

Daniel 10:1-21

“Prayer & Spiritual Warfare”

It's accurate to say, “The Christian life is not a playground it's a battleground.” & The quicker we realize & respond to that, the better off we'll be. Too often (I fear) we're *playing* when we ought to be *praying*.

That's not to say that we don't recognize that where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty, that whom the Son sets free is free indeed, that Jesus gives us joy unspeakable & full of glory... All that's true! Yet equally true is the fact that salvation isn't where the fight ends, it's where it begins! We haven't “arrived” once we're born again, we're just getting started!

& The bible declares in no uncertain terms that as believers we're engaged in a war. It's not a physical altercation/confrontation, but a spiritual conflict. Our fight isn't against that which is seen, but that which is unseen, that which takes place *behind the scenes* (if you will). As Paul the apostle declared, “*For the weapons of our warfare* (the believer's warfare) *are not carnal* (or physical/of the flesh) *but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God...*”¹ He told Timothy, “*...wage the good warfare...*” 1 Tim 1:18 & Again, “*Fight the good fight of faith...*”²

Make no mistake, Satan is the enemy of your soul & he came to steal, to kill & to destroy & he never wearies, he never tires, nor takes a break from seeking to accomplish his agenda. Jesus said that we're to watch & pray! Be alert, don't go to sleep spiritually, be aware of what's happening around you. Peter said, “*Be sober* (exercise self-control), *be vigilant* (watchful); *because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*”³ & He doesn't discriminate, he'll take who he can get (& no doubt he takes special aim at pastors & Christian leaders), but he preys upon the weak. Just like when you watch a lion on the hunt, they're never grabbing prey from the front of the pack, they grab the weak one in the back.

That's why Paul says, “*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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.*”⁴ The warfare is real.

¹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [2 Co 10:4-5]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). [1 Ti 6:12]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [1 Pe 5:8]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Eph 6:10-12]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

& Daniel 10 peels back the curtain & gives us just a glimpse into the goings on of the unseen realm. It's the last vision that Daniel will receive & it encompasses Ch's 10-12. & It spans the time frame from where he's at currently all the way through the 2nd coming of Christ; ultimately into His millennial kingdom.

Vs 1-3

We're going to discover that Daniel dates for us exactly when this happened. Here we're told that this final vision was given to him in the 3rd yr of Cyrus, king of Persia. We're looking to the year 536 B.C.

& We read that a message was revealed to him, that it was true, but that the appointed time was long (or perhaps your version speaks of great conflict). He's learning that the final fulfillment of what's being revealed to him will not be in the immediate future, but the distant future, & that a great time of conflict/struggle, pain & persecution was in wait for his people. He says, "I understood that, the vision was clear to me."

Now you should know that by this time part of his previous prophecy & Jeremiah's prophecy has come to pass. Babylon is no longer the world super power, Persia is in place. & Cyrus as officially released the Jews to return to Jerusalem, (just as Jeremiah prophesied & Isaiah called Cyrus by name well over 100 yrs before he was even born!)

Yet Daniel says in Vs 2, "In those days I was mourning 3 full weeks." Or "3, 7's of days." (If you remember right in Ch 9 he spoke of "70-weeks", or "7s" which were determined for the Jews. We came to realize that they were 70-7yr units of time [you might grab that study if you're interested], but here he distinguishes so that we know he's not speaking of years because he literally wrote "3, 7's of days." Or 3 full weeks.)

2 questions come up. #1 Why didn't Daniel return w/the others? & #2 Why was he mourning? Well. Regarding the 1st question I think we need to give the guy a break, he was in his mid to upper 80s! That kind of travel just wasn't a practical option for him. Plus, he may've found it more beneficial for Israel for him to stay connected to the primary powers that be where he was. He could serve Israel more effectively having a direct line to the President (so to speak), than being a burdensome old man who couldn't really offer much in terms of labor back in Jerusalem.

