**The Invisible War and the Power of Prayer**

**Daniel 10:1-21**

**Introduction**

Good morning! Today we are returning to Daniel. We have made it up to chapter 10. In today’s chapter we are going to be learning about the way that angelic beings, both Godly as well as those working for Satan operate in the unseen realm. What we will find out is that there is a continual war taking place between the angels who work for God and those who work for Satan. This is not very difficult for us as followers of Christ to understand because Scripture shows us many examples of how God is working to complete His plan on earth, but those plans are sometimes delayed by the powers of darkness. However, no matter how much Satan may try to stop the will of God he is not able to do so.

 Before we discuss the information provided for us in the chapter, let us think about the importance of us knowing about this conflict. Scripture tells us plainly that life on this earth is hard and that we should expect for life as a follower of Christ to be filled with challenges. Regardless of the challenges that we must face, our God is always with us as we go through this life. By the time of this chapter Daniel is in his 80’s and has become an old man in the kingdom. He has served four different kings during his life and is now at the point where God is revealing to him details regarding the future. For the remainder of this book we will looking at the details God reveals to Daniel later in his life.

 In our time together today, we are going to learn three insights regarding God. First, we learn that when God draws near to us in our trials, we will become less reliant on our own power and lean more upon God. Secondly, when we pray, we are taking part in spiritual warfare because we are equipping ourselves through the power of God to carry our His will. When we pray and do not receive immediate answers, that is not because God is refusing to act, but because God sees to it that His will is carried out at the appropriate time. Thirdly, it is the Word of God that gives us the endurance to face the trials of this life.

**Setting and Context (vv. 1-3)**

As we begin the 10th chapter of the book, we see that Daniel is standing along the Tigris River. We are told that this took place during the first month of the year on the 24th day. For us to grasp the magnitude of the moment Daniel is in we need to understand the events that have been taking place. First, at this point Daniel is an old man most likely in his eighties. He has served four kings during his life and served all of them faithfully while being detained in exile with the rest of his countrymen. Many years have passed since his experience with the lion’s den, and it can be reasonably assumed that most of his friends, if not all of them, have already passed away by this time.

 Not only has Daniel aged after spending most of his life in exile, but we also know that some other important events have been taking place during the last couple decades in his life. By this time there have been two return trips made to Jerusalem from Babylon. The first trip was made by Zerubbabel and then by the Priest Ezra. These returns were done so that the temple could be rebuilt and so that the worship of God would be done in obedience to the Law of Moses. After the people returned with Ezra, they began the process of rebuilding the temple. Once they had begun the work the Samaritans came to ask Zerubbabel if they could help with the building of the temple because they said they wanted to worship God as well. When reading the book of Ezra, we find out that the Samaritans were not worshipers of the God of Israel alone, they also worshiped other gods in the land and therefore just wanted to help so that the God of Israel would protect them as well. When their offer to help build the temple was rejected, they became angry and complained to the king of Persia. The king ordered that work stop on the temple, so it sat without any work being done on it for over 15 years. The work was restarted after God sent the prophets Zechariah and Haggai to tell the people to continue working because the Lord would be with them during the rebuilding.

 Daniel was aware of the challenges that the people in Jerusalem were facing and therefore he is approaching God in a humble manner asking that He be with the people and allow them the ability to restore Jerusalem. Since he was already old, Daniel chose not to return to Jerusalem with the younger people and therefore decided that his role was to help the people who were still in exile. What we also need to remember is that not all the people in exile chose to return to Jerusalem. Many of them stayed back and chose to live the rest of their lives in the land they had become comfortable living in.

 Now this brings us to the context of the passage. In verse 1 Daniel tells us where he is and when this takes place. It also tells us that Daniel had just experienced a vision dealing with conflict. The conflict this is speaking of is the war that will take place at the end of time as well as the spiritual conflict that is taking place during the life of Daniel and continues today. What we learn from this passage is that there is a spiritual battle raging between the angels of God as well as demonic angels of Satan. There is a spiritual war being fought on the earth, but it is unseen by human eyes. Not only do we see this concept brought up in Daniel, but the Apostle Paul confirms this in his writing to the church in Ephesus who he was encouraging in the faith. **In Ephesians 6:12 Paul writes these words** **“For 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."** We will get more into this as we discuss the chapter more fully.

