

I'm so glad to be getting back into Daniel today because God has a passage for us that will really strengthen us and build our faith

We'll be in Daniel chapter 10 so go ahead and turn there in your Bibles...

You'll want to have your Bible out and open today and every day

Even though we use PowerPoint as an aid to our study

- It is not a substitute for you having a Bible out and open
- And there are several reasons for this

- For one it helps you get familiar with the books of the Bible and where they are found

- For another it helps you learn how to read and understand Scripture for yourself
- It teaches you how to study Scripture for yourself at home

- And for yet another it helps you know if what I am saying is true or not
- I don't want you to ever base something on my opinion
- So by following along you can see if what I am saying is biblical or not

Amen?

OK, so are you ready to read?

Let's read the entire chapter and then go back and explain and apply it

Daniel 10:1-11:1

Notice right away how this passage begins in verse 1

- Several important things are said

In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar. And the word was true

Now stop there and meditate upon that for a minute

- **And the word was true**

All Scripture is true

- It is God's inspired, inerrant, authoritative Word

Daniel is reminding his readers of this because he doesn't want them to think this is coming from him, from his imagination

- He's reminding them of the certainty of what they are reading

We need to remember that as we go through hard times, trials and conflicts

- God has spoken to give us a sure Word in times of uncertainty

We live in a time when people call wrong, right

- When they call sin, a choice, a lifestyle, a preference

So we need a true Word about life, a clear Word

- That's why I'd never point you to my opinion as truth
- I would only point you to God's Word as truth
- And that's what this is

And notice the specific context of this true Word for us today

- **And the word was true and it was a great conflict...**
- You could read it this way as well: **it was about a great conflict...**
- **It concerned a great conflict**

What we are reading today is a true word about living in times of conflict

- A passage preparing you to live in times of difficulty

Now remember that Daniel was being told this for his benefit as well as ours

- He's telling us about a spiritual conflict taking place in the heavens

Specifically what this passage describes is a vision Daniel received in response to his prayer for the Jews

- If you remember our study from weeks past you remember that the Jews had recently returned to the promised land after 70 years of captivity
- The same Cyrus mentioned here in verse 1 had decreed that the Jews could leave Babylon and return home

Daniel had not gone with them so he prayed and fasted for their success

- He prayed that they would return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple
- **However he now learns they are slowing down in their work**
- **They are beginning to face some difficulty in their task**

This explains the context of verses 2-3: **²In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks. ³I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks.**

Daniel is very troubled to learn that the Jews were slowing down in their rebuilding efforts

- Maybe they found the task to be bigger than what they thought they could handle
- Maybe they were facing more opposition than they originally thought
- Maybe a lot of people had initially signed up to help but now two years later they weren't as supportive

That sounds a little bit like church life doesn't it?

So Daniel prayed and fasted but things weren't going the way he wanted

- **Long story short, he was discouraged by what he saw**

Maybe you're praying about something today...

- You're doing everything you know to be right...
- But you wonder why God hasn't answered your prayers...
- You wonder where God is in the midst of all this...
- It seems like your enemies are winning...
- Like your prayers are hitting a wall and not being answered...

Am I connecting with anyone yet?

Well God tells Daniel and us the reason for this...

- He says there is a spiritual conflict going on, a spiritual battle
- **There are things going on in the heavens that affect what is going on here on earth**

But now catch this... it was precisely during this time of discouragement that Daniel received the vision from God

- A heavenly messenger was sent from God to give Daniel a sure Word
- Look ahead to verses 10-11: **A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. ¹¹He said, "Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you." And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling.**

God spoke to His prophet just when he needed an answer

- He had him record it for us today so we would have this Word too

I'm encouraged by that because it tells me that God helps us make sense of life

- He gives us a true Word during times of confusion and doubt

He gives us a true Word to help us know how to deal with conflicts and problems

- He teaches us right from wrong so when we see all this weird stuff going on around us we can know the truth and stand firm

And notice one last thing here in verse 1 before we get too much further...

- It says: **And he understood the word and had understanding of the vision.**

I'm so glad to read that part of the verse!

We've been reading about all these wild visions in Daniel

- All these things that are so hard to understand
- All these statues representing different countries and end times prophecies

Aren't you glad to have a chapter in which Daniel says:

- *I understood the word!*
- *I understood the vision!*

Well, I hope you understand what we're talking about today as well

- What I'm going to do now is pull several truths from this chapter and make application to our lives

I hope God has already been speaking to your heart this morning

- But I pray He uses this now to speak even more clearly to those of you going through conflict
- *(Which if you haven't noticed, is all of us)*

So first on your outline, know that there is a spiritual battle raging all around us

Daniel was discouraged about the rebuilding effort and so he prayed

- God answered his prayer by sending him a heavenly messenger
- He would explain to Daniel the reason for the things going on around him

Verses 5 and 6 tell us more about this messenger: **⁵I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. ⁶His 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.**