As for why he was mourning, we don't know conclusively but it could be that when the decree was given that they could return home, the vast majority had gotten comfy in Babylon & quite frankly *didn't want to go back*. Only around 45,000 returned. We might say the vast majority of God's people had grown content to live like the world rather than lead lives of separation/consecration to Him. Something we need to be careful to guard against ourselves!

He may've been mourning because of the reports of the struggles Ezra sent back that he was encountering in the rebuild. & Again, anytime you plan on moving forward in the Lord, the enemy is there to oppose you, you can count on it...

We don't know exactly, but we read very clearly that he was mourning, his heart was heavy & that he entered into a time of self-denial & fasting.

Now there are some who will split hairs here & say, "Well, he wasn't fasting because fasting is an abstaining from any/all food." Others (& I'm probably in this category) will say that fasting can take different forms. Meaning that though he didn't abstain from all food, there were certain foods he abstained from (basically anything good) & so he was fasting from meat, from any kind of pastry or pleasantries & pretty much went on a veggie & water diet for 3 weeks. The idea behind a fast is that of depriving/denying your flesh.

That's what Daniel is doing here. He's denying his flesh, saying "no" to things that please his body physically. He didn't even take a shower or wear deodorant for 3 weeks. He didn't (the words are) "anoint myself at all". He's depriving his flesh, humbling his heart before God, & this had been going on for 21 days.

& Quite frankly, up to this point he hasn't heard a thing from God, it seems that the Lord isn't responding to his prayers, perhaps you've experienced something like that. It's like you phone a friend, it goes straight to voicemail. Are they busy, or did they just not want to talk to you? You don't know how to take it sometimes... 😊 & That's how we can feel when we pray, "I'm calling, God's not answering. Maybe my name showed up on his caller I.D. & He just didn't want to respond to me. Daniel has been persistently pursuing God for 21 days (sometimes we give up after we ask 2-3 times, we feel like, "I get it, I guess the answer is no). But Daniel was pressing in, pursuing the heart of God w/regard to God's plans for his people. He wanted to understand the heart of God in this.

What we're seeing here is that if we want to know God's heart, we've got to go after God's heart. We've got to seek his heart & refuse to relent. When God called David "a man after His own heart" He didn't just mean that he was like a chip off the ol' block, but that he sought God's heart, he hungered for God's heart, he pursued the heart of God... This is who we want to be, a people after the heart of God.

Vs 4-9

Well this is pretty radical! Wouldn't you say? Btw I should say that Daniel was a man w/a unique calling upon his life, God used him in amazing, incredible ways. Yet at the age of almost 90, he's only had a few experiences like this.

I point that out because, it's the exception, not the norm for these kinds of things to happen to *anyone*. You may go your whole life & nothing like this happen. Life in Christ is about walking by faith, not by sight. A lot of people spend so much of their energy hoping for some radical encounter w/God, but the odds are not in our favor. **God is seeking to develop our faith, He's told us that He is w/us, that He will never leave nor forsake us, we're either going to believe Him, or we're not. Yet w/out faith (the bible teaches) it's impossible to please God. So maybe a better position to take rather than looking for the radical encounter (which, if you get that great) is, "Lord, increase my faith..."**

But this was on the 24th day of the 1st month, which translates to you & me as April 24th 536 B.C. & On that day, Daniel was blown away! There he was on the shores of the Tigris river & as he lifted his eyes & looked what he saw took his breath away. **A man clothed in linen, waist girded in the finest gold, his body like a beautiful goldish bronze gem stone, his face like lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms & feet like burnished bronze & his voice like the sound of a multitude... & We aren't told what he said but Daniel says that he was so overwhelmed that in essence he passed out... He was in a "deep sleep on his face, w/his face to the ground."**

Who could this be? 😊 Leave the book of Daniel & turn to **Revelation Ch 1** (Vs 10-17). Sound familiar? Ladies & gentlemen, there are those who don't agree (& that's fine) but I personally am of the persuasion that Daniel just got a glimpse of the pre-incarnate Christ!

