

Daniel Chapter 10 – Spiritual Warfare and Faithful Men

Today we will get into Daniel chapter 10, which really serves as an introduction to Daniels final vision captured in chapters 11 and 12. But there is some significant content in this chapter regarding faithfulness, spiritual disciplines, spiritual warfare, and God’s overarching plans. So we get a break today from apocalyptic (or symbolic) visions, and we get a glimpse into the heavenly realms.

I’ve asked Janet to read Daniel chapter 10 for us today. I do this so we can hear the whole context of it. I also want to encourage everyone that even if you don’t like to read, listening to scripture is a great way to allow God to wash our minds with his truth.

Daniel’s Determination

In chapter 9, when Gabriel appears he says this:

Dan 9:22 He explained to me, “Daniel, I have come here to give you insight and understanding. 23 The moment you began praying, a command was given. And now I am here to tell you what it was, for you are very precious to God. Listen carefully so that you can understand the meaning of your vision.

Now in this chapter we see an angelic being that appears to Daniel says:

11a And the man said to me, “Daniel, you are very precious to God, so listen carefully to what I have to say to you. Stand up, for I have been sent to you.”

19a “Don’t be afraid,” he said, “for you are very precious to God. Peace! Be encouraged! Be strong!”

Daniel’s life and character displayed over many years was noticed by God.

Daniel was a young man when he was taken into Babylon. He was educated by the Babylonians, but clearly very devoted to following the ways of God.

- He did not want to defile himself with unclean food (Dan chp 2)
- He faithfully served under 3 or 4 different kings – Cyrus, King of Persia the last
- He did not compromise to get ahead
- He was consistent to pray and serve God despite opposition
- We saw last week that he studied the scriptures to understand what God was doing

Daniel’s devotion built a heavenly reputation.

Daniel also was highly disciplined to seek God through prayer and fasting to gain insight and wisdom from God.

Dan 9:2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. 3 Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. 4 I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession.

Dan 10:1 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.

You may have heard the term a “Daniel Fast”. Like in Daniel chapter 2, we see Daniel doing a fast that consists of avoiding “delicacies, meat or wine, and he also didn’t use anointing oil for 3 weeks.

Daniel fasted as he repented for the sin of his people, and to gain wisdom and insight from the Lord. What is the point of fasting generally, and **should Christians fast?**

Matt 9:14 One day the disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus and asked him, “Why don’t your disciples fast like we do and the Pharisees do?”

15 Jesus replied, “Do wedding guests mourn while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

We see Jesus use the idea of fasting and mourning similarly like Daniel did. We fast because we long to be close to the God we love, but sometimes he doesn’t seem near.

In the book of Acts we see that fasting is something that Christians still are called to do.

Fasting positions the heart to hear from God.

Chp 13 – At the church in Antioch, the church prayed and fasted while receiving direction regarding sending off Paul and Barnabas to preach the gospel to the non-Jewish world.

Chp 14 – Paul and Barnabas are seen in prayer and fasting when commissioning elders in the new churches that were established as they preached the gospel from town to town.

The purpose of fasting:

- To spend more time in prayer – skipping eating saves some time!
- To sharpen our focus by subjecting our fleshly desires to something more important

- Putting aside the pleasures of this life for eternal matters

Mat 6:5 “When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. 6 But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

In conjunction with the overnight prayer event next weekend (starting Saturday at 6pm running through Sunday morning at 6am) we would like to suggest the congregation also spend time in prayer and fasting ahead of time. So this week coming up, or maybe a day or two ahead we can begin to dedicate ourselves to seeking the Lord.

- You could do like Daniel and forego delicacies. Eat only vegetables, no wine, no ice cream.
- You could skip a meal every day this week.
- You could not eat at all for a day or two or whatever.

The point is not that we are trying to move God’s hand somehow, but that we are trying to put ourselves in a better position to hear from God. To receive understanding from God about things going on in our lives, in the life of the church, in our city and our country.

What is Spiritual Warfare?

One of the reasons we should continually seek God in prayer is that there is an unseen realm of activity beyond what we see with our physical eyes. We see glimpses of that here in Daniel chapters 9 and 10. We saw above in 9:23 The angel Gabriel told Daniel “The moment you began praying, a command was given.” Now we see as Daniel began to pray and fast (no choice food, no meat or wine, no lotions) that again, something is put in motion in the heavenly realms. A different fellow shows up this time and says:

*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. 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.”*

Does this jump out to anyone else? **From the first day** ... your words have been heard. Now, I pointed out at the start that Daniel had a good reputation in heaven. He wasn’t just throwing out a last gasp prayer in the final seconds of a situation. He was **known** by God

already. And when this man prayed and sought after understanding from God, there was immediate action!

