



## Daniel 10

### *If Only We Had Eyes to See Things as They Really Are*

NKJ Daniel 10:1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message was true, but the appointed time was long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision.

2 In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks.

3 I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

4 Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that is, the Tigris,

5 I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz!

6 His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice 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 terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

8 Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength.

9 Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.

10 Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands.

11 And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling.

12 Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words.

13 "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.

14 "Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come."

15 When he had spoken such words to me, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless.

16 And suddenly, one having the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke, saying to him who stood before me, "My lord, because of the vision my sorrows have overwhelmed me, and I have retained no strength.

17 "For how can this servant of my lord talk with you, my lord? As for me, no strength remains in me now, nor is any breath left in me."

18 Then again, the one having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me.

19 And he said, "O man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace be to you; be strong, yes, be strong!" So when 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? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come.

21 "But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince.

It's funny as you move you discover again all the things you keep but you never use. You just move them from place to place. For instance, after this latest move, I once again dutifully put away in my closet 3 Tuxedos, a legion of Tuxedo shirts, and my White Tie and Tails. I'm fairly certain that in the case of at one of those Tuxedos, I couldn't even get my legs into it any more, and what are the chances that a Pastor in Fayetteville is going to need a tailcoat? But you never know, the Session could decide that one of our services should be *formal*.

But there was a time when I used them all the time, first in Manhattan and then later on in New York City. That was back when I thought what was really important was wealth and power and influence, and when everyone I knew thought the same thing. It's funny you know I found that having worked in the commercial world in NYC and the political world in Washington D.C., I found that the perception in both places was the same. Whether it was leaders of industry, bankers, diplomats, lawyers, politicians, or the people *who wanted to be* leaders of industry, bankers, diplomats, lawyers, politicians there is this perception in both cities that "this is where it all happens," this is the real "seat of power" and frankly there is a terrible contempt towards other places and the little insignificant people who live in fly-over country, it irritates them to no end that every few years they have to pretend that you and your town and your cares and thoughts are important *in order to get your vote or watch their show or buy their products*. That's nothing new though, it was the same in London at one time, and before that in Rome, and before that in Susa, the capital of the Persian kings.

The people who inhabited those places all thought they were the real power, the people who *made things happen* in the world. **Daniel knew better though**, although he was talented and important civil servant, he worked for earthly princes, he never forgot that the real power is not here on earth, but in heaven.

Now as we look at these verses this morning, I want you to ask yourself, "What is my worldview?" "Do I know what Daniel knew? Or do I believe *or act like I believe* that the real power and glory really is the hands of men here on earth?"

As these verses open we've once again gone forward in the life of Daniel, this is several years after Daniel was given the vision in chapter 9. Now Daniel is 87 years old, he's been in exile working first the Babylonian and then the Persian civil service since he was 14. The return of the exiles to Jerusalem that Daniel was told would happen has already begun. So why is Daniel mourning and not celebrating? Well because despite the fact that some of the Jewish exiles had indeed returned to Jerusalem with Zerubabel and Ezra to rebuild the city and the Temple of the Lord, the majority of the exiles had decided to remain in Babylon.

Now we look at that and we are sometimes incredulous, why would the people of God *not want to go back to Judea*? Brothers and sisters, it's been 70 years since the exile began, where do you think they consider *home* to be now? They have houses and estates in Babylon, they speak the language, and it's the only place most of them have ever lived. To give you analogy how comfortable do you think my

children would feel returning “home” to Britain in 2045? Plus if they go, the exiles are leaving the heart of the most powerful and wealthy empire on earth, to travel through bandit infested country to a desolate city in what is now a backwater that they will have to rebuild with their own hands surrounded by enemies. To the worldly minded, to leave the world to make the difficult pilgrimage to Zion makes no sense. That is a decision that has to be motivated by real faith in God’s promises. It’s the same today; men will not leave the world for the heavenly country unless they do so by faith and not by sight.

