

XVIII. Daniel in Biblical Perspective
“A Vision And Spiritual Warfare”
Daniel 10
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August 15, 2010 – Evening Sermon

We will be looking at Daniel 10 in this study and we are coming to a conclusion in our twenty studies on the book of Daniel. This is the 18th study. The next Lord’s Day evening we will not be back in Daniel because we will be using that service as our convocation service where the focus is on the administration and faculty, families and students of Briarwood Christian School but we don’t stop there. It’s a broader theme because our congregation is constantly engaged in supporting those who are raising their children in the nurture and admonish of the Lord. So we will focus on the faculty and administration who are members of our church who I call missionaries in private and public school settings. We set you aside, pray for you and challenge you. It is focused on all of that to consecrate the year and to prepare. We look forward to being with you during that time.

Before I start into this I want to mention two things about this text that I want us to really focus upon here. One is the reality of angelic ministry. If said “Do you believe in angels?” Someone would probably say “Oh sure.” Are angels active? One might answer “I guess so.” We’ll look at the reality of angelic ministry coupled with that and in concert with the reality of spiritual warfare. For instance in our country right now I mentioned to you in this morning’s service an illustration from Uganda and when I went there in 1986 I got the opportunity to get immersed in the Central African revivals that now are forty plus years continuing to move forward. As I was experiencing that I tell people I can go over there and preach the same sermon I preach here and hundreds of people over there come to Christ. It’s just amazing. It’s the movement of the Spirit of God. Now I get translators over there and sometimes I wonder are they translating my sermon or preaching their own which might be the case. It’s really amazing to what’s happening over there and how God is blessing there.

In the context of that ministry that is there I remember talking with some of my brothers about the reality of spiritual warfare as they face the onslaught of people like Idi Amin and Obote who really tried to destroy the church and yet the gates of hell have not prevailed against it there. It continues to grow, expand and make an impact. While I was there and being exposed to some of those things and praying through some of those things I remember one of my Ugandan brothers telling me “Pastor Reeder you all are involved in spiritual warfare, it’s just we know it and you don’t and some how you all have been lulled to sleep in the matter of spiritual warfare.” I think he’s right. So today as we see what’s happening in our country, we think we’re in a culture war but we’re not in a culture war. The culture is merely a reflection of a spiritual war that we’re involved in. We’re not on just a battlefield but we’re on a mission field. We’re in a spiritual battle wrestling for the souls of men and women and dare I say for the soul of a nation. So how do we fight this battle?

The one thing I’m very encouraged about right now is as I meet with people and watch the movement of ‘throw the encumbrance out’ which goes by various names, I don’t particularly like cynicism but the one good piece about it is I think even believers

are realizing certainly politics is an area we have to be involved in but that's not where the answer is coming from. Where will the answer come from? I don't think we're going to get an answer in this culture without a revival and I don't think we're going to have a revival without wrestling through the matter of spiritual warfare. Praise the Lord for the reality of angelic ministry.

His name is Dr. Francis Schaeffer. When I was in college he was a Godsend to us. He was quite a challenging figure theologically defending the faith. He had spent 13 years as a missionary and then began to write, speak and God began to open up so many doors for him. When I was coming through college we had this "revival movement" called the "Jesus Movement" which was about five miles wide and one inch deep. Then we had the Christian fundamentalists who were thinking deeply but weren't reaching anybody and just talking to them selves. Along came Schaeffer who drew those "Jesus" people into the challenge of thinking doctrinally. He challenged those who were thinking and knowing their doctrine on how to get engaged in life and God really used him as a prophet for our age. There was no doubt about that and I had the opportunity to be with him on a couple of occasions and to learn underneath his ministry.

I'll never forget when Schaeffer gathered a group together sitting in a building and said to them, "What do you see? Go ahead and name it." We started naming things and he said, "Go a little deeper." So we went beyond chairs, tables, lights, lamps and we started noticing things we very seldom see like curtains, shades, colors on the wall and things like that. Then he said, "Let me tell you what I see. As I open up the Word to teach you there's a war going on in this room and there is an angelic war that's going on. The demonic host would take your mind away from the Word and your heart away from the Word. God has sent His ministering spirits to fight for your heart through the victory that Jesus has won against the principalities of darkness on a cross. That's what is really going on in this room."

That's what I see in this room and I feel it every Lord's Day. When we open the Word to sing it, preach it and pray it I sense how Satan would take many of us and our hearts would be hard and he would just come and pluck the seeds off the ground because it never gets past the hard heart or the distracted heart or the cluttered heart or the thorny ground heart or the heart that attempts to put Jesus in with everything else which is the rocky ground heart. I know that Satan is always working and I know that there's the reality of spiritual warfare. What does that look like? Here in Daniel 10 is a chapter in the Bible that gives you a glimpse of its reality and as well the angelic ministry.