Now we aren't given the identity of this messenger

- There are reasons for and against it being a pre-incarnate Christ but I'm not going to explore all those today

What I think is most important is what he says

- Look with me at verse 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."**

Daniel prayed, he fasted, he humbled himself

- And God answered his prayer, He came because of his words

God sent a heavenly messenger to explain to Daniel what was happening

- He said there was a conflict taking place in the heavens that was influencing the things happening here on earth

Verses 13-14 are very important to understand what is happening here

- They record the heavenly messenger saying: **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, ¹⁴and 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."**

Now two different things are taking place here

- One thing he says in verse 14 will help us as we address the last two chapters of Daniel
- He says **the vision is for your people for days yet to come**

I'm not going to get into that part today since we'll cover it later

- But what interests me now is what he says in verse 13 about this **prince of the kingdom of Persia withstanding him twenty-one days**

You need to understand that God is allowing us in on something here that we aren't allowed in on very often

- He's allowing us to see the spiritual reality all around us

As one writer said: Here a veil is lifted momentarily, and it reveals a heavenly warfare going on. It reveals there is a great deal more about this universe in which we live than meets the eye. There is a great deal more to it than we know.

What we **do** know is that a heavenly messenger was sent by God to answer Daniel

- That's clear from verse 12

But now catch this in verse 13...

- Someone called the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood him for 21 days
- He blocked his path
- He delayed his journey
- *That's amazing isn't it?*

Then next we are told that Michael, **one of the chief princes**, came to help him

- With his help, the heavenly messenger was finally able to get to Daniel and deliver his message

Now very few details are revealed to us here so I'm not going to speculate beyond what the text reveals

- A lot of people take this verse and go in a lot of different directions and develop some pretty elaborate schemes of spiritual warfare

All I want to do today is awaken you to the reality that there **is** a conflict taking place

- A spiritual conflict

In the unseen world there is a conflict going on between good and evil, light and darkness, God and Satan.

- There are satanic forces and heavenly forces.

I conclude three things from this

- Angels are real
- There are good and evil angels
- And angels can influence the affairs of human beings

This explains why our prayers are sometimes not answered as quickly as we would like

- It explains why sometimes the Christian life seems like such a battle
- And it explains why sometimes it seems as if our enemies are winning

Ephesians 6:11-12 sheds more light on this for us: **Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.**

So what are these spiritual battles we're talking about today?

- What are some examples of angels influencing human affairs?

I like to always clarify that the battleground for spiritual warfare is the mind

- I believe these angels attempt to sway earthly powers
- They try and change our thinking

It doesn't mean these evil angels are guaranteed success

- We have a say in what we believe and what we do
- We have a choice to stand on His Word and stand for Christ
- But their job is to subtly influence our thinking against Him

So what are some of the things our enemy may want to influence us in?

- Well, what about things like homosexuality and abortion?
- We know what God's Word says but our enemy is trying to sway the minds of people to go against what God has said

Then at an even more practical level

- What about things like sexual immorality and living together before marriage?
- We know what God's Word says, but can't you see a shift in how people view these things today?

What about modesty in how we dress?

- What about the words we deem appropriate and inappropriate?
- The types of entertainment we select?

In all these cases and thousands more, we know what God's Word says

- But there is an enemy trying to change our thinking

Now I'm not out to find a demon hiding under every rock

- But Scripture is clear that this is a real thing for us to know about
- There is an enemy working not only against biblical values but biblical objectives and purposes
- There are angelic forces influencing people making decisions today
- Both at a national political level affecting our country and our future
- Down to smaller decisions affecting people and their lives

So be alert, be awake, and know there is a spiritual battle raging all around you

OK, that was number one

- **Now I want to get even more specific with how our enemy operates**
- **So second, our enemy works specifically to stop the spread of the Gospel**

Now get back in to the context of Daniel for a minute

- Why would this prince of Persia want to stop Daniel's prayers?

Well, to figure that out you need to think about what Daniel was praying for

- He was praying for the re-establishment of Israel

So where was Israel back then in terms of salvation history?

- Well, they were waiting for the Messiah, the Savior to come

They had the prophecies, they knew He would be coming

- They were just waiting for Him to arrive

So what did all those prophecies tell about?

- That He would be born to a virgin in Bethlehem
- That He would suffer and die for sins
- On and on, hundreds and hundreds of prophecies

So if you were the enemy what would you try and do?