 In verses 2-3 Daniel says that he had been mourning after having his vision for three weeks. During that time, he neglected himself from having fine food and wine and also, he did not use any lotions that would have been used while being in such a hot and humid climate. His entire focus during that time was on the vision. What he had seen in that vision disturbed him so much that he needed time to process what he had witnessed.

**Daniel’s Vision of Heavenly Glory (vv. 4-9)**

 Starting in verse 4, Daniel gives a description of the heavenly figure that appeared to him in his vision. The man in his vision was wearing linen and a belt of pure gold around his waist. Not only was the man dressed beautifully, but his physical characteristics show that this was a heavenly being. His body sparkled like topaz, he had eyes of fire, arms and legs shined like bronze and his voice was powerful like a multitude of people.

 Now who was this being? Some commentators say that there are two possibilities. The first option is that Daniel is having a vision of Jesus Christ in His heavenly form. While this is possible it is most likely not probable. The reason why this is not Jesus is because later in the account another being will say that he was delayed from helping the people in Jerusalem because the Prince of Persia had delayed him. With the fact that the other angelic being speaking is talking about the being in the vision, the best option is that Daniel is seeing an angelic heavenly being that has been sent by God to answer the prayer of Daniel.

 Daniel records that he alone saw the vision, but that he was so shook by what he saw that it caused the other men with him to also run and hide in fear. Now what was the cause of Daniel’s fear as well as his companions? The reason for their fear was because they were in the presence of holy God, whose radiance is so great that human eyes cannot fathom it. This angelic being wearing the linen and having the physical attributes we just mentioned left Daniel in a state of wonder because he was marveling at what he saw. His reaction was so startling that it caused the men with him to become frightful as well. Scripture tells us that the glory of God is so awe inspiring that just looking at Him is impossible. After Moses saw the Spirit of God in the burning bush his face had a glow that resonated from it. It was so bright that later while the people were wandering in the wilderness, he had to wear a veil to shield the people from the light. Without a doubt, this experience left Daniel in a state of shock! In verse 9 Daniel is lying on his face on the ground sleeping because of the experience.

**Spiritual Warfare is Explained to Daniel (vv. 10-14)**

 It is at this point in the account that Daniel will be awakened by the second being who will explain to him the spiritual warfare that takes place in the unseen realm, which we already have read as explained by the Apostle Paul as well. After Daniel wakes up and gets back on his feet the angel begins to explain everything that had taken place after Daniel made his petition to God. Let’s look closely at verses 12 and 13. The first point the angel makes is that God heard Daniel’s prayer from the first time he prayed. From that time on the angel had been sent to answer his prayer. However, the angel was delayed in answering the prayer because a demonic angel, referred to as the “prince of the kingdom of Persia,” stood in the way of the Godly angel being able to do his work. This delay lasted 21 days until the angel received help from Michael, who is one of the chief princes of the angels. What the angel is telling Daniel about is the spiritual warfare that takes place in the spiritual realm, which is not seen by human eyes. The Satanic angel mentioned here does the bidding of Satan and therefore was working to delay and resist the purposes of God. The demonic angel was able to delay the work of God, but he was not able to stop what God was going to do. So, what we learn here is that there are dark spiritual forces at work through people and events in this world that try to delay and stop the purposes of God. Now why is this happening? We must remember that when man fell into sin this allowed the curse of sin and death to enter the world. There are evil forces at work and when we see things happening in this world that seem to be an attack on God and His people this is what we are seeing. Even though there are evil forces at work, we must not be afraid. Our God is much more powerful than Satan and therefore anything he tries to do will never overcome the purposes of God. Just like we mentioned earlier with the Samaritans trying to stop the work of rebuilding the temple. They were successful at delaying the work, but after God sent His prophets the work resumed and the temple as well as the city were eventually restored. There is a spiritual war being fought on earth as well as in the heavens, but we must have courage because our God wis with us through His Holy Spirit. Those forces cannot defeat us because we are sealed in Him.

