is God’s storm....
- Luther reminded us, “The Devil is God’s devil”

Erwin Lutzer said, *“Blessed are those who are understand that the **prince of this world** is the slave of the **prince of peace**”*

CONCLUSION: Just as Daniel was driven to fast and pray on behalf of his people... we told that our Lord was also compelled, driven in the wilderness to fast and pray... as he did a great spiritual battle took place. No lieutenant demon, or corporal demon met with Jesus, but the most devious and powerful of them all. Satan himself came to distract Jesus from the Word His Father had given Him. And Gabriel didn’t come to His defence. Michael stayed his sword. It is only Jesus and Satan.

Jesus had laid aside the Divine prerogative. He could have blink and destroyed Satan forever. But he would face Satan just as you must, as a man.

Your Savior, wielded the Sword of the Spirit marvelously, he answered error with truth... until the most powerful of all demons left defeated until a more opportune time.

Follow him, the true and better Daniel and fight the good fight of faith... and win.