& Vs 7 is hilarious. I mean, these are the kind of friends you want, right? 😊 When in a fearful situation, sensing something supernatural, they just freak out & flee! "Sorry old man, you're on your own! It's survival of the fittest & I can out run you!" So they just left Daniel there overwhelmed & alone! Saul of Tarsus had a similar experience in the 1st 7 Vs of Acts Ch 9. The people he was w/sensed something supernatural & stood speechless, but Saul/Paul was the only one who saw the Lord.

But I think that sometimes revelation not only *results* in isolation (meaning not everyone will sense/see the vision that God gives you), but sometimes it *requires* isolation. Daniel saw the vision when he was alone. John received the book of Revelation when he was alone. & Oftentimes it may be that friends won't be there for you, that family *can't* really be there for you, because the Lord wants to deal w/you alone...

But Daniel experiences what John experienced, what Isaiah experienced, what Peter experienced, what Saul experienced on the road to Damascus when he realized he was in the presence of true holiness.

He was overwhelmed & undone. Humbled & brought low in the presence of God. The thing we need to realize however is that each of those encounters didn't only serve to bring *revelation*, they served as *inspiration/motivation*, they resulted unyielding service to the Lord.

Vs 10-11

This is where I believe the scene shifts. Those who believe the figure in Vs 5-6 was an angel, see this as the same one talking to him now. I'm of the persuasion that Daniel was overwhelmed, blacked out, or in some way lost consciousness (as he says), & when he was brought to the Lord was no longer in view, but now this angel is there.

He says, "a hand touched me", indicating a different figure than previously mentioned. & He was raised up from flat on his face to his hands & knees. Then the angel says, "Stand up like a man, I'm here to give you a word from God." So he stands, trembling & afraid...

Ladies and Gentlemen, Daniel is here interacting w/the supernatural. God has pulled back the curtain & given him eyes to see the unseen. There is a spiritual realm that is every bit as real & runs parallel to this physical realm. You may not see it, but it's there.

Some people have trouble believing in something they can't see. But imagine a baby in the womb w/the ability to reason... thinking, "It's really nice in here, everything is provided for me, food, it's warm, it's comfortable. And I don't really believe there's anything beyond this anyway. After all, I've never *seen* it." The baby can't envision our world, they've never seen this world, it's invisible, intangible to them. But it's very real...

So to, you & me regarding the spiritual. It's very real, & you may not see it right now, but when you leave this life, you will open your eyes in the next & it'll all be clear.

This angel touches him, strengthens him, so he can stand up & receive the word of God.

Vs 12-14

Family, there's a lot to learn right here... The 1st thing I want to encourage you with is found in Vs 12, "from the 1st day that you set your heart to understand, & to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard:". When you pray (child of God), God hears you *immediately*.

This angel tells Daniel that the moment he began to humble himself & pray, his words were heard. & The angel says, "That's why I've come..." (Btw, notice the motive the angel acknowledged in Daniel, he set his heart to understand & he humbled himself b4 God).

He says, “But the prince of the kingdom of Persia w/stood me.” How long? 21 days... Wait, why does that ring a bell? How long had Daniel been fasting/praying, humbling himself & setting his heart to seek understanding? We learned in Vs 2, 21 days.

Are you beginning to pick up what’s being put down here? We’re seeing here the reality of spiritual warfare! We spoke the other day about delays in prayer. Sometimes what we request may not be God’s will, sometimes, it may not be in God’s timing, here we’re learning that there are at times what we might call “demonic delays.” The prince of the kingdom of Persia is not a man, there’s no man that’s going to w/stand an angel. This was a reference to the demonic entity (& his cohorts [kings of Persia]) that was behind the goings on *in* Persia.

