

Prayer and the Invisible War

Text: Daniel 10:1-21

Introduction:

1. This is the fourth and final vision Daniel receives from the Lord. It is important to note that chapters 10-12 are one unit and are all a part of this final vision. Note the word 'Also' in 11:1 and the word 'And' in 12:1. In chapter 10 we are introduced to the circumstances of the vision. Chapter 11-12 give the content of the vision.
2. "The visions of Daniel 11 and 12 describe the end of the Persian Empire, the Greek Empire, the Antichrist kingdom, the Great Tribulation, and the resurrection and establishment of Christ's kingdom." (David Cloud)
3. This chapter unveils to us details of the unseen spirit world and the battle that rages in the heavenlies as God's people give themselves to fervent prayer. M.A. Butler states, "This chapter goes behind the scene to the spirit world, revealing a picture of the "conflict of the ages" between the plan of God and the opposition of Satan, between good and evil, between angelic and demonic powers and activity." John Phillips says, "This chapter gives us an extraordinary glimpse into the mechanics of prayer and a look at the spiritual forces that take side for and against God's people in the unseen world."
4. In this sermon we will study this chapter under 5 main points.

I. The Introduction to the Vision (Vs. 1)

A. The Period (Vs. 1a & 4a)

1. The monarch (1a) – Cyrus king of Persia
 - a. The third year of his reign.
 - b. Cyrus' proclamation allowing the Jews to return to the land and rebuild their temple given in the first year of his reign (Ezra 1:1-4).
 - c. This means Daniel lived to see the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel.
2. The month (4a) – 24th day of the first month

B. The Prophet (Vs. 1b)

1. The title of the prophet
 - a. Daniel's Babylonian name is mentioned. We can be in no doubt as to the identity of this man Daniel. He is the same man who was carried away to Babylon in his early teens.
 - b. By this time, Daniel would be approx. 90 years old.
2. The thing for the prophet
 - a. The truthfulness of the thing – "the thing was true" God's Word can be trusted!

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- b. The time of the thing – “the time appointed was long” “This means it was not for Daniel’s day. The focus of Dan. 11-12 is of the Greek Empire and the time of the end in the day of the Antichrist.” (Cloud)

II. The Intercession before the Vision (Vs. 2-4)

A. The Fervency of Daniel’s Praying (Vs. 2)

1. The lamentation of it – ‘mourning’
 - a. Who was Daniel praying for? Answer is found in Vs. 12 & 14. Daniel was obviously praying for his ‘people’ (Vs. 14). Daniel was deeply burdened for the people of God, so much so that he ate and drank very little for 3 whole weeks!
 - b. Why was Daniel praying? It is hard to know exactly what prompted this period of intercession but some possibilities are as follows:
 - i. The spiritual condition of Israel. When the opportunity came to return to the land and rebuild the temple approx. 42,360 people returned but the majority stayed in Babylon, choosing the convenient life over the pilgrim life. Perhaps this was the source of Daniel’s heart burden.
 - ii. The spiritual conflicts of Israel. Perhaps word had reached Daniel of the opposition that was facing the builders in Canaan.
 - iii. Whatever the motivation, Daniel had a love and concern for the people of God and prayed earnestly for them.
2. The length of it – “three full weeks” (See also Vs. 3)
 - a. Daniel prayed until the answer came. As the old timers would say, “he prayed the matter through”.
 - b. In a day where we expect everything instantly, we need to be reminded to be ‘instant’ in prayer. Christians today aren’t interested in praying for 3 hours, let alone 3 weeks!
 - c. Challenge: How much do we involve ourselves in this ministry of intercession for others? Are our hearts ever moved even slightly for the needs of others? Have we ever experienced a burden that comes even close to that of Daniel’s?
 - d. Illustration: Andrew Bonar’s prayer life

Andrew Bonar was one of the great preachers and writers of the 19th century. His daughter was taking a Welsh evangelist through the church that her father pastored. She said, “*When I was a little girl, my Daddy used to bring me here and tell me to sit in a pew in the back.*” He would say, “*I’ll be back in a little while. You stay here.*” “*He’d leave me, and I wouldn’t see him for a while. One day I decided to find out what he was doing, so I crawled out of the pew and walked up the aisle until I finally found him. I saw the strangest thing. My Dad would be seated in a pew bent forward, as if to read the name on the plaque. He would read the name and then bow his head and pray. Then he would scoot over and read the name on the next pew and pray again. My father would spend an entire evening in the*

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place where the people of God came to worship, and one by one, pray for every worshipper in the church fellowship. He had an overwhelming burden for his people.”

B. The Fasting of Daniel’s Praying (Vs. 3-4)

1. The particulars of his fasting (Vs. 3)
 - a. “no pleasant bread...neither flesh” = pleasant means ‘delightful’. Appears Daniel did not refrain from food entirely but from certain kinds of foods such as meat.
 - b. “nor wine” = implies he only drank water
 - c. No anointing = a form of ancient toiletry
 - d. “Daniel lived in the top tier of one of the wealthiest and most sensual kingdoms that has ever existed, but his passion was for God and the things of God.” (Cloud)
 - e. Note: The particular way in which you approach a fast is between you and the Lord.
2. The place of his fasting (Vs. 4)
 - a. Daniel was by the river ‘Hiddekel’ which is the Tigris river.
 - b. Note: To fast, pray and seek the Lord, it is wise to set aside a specific time and place to do it.