I want to look at the first section of Daniel 10 which is the occasion for this vision for Daniel. Daniel 10:1 says *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.* We're not going to spend a lot of time on the vision in this study because it actually carries us all the way through to Daniel 12. This vision that comes in the third year of Cyrus will carry us through to the end of Daniel but something else happens at the moment of this angelic visitation and this vision.

Daniel 10:2-8 says *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. 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. So this glory overcomes Daniel changing his appearance and drains him of his strength. Daniel 10:9 says 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.

That is the occasion for the vision that comes up and I want to trace our way through this. Daniel was taken into this captivity at approximately 605 BC. It is then that the clock begins to tick of Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 years of the Babylonian captivity. As Daniel is there he will go through the Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire and he will go through kingdom after kingdom all the way down not only from Nebuchadnezzar, to Nebonidus, to Cyrus and even to Darius the Mede. We are engaged toward the end of that 70 years in this particular passage. We actually know exactly the year of this chapter. It is in the third year of Cyrus and that would have been 536 BC. We also know more in that it is in the first month and the 24th day. We know that upon the receipt of this vision that Daniel had been engaged in a focused season of fasting and prayer. It was three weeks in length.

By the way, the first month of the year meant that he would have been engaged in this during a time of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Those two events happened within that three week time period that Daniel was fasting. So here is Daniel in these three weeks of fasting and he has particularly set aside the choice beverage of wine and the choice food of meat. He has continued in prayer and mourning and in the context of this there is now an angelic vision that occurs. He comes to him and of course the question is – who is this? We have about three choices. Some would say this is Michael but the problem with that is that this particular angelic visitation will refer to Michael. Some will say it's Gabriel and some will say this is a Christophany which is another one of these pre-incarnate appearances of Christ in the Old Testament. Did you notice the description of the angel mentioned here? There is a lot of lay over with Revelation 1 and the vision that John saw of Jesus. I don't have time to go into it all but there is a lot of similarity there.

Harry, who so you think it is? Hold on for a minute and I'll tell you who I think it is as we go on just a little bit further. In fact, I think there's a fourth option that's related but we'll get to that in a moment. Something has already occurred because this is the third year of Cyrus' reign. This is 536 BC and Cyrus started in 538 BC. Cyrus did something in the first year of his reign, two years prior to this moment. I want to look at Ezra 1. Ezra is one of those books in your Bible that is in the same time frame as Daniel, Ezekiel and Jeremiah. Ezra 1:1-4 says *1 In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 27:11 said after 70 years Israel will be sent back and 70 years into captivity was the first year of the reign of Cyrus thus the Lord fulfilling prophecy.) might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: 2 "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me*

all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem. 4 And let each survivor, in whatever place he sojourns, be assisted by the men of his place with silver and gold, with goods and with beasts, besides freewill offerings for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.”

So two years prior to the visit of the angel back in Daniel 10, Cyrus in his first year in 538 BC has given a proclamation to fulfill the prophecy in which the Spirit of God moved upon him to send Israel back after their 70 years to rebuild Jerusalem and the house of the Lord, the Temple. They even had kept some of the consecrated vessels and some of the things that had been captured under Nebuchadnezzar and they were sending that back. Now where is Daniel? If you'll remember Daniel has been very much absorbed in our last couple of chapters of Daniel about these 70 years and then he received the vision of the 70 sevens that would stretch out all the way to the coming of the Messiah. He has been consumed with this and in fact in Daniel 9 he has been praying and confessing his sins about it, asking God to give Him wisdom. Daniel had been reading Jeremiah 27. Now it has occurred two years earlier. So where's Daniel? He is still back under Cyrus in the Medo-Persian Empire which is old Babylon. Why didn't he get up and go with them?

Just so you know there were actually three decrees. There is Cyrus' decree in 538 BC. There will be a decree given by Darius and one under Artaxerxes. There will be three decrees that kind of match the three deportations of 605 BC, 597 BC and 586 BC. This will finally culminate with Nehemiah rebuilding walls later. The first person I would have expected to saddle up would have been Daniel and I don't care that he is somewhere in his 80s. I would have expected Daniel to say something like, "Man, I have been waiting for this. Let's go home!" But he's not because he is still up here by the river Tigris. He is up here praying, mourning and fasting even though a decree has already been given to go back. He is still there, why? I'm at the age now where that's not a real big question to me because of Daniel's age. He is probably thinking, "I'm too tired, too old so I'll just send ya'll back and I'll die here." Maybe he is debilitated or whatever but if they could carry the bones of Joseph back then they could carry Daniel back, I would think.