He says, “I was w/stood until Michael, one of the chief princes came to help me.” Family, we serve a God *of* order. & He has arranged His angelic forces *in* order, different rankings of power/might & purpose.

Perhaps you remember in Isaiah 14, when we read of the pride found in Satan’s heart, one of the things he said in his heart (before he was exiled from heaven) was, “I will be like the Most High.” (Is 14:14). It appears here that he has in fact sought to imitate God in the arranging of the rankings of the demonic forces that fell w/him. & He assigns them in rank, power & purpose... Remember Eph 6? Paul referred to them as principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this age, & spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

We know that angels are ministering spirits (Heb 1:14) sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation. & Evidently God has assigned Michael specifically to the nation of Israel. & When this angel was being held up, Michael came to his aid... (Wild to envision what that looked like, right?)

But what we’re learning is that there are influences in world governments that you may never see. Which is one reason we’re told to pray for those in authority, those who are over us, because we don’t know what’s going on “behind the scenes” (if you will). Satan had assigned some demonic host to Persia & it was seeking to hinder the word of God (& the understanding of the will of God) from coming to Daniel.

Here’s my point. The answer to his prayer was hung up in heavenly conflict. It took 21 days for the breakthrough to occur. What do you suppose would’ve happened had he quit seeking the Lord on day 12? Or day 17? He may’ve never received the answer... There’s a reason Jesus told us to ask (& keep asking), to knock (& keep knocking), to seek (& keep seeking). To pray & not lose heart. There’s a war going on & we fight from our knees in prayer.

“Couldn’t God have just said the word & obliterated the demonic resistance? Of course. Why wouldn’t He then? How do you grow stronger, physically? Through resistance, right? Your muscles need resistance to grow, you don’t gain greater skill on the mats, on the court, in the field or anywhere else if you’re not encounter resistance. Obstacles to overcome.

So to spiritually, God is growing you, teaching you & me persistence, perseverance, how to wage wise warfare in prayer. God dispatches the armies of heaven when we pray, but we can’t lose heart, we’ve got to persevere! Because we’re learning here that prayer is way more than a therapeutic exercise for the one who prays, spiritual battles are fought & won or lost through the power of prayer. I’m not saying I understand it, but in some measure it’s how God has ordained it, the question is what are we going to do w/it? Say, “Neat” & move on, or purpose to grow in our prayer lives that God might be magnified & glorified in bringing to pass His purpose through our lives?

The angel says, “I’m here to make you understand what’s coming down the pike prophetically for your people (Israel, the Jews).”

Vs 15-19

Again, Daniel is overwhelmed & again the angel ministers strength to him. I love the fact that if God calls us, He equips us. If He enlists us, He enables us.

Vs 10:20-11:1

You see? There was heavenly influence accomplishing God’s will in Darius as well. God help us to pray for our leaders.

Now when he says, “The prince of Greece is coming”, he’s referring to another demonic entity & it won’t be for another 200 yrs or so. But when you don’t dwell in the linear time frame, time is of no consequence. He’s just saying, “the battle isn’t over, it will continue on until the Lord puts all things under His feet.” So just when you enjoy one victory, don’t get too comfortable, another battle is just around the corner.

So fight the good fight, fight for your country (be a person of prayer), fight for your family (through prayer), for this body & yourself personally. Embrace the struggle & be strong in the Lord & in the power of His might & God will be glorified in your life...

Prayer Points:

God help us to understand the gravity, the enormity of the importance of prayer & persevering in it. That we pray always & not lose heart. & We do pray for our leaders, for our President, for the warfare that takes place in this country, around our families, strengthen us God, & be glorified in our lives.

I want you to know that God loves you. That it's His heart to save you & make you new. We set ourselves against Him through sin, yet He has reached out to us through the cross of J.C. who has loved us & given Himself for us. God will forgive you of all your sin, you've got to turn from it, & believe in the Lord J.C.