- You'd try and keep the Jews from rebuilding
- You'd try and keep them from re-establishing themselves in the land
- You'd work against them and try and wipe them off the face of the earth so the Savior could not come and destroy your kingdom

What that tells me is that Satan knows the Bible, maybe better than some of us

- He can't alter God's purposes but that doesn't stop him from trying
- He's already a defeated foe but that doesn't stop him from causing us problems

Specifically today he works against the spread of the Gospel

- In a geo-political sense he works to slow the Gospel by influencing governments and policies to work against the cause of Christ
- And on a smaller scale he influences Christians to not share their faith

He knows what Matthew 24:14 says and what it has to do with his end

- **And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.**

So he does all he can to slow that day from coming

But as I said, it's not just governments and high officials that he tries to influence

- He also works to influence local churches and individual followers of Christ
- He whispers that you are too busy to talk to your neighbor about the Gospel or to invite them to church
- He tells you they wouldn't be interested in hearing about salvation or that they would only get mad at you if you shared with them
- He tells you not to invest money into missions when the economy is bad
- He tells you to discourage your loved ones from becoming missionaries or going into the ministry
- He tells you it's no big deal if you are too busy to visit people
- That's what you pay the pastor for

- He wants us to focus on other things instead of the Gospel
- To allow divisions and fights to creep into the church
- To just not care

Listen... our enemy will use whatever it takes to slow the spread of the Gospel

- He knows he is a defeated foe so he will work to delay that day as long as he can

God is sovereign, God is all-powerful, God's purposes will prevail

- Yet inside God's plan for the world He allows our enemy to fight us

Are you with me?

There is a spiritual battle raging all around us and this battle is specifically aimed to work against the spread of the Gospel

So make sure your eyes are open

- Be alert
- Stand your ground and fight

Next I'll show you how to fight

- **So third, we need to persist in prayer**

Daniel prayed, Daniel fasted and Daniel humbled himself

- And verse 12 says: **I have come because of your words**

That verse should encourage every child of God who has ever prayed...

God answers the prayers of His people

- He hears you, He loves you, He is on your side

He is so much on your side that His Son died for your sins at the cross and rose again from the dead

- He is so much on your side that He has defeated your enemy
- He is so much on your side that He gave you His Spirit
- He is so much on your side that He placed you in a church to help you
- He is so much on your side that He gave you His Word to teach you
- He is so much on your side that He allows you to pray to Him

Are you using the weapons and tools He has given you?

- *Are you persisting in prayer?*

Our warfare is spiritual, our weapons are spiritual, we fight through prayer...

Romans 15:30 says: **I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf,**

2 Corinthians 10:3-6 **For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. ⁴For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, ⁶being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.**

Let's pray for our church

- Let's pray for each other
- Let's pray for our sister churches and missionaries and ministries
- Let's pray for our President and other elected leaders
- Let's pray for Israel and other nations to come to Christ and be saved

Let's persist in prayer

- *Amen?*

And now fourth and finally

- **Let me encourage you with what God used to encourage Daniel**
- **When you stand with Jesus and walk with Jesus you are given strength and He will fight your battles for you**

One of the neatest things takes place here in chapter 10 if you catch it

- In verse 8 we are told that Daniel was feeling weak and no strength was left in him
- In verse 17 he says he is so weak he can't even breathe or speak

But then beginning in verse 18 we are told again about the heavenly messenger

- Whether or not it is Christ I can't say for sure
- But I do know Christ is the One who stands with us today
- He is the One who gives us strength today
- He is the One who fights our battles for us today

And so Daniel 10:18-20 says: **Again one having the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me. ¹⁹ And he said, "O man greatly loved, 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...**

God not only strengthens His people

- He then goes out and fights for His people
- He goes before us in battle to defeat all our enemies

We still have to stand and fight as well

- But God leads us into battle
- He gives us strength as we fight

Isn't that amazing?

We'll be out there fighting and struggling...

- And then we'll turn to Christ by faith and be strengthened

You'll be strengthened when you do well

- You'll be strengthened there in the trenches as you fight side by side with other believers in Christ
- You'll be strengthened as you see Christ our Banner going out before us
- Leading us into battle
- *What a Savior!*

Are you feeling that strength today or are you feeling weak and run down?

Are you energized and enthused or are you discouraged and frustrated?

Some of you are in spiritual battles today and you need to persist

- Maybe you've quit fighting the battle
- Maybe you're not persisting in prayer
- You need to get back in the fight
- You need to trust in Jesus

His timing might not be yours nor may His plans be what you would have chosen

- The battles may have even caused you some scars and damage
- But He is your answer
- He is the Victor
- He won at the cross and He won at the grave and He will win every battle He fights
- You need to keep your eyes on Him
- You need to have faith in Him

Others of you need a church home or to be more committed to the church

- You need more spiritual protection
- You need deeper relationships for accountability and spiritual growth
- You need a youth group
- You need a Sunday School class
- You need to take a step of faith and take the initiative

You don't want to be isolated in the battle

- It's the sheep out there by themselves, out on the fringes, that are the easiest for the lion's to attack

Maybe others of you aren't even in the battle because you don't know the Savior

I want to urge you to come to this Christ we've been talking about

- The Lord mighty in battle
- The one who died for us and rose again
- Come to Him, turn from your sins and trust in Him

Will you pray with me...?