So why is Daniel still there? I think there is a very specific reason. I will give you the reason toward the end and I believe it is somewhat speculative on my part but I'll tell you why I think he is still there. But suffice it to say probably about only 20, to 30 to 40,000 go back in this first decree. There are not many that go back. In Psalm 137 they sing about how distasteful it is to sing the Lord's song in a foreign land. After 70 years there are some who have forgotten the Lord's song, the foreign land has become home and they're not ready to go back. They are staying. Tuck that away in your mind for a moment.

Now here is this strength draining, sleep inducing, overwhelming angelic appearance. What is said? Daniel 10:10-12 says **10** *And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. 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. You wanted to know the word Daniel, you've prayed and I've come, O man greatly loved.

Daniel 10:13-15 says **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.* **15** *When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and was mute.* Now He has come to give Daniel understanding of the word telling him he is greatly loved and that He has come in response to Daniel's prayer because Daniel wants to understand. This is really interesting and there are so many things here. Whether it is Jesus and the miraculous power that He brings in His Gospel ministry recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John or it is the power of the miraculous that comes in the book of Acts related to the establishment of the church or it is at a moment like this, have you ever noticed a complete difference with the way we portray the miraculous today? We talk about the miraculous today as if it's like a side show carnival and trivial.

Every time God shows up and makes Himself known in power the next thing you usually have to hear from people is 'don't be afraid' because everybody is trembling. Then the next words are usually 'get up' because it just overwhelms us. There is introduced certainly celebration and joy but it is always couched within the sacred heart and life of reverence – falling before the One true and living God. I'm not talking about morbidity and calling it reverence. I'm not talking about dullness and calling it reverence but the joy of the Lord never becomes trivialized. It's always in the context of worship, praise, awe and respect that takes place.

Secondly, notice what an experience it is but the emphasis is not on the experience. It is on the part when He says "I've come so you will understand the Word of God." Why? It is because believers don't know what to do and how to do it until we learn what to do. We can't do what's right until we know what's right. So we need three things – knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. He said, "I've come that you might understand." Then He makes this wonderful statement, "O Daniel you are greatly loved." Now let's look at the response.

Daniel 10:15-21 says **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 (perfect love casts out all fear), 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 (that is the demonic host that would seek to confuse the nations, even a nation such as Persia where they dwell); 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.*

First, 'Michael, your prince' probably refers to Michael's special calling in ministry to God's people. Secondly, we find that coming on the heels of this demonic influence of Persia will come demonic influence upon Greece which will be the Empire that replaces them and that will be replaced by the Roman Empire. We have already seen that in the prophecies and we'll see more of it in Daniel 11 and 12 as we move ahead. Here as He gives Daniel strength, encouragement and raises him up He tells him He has to return to the battle, the spiritual war but I have come as part of the battle to strength you, O Daniel, man greatly loved.

I want to give you some takeaways from this text as we close. The first takeaway is look at Daniel. Daniel knows he needs the act of God to take place but Daniel first does not look for God to act but he first looks for God. He knows he needs the intervention of God. He knows the people of God need the powerful, providential intervention of their God. The great and mighty acts and deeds of God are necessary but Daniel does not look for the deeds of God first, but he looks for God and seeks Him in prayer. He calls upon God. He wants to know his God. His God doesn't exist to give him and his nation a miracle. His God is glorious. He exists to know Him. I want to know my God. I want to understand Him. I want to know His Word.

This is pretty crucial because most of the time when I hear people talking about spiritual warfare God is the One we call upon to do what we want Him to do instead of the One in whom we go to seek saying, "Now, God what do you want me to do?" Spiritual warfare, as many teach it, many times is taught in the context of God being the utilitarian, cosmic genie that we rub with prayer to get Him to do the things we want Him to do, instead of the God of glory whom we seek to know and understand.

The second takeaway is Daniel's life reveals the joys of a reciprocal relationship with God, a prioritized life and the prevalence of prevailing intercessory prayer. He reveals the joys of three things. First of all there are the joys of a reciprocal relationship with God. Do you think Daniel loves God? Do you think God loves Daniel? It says it two times in this passage – 'O Daniel greatly loved.' I know we must carefully teach everyone that it is not your love of Christ that causes Christ to love you. We love Him because He first loved us. I know that and you know that but that does not deny the reality of our personal relationship with God. While my love, loving obedience and seeking of God does not merit God's love, God does respond to your love. There is a reciprocal relationship. You love Him because He first loved you but when you love Him, He greatly delights in loving you back.