**God Provides Strength for the Battle (vv. 15-21)**

 After seeing and hearing everything in this vision Daniel is totally exhausted and weary. There were no words that he could say because it was so overwhelming for him to process. The angel in verse 16 touched his lips, which allowed him to ask the angel a question. He wanted to know how to speak with a messenger of the Lord and he felt that he was too weak to be able to do so. Once again, in verse 18 the angel touched him to strengthen him. As the passage concludes the angel provides words of encouragement and tells Daniel that he will be returning to fight the prince of Persia on behalf of God and His chosen people. Not only does the angel say that he will fight against Persia, but also against the prince of Greece who is about to come. Just as God provided strength for Daniel, He does the same for us as we face trials. Now it is time for us to look at our applications from the passage.

**Applications**

 The first application we can take from Daniel’s vision today is that prayer is the conduit that connects us with God. We should take every opportunity we have to connect with our God and communicate to Him through prayer. As we review today’s passage, we see that a response was sent to Daniel because he was seeking the Lord by denying himself the comforts of life and focusing on the well-being of his fellow Israelites as they were working to rebuild Jerusalem. That had faced many obstacles, but through prayer God was helping them to overcome those challenges to fulfill His purposes. This speaks to our lives today because we all face challenges and trials in this life that will cause us to become weary and discouraged. The forces of evil are trying to delay the purpose of God while at the same time wear us out so that we will lose our faith in God. Daniel lived over 70 years of his life in a strange land in exile because of the sin of those who came before him. Without a doubt Daniel was becoming tired and was dealing with a lot of discouragement because of that long exile. God spoke through the prophets that He would bring restoration and return the people to the Promised Land. We see that God will encourage and sustain His people when they seek Him in prayer and repent of sin. I know that we have used this Scripture before, but it does fit perfectly with what we are learning today. God told the nation of Israel that He would heal their land if they would humble themselves, seek His face, turn from their wicked ways (2 Chronicles 7:14). He offers this same promise to us today, but we have also the gift of the Holy Spirit who convicts us of sin and allows us to stay connected with God through His Word. We must always seek the Lord and when we do so He is there to encourage and strengthen us as we go through the challenges of this life.

 A second application we need to discuss from today is that we are in the middle of a Spiritual Battle where the forces of darkness are trying to get the people of God to stop obeying His Word. I would like to share a quote from the Reformed Expository Commentary that says this in a way that I think is appropriate. *“Satan wants us to think that obedience to God really doesn’t matter very much- that it doesn’t make much difference whether we follow God or assimilate into the culture around us”* (p. 182).The reason this is important to remember is because it is easy to think that we can just go along with the culture and still try to worship God by being obedient to Him. That is not possible. Daniel showed us that he stood strong for God while at the same time he faithfully served the kings in Babylon. He served well, but also did not compromise his faith. You and I are called to do the same. We are commanded in Scripture to be loving and share the love of Christ with our fellow man. But we are also called to be the light of the world and to not allow that light to be placed under a bowl. We can make a difference in this world as well as represent Christ in a positive manner by standing up for the Word of God and unashamedly sharing the good news with the culture. Even though there are forces of evil out there trying to stop the gospel we need to remember that Jesus said that not even the gates of hello will be able to stop the church. Through prayer, the work of the church, the presence of the Holy Spirit and the spreading of the gospel God is bringing the good news to a lost and dying world that so badly needs to hear it. God worked through the life of Daniel to impact the kingdom of Babylon; He can and will do the same thing through His church.

 May we never forget that our lives will either make a difference for good or bad in this world. God has called us to leave a legacy of faith for the next generation that will lead others to coming to the knowledge of salvation that is provided by Jesus Christ alone. The Lord is with us every day as we work to do His will, so may we never stop doing the work He has commissioned us to do until either He calls us home or He returns to take us to our eternal home. Amen.