So Daniel is mourning and praying over that lack of faith in his countrymen, and he is also mourning and praying over something even more serious. The exiles who have gone back and started the rebuilding have been forced to stop the rebuilding. You see the Samaritans who lived in the area were not happy to have the Jews back, and sent petitions pointing out that these Jews were rebels, and so the king’s son had written an edict suspending the work of rebuilding.

So what can Daniel do? Start a political action committee, hire lobbyists, and begin soliciting donations and running ads of course! No, wait that’s what American Christians would do today. Daniel fasts and prays for three full weeks. And in the midst of his prayers, he receives another message from heaven, but this one is different from the last, this one is far more intimidating and it is not Gabriel who appears this time. Now why is this encounter so intimidating that Daniel faints three times and spends the encounter bowed down, and filled with this sense of his own corruption. Who is this heavenly messenger?

Well, it is not explicit, but I and most commentators believe this certain man clothed in linen, the garb of a priest, and girded with gold was the pre-incarnate Christ. Daniel has seen a vision of the ascension of the Son of Man in chapter 7, now he is meeting his Savior face to face. That is one of the reasons as with Paul only Daniel can stand at all, the unbelievers with him are overcome with terror and run and hide. The description of that meeting is almost the duplicate of the meeting that the Apostle John had with the ascended Jesus on the Isle of Patmos:

***Rev. 1:13 and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.***

***14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire;***

***15 His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters;***

***16 He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.***

***17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.***

Just like Job, and Isaiah, and John, when even a righteous man comes into the presence of the living God, he is humbled to the dust. I like the way the old KJV frames verse 8 – His comeliness was turned to corruption and as he confesses in verse 17 – ***“For how can this servant of my lord talk with you, my lord?”***

Again and again, in order for Daniel to receive this vision he requires supernatural strengthening, and assurances. He is undone in the presence of His Lord, He feels his sin, his lack of worth, even his status a mere mortal in the presence of his Creator, but instead of hearing words of condemnation which he seems to expect, he receives assurances of Christ’s love to him – “Daniel, man greatly

beloved” and then **“Do not fear, Daniel,** (you remember that “fear not” was what Christ had to say to the Apostles when he appeared to them?) **for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words.”**

What has he come to tell Daniel? Well two things really, first He has come to Daniel what will come to pass in the distant future, and also to let Daniel know that as a result of his prayers a spiritual battle ensued and to let him know the outcome.

Now if you tell people today that the actions of evil men are directed by evil powers and that what we witness on earth, is what Abraham Kuyper called the backlash of that spiritual struggle they will look at you in about the same way as if you told them that you believe that your wallet had been stolen by Leprechauns. Even if men might believe in Angels, they tend not to want to believe in the Devil and his demons, but as C.S. Lewis pointed out in the Screwtape letters - **the Devil’s greatest victory was to make us think he doesn’t exist.**

Brothers and sisters, that we live in the midst of a great battle in the heavenlies, that has its effects on earth is the uniform testimony of scripture. In the book of Job, we have the story of the terrible misfortunes and restoration of a man, but we learn from the very beginning that those misfortunes are a result of the conflict between God and the Devil. But before we even begin to get into our discussion of spiritual warfare, please remember this one thing. **God is sovereign in all these things,** and when angels and demons do battle it is never a battle between equals. As Luther said, even the Devil is yet God’s devil. And while the conflict is real and even terrible the final outcome of the battles is never in doubt and all of these battles no matter how terrible work for the good of the saints.

So we read about this prince of the kingdom of Persia, this is not the earthly king of Persia, this is a demon who seeks to influence all the decisions made by that Empire, and does it surprise us therefore that he would want an edict suspending work on the temple?