Here is the way James, the brother of Jesus, says it; Draw near to God and He will draw near to you (James 4:8). Let's back up. I know all the passages and you know all the passages. Why do I draw near to God? It is because He drew me to draw near to Him. No man can come to the Father unless He draws him. I know that but I also know that when He has drawn me and I draw near to Him then He responds to me. This Daniel who loved to seek God personally, God loved to love back and it wasn't because his love merited it but it's because God delights in that reciprocal relationship with His people.

Notice that Daniel had a prioritized life also. Every time we look at Daniel he is either trying to check out God's Word or he is praying. Prayer and the Word just fill his life. He has a clearing prioritized life around prayer and the Word. It is foundational to life. It is not added to his life. It's not something he squeezes in. It is God's Word that guides him and directs him. He has a prioritized life. In that prioritized life he becomes

this monumental statement. This is now the third time in our study of Daniel that this phrase has been there (paraphrased) – “O Daniel I have come in response to your prayers. You have called, I have come.” I know that my prayer does not direct the affairs of the world. I know that God is not up there wanting to know from me how He ought to do things. God does delight in entwining His sovereign providence with your prayers and mine but that’s as far as I can take it. My prayers do not cut God loose.

I hear people teach this in spiritual warfare all the time. I remember when the Frank Peretti books came out which were very interesting but my hair would go up on end (when I had hair) when it said, “As they prayed then the arms of the captain of the Lord of Hosts, Jesus, was strengthened and when they quit praying He began to lose strength.” My prayers don’t give Jesus strength. I pray to get His strength to serve Him. This mechanistic view that somehow God is dependent upon my prayers or I’m calling on God to do this, this and this and God says “Harry what a brilliant idea, why didn’t I think of that?” is not right. God is omniscient, omnipotent and my prayer life somehow He has ordained to entwine with how He moves in this world. So we pray. I want to add something else James says. In James 5:16 it says “The prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” Certainly I have a positional righteousness in Christ but our pursuit of righteousness to serve Christ is also that in which our relationship with the Lord grows more and more and our prayer life becomes more and more effective.

The last takeaway is spiritual warfare is a convulsive and continual reality of life. It is not a subset of life. Notice the convulsiveness where He says “I’m coming here” spiritual warfare, “I get stopped and have to fight this one and that one. Michael came and helped me” and that’s why I don’t think this is a Christophany. If this was Jesus He wouldn’t have needed Michael’s to take care of the demons and the demonic host. If you’ll read Ezekiel 1, Ezekiel’s description of the angels is the same kind as here. This is an angel that has come to Daniel. I don’t know which angel but it’s an angel that showed up. By the way, they are showing up all the time. They are at work. It’s a reality.

My oldest daughter for my 40th birthday had to run down to the store to pick up something for me. The stores were closing and she barely got it done. As she came out of the Food Lion in Pineville, North Carolina six boys started walking behind the car in this empty parking lot. They began to say out loud what they were going to do to her. All of a sudden a Food Lion employee with his green apron on shows up. He puts his arm out and takes her and says “Would you like for me to escort you to the car?” She was escorted to the car and the boys all left. So when she gets home with this stuff for my surprise 40th birthday party my wife is so overwhelmed by what happened that she says “We tell people when they do things wrong so in this instance I’m going to call the store up and thank them. What was his name?” Jennifer said, “I didn’t get his name but this is what he looked like.” She gave a perfect description. So my wife called up the next day to thank them and the Manager said, “Thank you for calling but we don’t have anybody that looks like that here.”

Maybe my daughter with a gene from me went brain dead and that could have happened but personally I think it was an angelic intervention. I don’t know how many times those things happen in our lives. There is the reality of angelic ministry. In fact, some have entertained angels, just ask Abraham, and didn’t know it. There is also the reality that you are in a fight. Praise the Lord your war has been won on the cross but you’re in a fight so we don’t need casualties. You’re in a fight for your marriage, your

family, your witness, your testimony and for the church of Jesus Christ to impact this nation that men and women might come to Christ. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the time we could be together. Thank You for the privilege to be in this, Your Word. Would You take these things that we have been able to consider and would You plant them upon our hearts? We are so grateful for that. Thank You Father that we can understand that we are at war and it's not a subset of our Christian life but it is our life. You have given us ministering spirits and angels, thank You and You have given us Your Word and loved us so we love You and You love to love us back. Keep loving Your people that they have peace and no fear and walk for Jesus strong and courageous, in Jesus' Name, Amen.