III. The Revelation in the Vision (Vs. 5-9)

A. The Heavenly Man’s Description (Vs. 5-6)

1. Similar to John’s vision of the glorified Christ in Revelation 1:10-17.
2. Very possible this was a vision of the Christophany, the pre-incarnate Christ (See Dan. 3:25) but it is difficult to say with complete certainty. Concerning the identity of this “certain man”, noted Bible teacher Lehman Strauss said, “In 1948 I was very sure; in 1958 I had reversed my former conclusion; now in 1968 I am not certain that I know just who this certain man is.”
3. I would strongly contend it is a vision of the preincarnate Christ for the following reasons:
 - a. The language so closely resembles John’s description in Revelation 1 it seems the most logical conclusion.
 - b. There appears to be at least one other heavenly personage to the ‘man’ of Vs. 5-6 (See Vs. 10, 16 & 18). In fact, Dan. 12:5 (also a part of this same vision) indicates there were several supernatural beings present during this vision. This explains why the angelic being could be hindered in his progress by evil spirits (Vs. 12-13)
4. Consider the specific details of the description. Note the word’s ‘like’ and ‘as’ in Vs. 6.
 - a. His clothing – linen and a golden girdle
 - b. His body – as beryl. Beryl is “a yellowish-green gemstone” (Barnes)

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- c. His face – as the appearance of lightning
- d. His eyes – as lamps of fire
- e. His arms and feet – like polished brass
- f. His voice – like the voice of a multitude

B. The Earthly Man’s Reaction (Vs. 7-9)

1. The reaction of Daniel’s associates (Vs. 7). Twice Daniel mentions that he saw this vision alone (Vs. 7 & 8). God clearly intended that only Daniel receive this vision.
2. The reaction of Daniel (Vs. 8-9)
 - a. Daniel had a sense of his own weakness – twice he mentions that he had “no strength” (Vs. 8)
 - b. Daniel had a sense of his own wickedness – “my comeliness was turned in me into corruption”. Even though Daniel had walked closely with God all his life and was possibly the godliest man in the world at that time, he was totally undone in the pure presence of God. Isaiah had a similar experience (Isaiah 6)
 - c. Challenge: Do we ever pause to contemplate who we are serving? Do we have a high view of our Lord Jesus?

IV. The Consolation in the Vision (Vs. 10-11; 15-19)

The heavenly messenger tenderly comforts Daniel. Daniel was...

A. Strengthened by a Touch (Vs. 10a, 16a & 18)

Three times Daniel is touched in this passage. He was touched...

1. To Stand (Vs. 10-11)
2. To Speak (Vs. 16)
3. To be Strong (Vs. 18)
4. Note: Remember that Christ is closer to you dear Christian than the breath you breathe. He dwells in you and can strengthen you.

B. Strengthened by the Truth (Vs. 11 & 19)

1. Daniel is reminded that he is “a man greatly beloved” (Vs. 11a & 19a) As God’s children we are the special objects of His affection.
2. Daniel is given God’s peace – “peace be unto thee”
3. Daniel is exhorted to “fear not” and to “be strong” (Vs. 12a, 19)

V. The Explanation in the Vision (Vs. 12-14; 20-21)

A. The Reception of Daniel’s Prayer (Vs. 12)

1. There was NO delay in the prayer getting to the throne room of heaven. Satan CANNOT delay our prayers getting to God. It is impossible for him to do so as we are seated with Christ in heavenly places (Eph. 2:6).
2. “from the first day...thy words were heard” = the prayer was heard immediately and a prompt answer was dispatched with the sending of an angel.

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B. The Resistance to Daniel's Prayer (Vs. 13, 20)

There are two princes spoken of here. There is a...

1. An evil prince – “the prince of the kingdom of Persia”
 - a. A high ranking, powerful demonic spirit was behind the Persian Empire. The demonic host is a well-organized army with a united objective to oppose the will of God. This evil spirit came to withstand the angel sent with the message for Daniel. This was the reason for the 3-week delay in the answer to Daniel's prayer.
 - b. Satan is called “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2) Ephesians 6:12 says, *“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against **principalities**, against **powers**, against the **rulers of the darkness of this world**, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”*
 - c. Satan was interested in the subject of Daniels praying on account of his hatred of the Jewish people. They were God's chose people and from Israel would come the promised Messiah. Intercessory prayer takes us into direct conflict with the enemy.
 - d. Challenge: Does your prayer life attract Satan's attention? Are you known in hell? Satan knew who Daniel was. Satan knew who Paul was (Acts 19:15). For most of us, our prayers are so weak that they hardly ever come up on the devil's radar. Many believers live their lives with little to no sense of the battle that often rages in the heavenly places.
2. A godly prince – “Michael, one of the chief princes”
 - a. A powerful, high ranking angel in heaven – ‘chief’
 - b. The only angel in Scripture referred to as an ‘archangel’ (Jude 1:9)
 - c. Has a special relationship to Israel as a nation (Dan. 10:21, 12:1; Rev. 12:7-9)

C. The Revealing because of Daniel's Prayer (Vs. 14, 21)

1. Prophetic truth (Vs. 14) Note the phrase “latter days”
2. Predetermined truth (Vs. 21) The Scripture that was to be revealed was already in existence in heaven. It existed before it was delivered to holy men by God's Spirit (See Psalm 119:89)

Conclusion: Are you involved in intercessory prayer for others? Are you involved in the spiritual warfare that is raging in the heavenly places? Prayer is our most potent weapon against the enemy.