Now did the king’s son know he was doing the Devil’s work with his edict? Undoubtedly the answer is no. In some sense he felt he did the bidding of his own God, just as Muhammad and the Jihadis felt they do the bidding of Allah in waging Jihad. But there is no God but the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and those who worshiped and served the gods of Persia, or Greece, or Allah were actually serving demons – and brothers and sisters that is not my opinion that is what Scripture tells us and what Paul said - **1 Cor. 10:19 What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything?**

**20 Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.**

And then later: **Ephesians 2:1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others**

So the sad thing is those who believe they are the power, the center of the universe, are blinded to the real state of affairs, they are like Gehazi the Servant of Elisha. All they can see are princes and armies

and money, worldly power. They like I was, are blind to the truth, that what is going on is the earthly outworking of a spiritual conflict. And that just as prince of the kingdom of Persia could not resist Christ and Archangel Michael, so the forces that stand behind everything that opposes the Christ and His kingdom will eventually be cast down.

*So what are the applications of this to you?*

First take heart, Christians, you are not alone against the forces of wickedness in this world. Than can be overcome precisely because, ***He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.***

If only when things seemed grimmest, when you were in the deepest valley, the worst pit, you had the eyes to see things as they really are.

***2 Kings 6:15 And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?"***

***16 So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them."***

***17 And Elisha prayed, and said, "LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.***

The Lord never leaves you nor forsakes you, and everything is taking place according to what was written by God from the very beginning in the book of his eternal decrees that we hear called in verse 21 "The Scripture of Truth." Now we can't read that book of sovereign decrees, but we can read his promises and know they are true, and thus stand in the day of conflict.

Secondly, if we know that our conflict is spiritual and not merely physical, then we will know who our real enemies are, that will lead us to do two things:

1) Not to fight our battles as the men of this world do. We will realize that their weapons are weak by comparison and incapable of affecting real change:

***2 Cor. 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.***

***4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,  
5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God,  
bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,***

***And so we must:***

***Eph. 6:11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.***

***12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.***

Now what was the mightiest weapon that Daniel employed here and elsewhere? Prayer! An old man in Persia prayed, and history changed. That is because prayer is the means that God uses to bring about what He has decreed!

The amazing thing is, I see all the time men and even women who understand the vital necessity of communication to effectiveness on the battlefield who disregard the importance of communicating with the only person who is able to really effect change in this world!

Do you really think, that the blessings that you have, for instance the fact that the men of this congregation go away to war and return home safe and sound is because of “luck?”

2) It will have a profound effect on the way we will think of our enemies, not to hate them, but to pity them, for they are blinded:

***2 Cor. 4:3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.***

Therefore we must preach the gospel to them – that gospel is the only thing that can save souls, any souls -

Let me give you an extreme example of that - The importance of the Word – Nuremburg, Keitel, Von Schirach, and Von Ribbentrop.

Von Schirach – The Hitler youth leader who admitted that he’d been instrumental in bringing thousands of German youth out of the churches.

Goering – “I’ll choke Von Schirach to death when I get my hands on him because he has cut all allegiance with Adolf Hitler”

Gerecke - Goering – Just say Jesus save me, “this Jesus you speak of, to me he is just another smart Jew” - Edda, his daughter “I kneel by my bed and ask God to open my Daddy’s heart and let Jesus in.” Goering: “I think my little girl believes in your savior, but I don’t. I’ll take my chances.”

Von Ribbentrop – “I place all my confidence in the Lamb who made atonement for my sins. May God have mercy on my soul.’ Then he turned to Gerecke and said, ‘I’ll see *you* again.”

Those men Von Schirach and Von Ribbentrop learned the hard way of the emptiness of worldly power, and repented of their former willingness to be used to perpetrate unspeakable evil in the pursuit of that power. They sought forgiveness and salvation from the only one who could grant it, men would never give it to them, and what could it help them at the judgment seat. No they knew they had to receive it from God Himself through the blood of His Son. Now I know there is no one here who has committed the sins of a Von Ribbentrop, but I know that I was just as deceived as he about how things really are and I fear that some of you might believe as he did, that this world of dust is all there is. I tell you the truth, this unless your confession is the same in substance as the one he made, then ultimately you will be no better off in eternity than Goering.