1 John 5:14 And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.

The apostle John reportedly lived a long life of faithful service to Jesus in the early Christian church. Also, James, the half-brother of Jesus, who at one point thought Jesus had lost touch with reality but later believed after Jesus appeared to him says this:

James 5:16b The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

Note that in church history was known as **James the Just** and details how he was known for long hours in prayer and fasting. So while these things apply to all believers, I especially want to highlight this for the more seasoned saints among us. Those who have served God faithfully for years. God hears you when you pray. As ACC continues to seek God's direction to fulfill the Great Commission and Great Commandment into the future, the leadership is grateful for your prayers. I know that heaven hears you from the moment you begin to pray.

Now if you are a new believer, that doesn't mean God doesn't hear you or isn't going to respond. As you grow in obedience and as you learn to seek after what pleases God, he answers us too. Jesus is patient and kind as we learn and grow in him.

So what do we make of this battle that went on between this angel and the prince of Persia? The context of this suggests that a demonic force was resisting the angel to prevent deliverance of the Word of the Lord to Daniel. (See earthly delay slide) How many think, "well that's weird"? Yeah, it is a bit weird to our natural minds. This is where the Word of God must inform us. We allow scripture to interpret scripture.

Eph 6:12 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.

There is an overarching plan of God, taking place both in heavenly places and earthly places. Going back to the end of chapter 10 of Daniel, the messenger tells him this:

Dan 10:20 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.

Again, this is a bit confusing, but let's step through it. This messenger had a message for Daniel about Israel and the end of all things. But he is detained and delayed by prince of Persia, which in context seems to be talking about a spiritual being, not a human one. He tells us here that when he leaves Daniel he is going to fight against the prince of Persia again (along with Michael the arch-angel who some think was assigned specifically to Israel). He will apparently defeat the prince of Persia because this will allow the prince of Greece to arise.

If you have heard some of the previous messages from Daniel we have heard this before.

Babylon → Medo-Persia → Greece

He also mentions the book of Truth. This is God's sovereign will and decree. Despite the chaos we may see down here on earth we must remember the God has a book of Truth. He has a plan for all of history and is working in and through all of it.

So the heavenly power behind Persia held sway for a period of time, but then that was pushed aside allowing the heavenly power behind Greece to arise.

- It's foreordained by God
- It plays out in unseen heavenly realms
- It takes place here on earth

I find this to be both frightening and extremely comforting. Who finds this idea frightening, that there are heavenly battles taking place? But isn't comforting to know that it all takes place according to God's book of Truth?

How do we wrestle with these “spiritual powers”?

1. Recognize our source of strength.

Col 2:13 You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. 14 He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. 15 In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.

Just as Daniel, and the Apostles John and James were esteemed by heaven, so are you when stand in power and provision of the Cross of Jesus. It is by his mighty work on the cross that we stand redeemed and by which the spiritual rulers and authorities were officially disarmed.

2. Pray in accordance with the will of God.

Last week Kirk made the statement:

“We’re not waiting for world events to happen, we are the event!

This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the world, and then the end shall come.”

Just as Daniel searched the scriptures to understand the time he was living in back 600 years before Christ, so too we must operate with understanding of the time period we are in now, and how to proceed. There are two over-arching themes which define our marching orders.

The Great Commandment – Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself.

The Great Commission – Make disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey everything Christ has commanded.

GC²

So when you pray, think about things in these terms. Does it have to do with:

- My love and obedience to God
- How well I am loving my neighbor as myself
- My work in helping to make disciples

If not, then it’s probably more of your own desire than one that pleases God. Are we allowed to pray for our needs? Of course. But align yourself with what God calls needs and not what the world calls needs.

3. Pray scripture. Here’s a couple of examples.

Pray for open eyes:

1 Cor 4:3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Pray for boldness and empowerment:

Acts 4:29 And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and give us, your servants, great boldness in preaching your word. 30 Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

31 After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness.

4. Pray for transformation:

2 Cor 3:17 For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.

5. Pray for specific direction in completing our mission:

Last week Randy mentioned we have the prayer people and the action people and how we need to work together. Acts 16 is such a great example of how the two work together.

Acts 16:6 Next Paul and Silas traveled through the area of Phrygia and Galatia, because the Holy Spirit had prevented them from preaching the word in the province of Asia at that time. 7 Then coming to the borders of Mysia, they headed north for the province of Bithynia, but again the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them to go there. 8 So instead, they went on through Mysia to the seaport of Troas.

9 That night Paul had a vision: A man from Macedonia in northern Greece was standing there, pleading with him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us!” 10 So we decided to leave for Macedonia at once, having concluded that God was calling us to preach the Good News there.

Conclusion

When Daniel walked the earth, 600 years before Christ, he had a devout heart that desired to know and understand the plans of God. So he humbled himself through prayer and fasting to seek God’s face. In response, God sends messengers to fill Daniel in on His plans and encourage Daniel by telling him he is precious to God.

Here we stand today – 2000 years after Christ walked the earth. We have the benefit of seeing God’s plan of redemption as a completed event. We have the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to be his witnesses. And we have the clear marching orders of Jesus – GC².

This week we all have the opportunity to practice the spiritual disciplines of fasting and prayer concluding with the overnight prayer time here at ACC from 6pm Saturday to 6pm Sunday.