

Hurst Green

15th Jul 2018

Daniel 10:1-11:1

Daniel's Vision of a man

Last week we had Daniel's prayer in Chapter 9 and a look at how to pray big and being prepared to step up and pray for the nations.

If you remember it finished with all those sevens which I walked through as spelling out the time between Daniel then and the coming of Christ.

Now we go on and Daniel is getting his prayers answered and is going to have a number of things explained to him about the end times.

From this we can learn a number of things about prayer and a phrase that is often banded around – spiritual warfare. Perhaps we need to be a little more careful of that phrase – not scared of it but just careful.

This is another chapter full of truths we could learn and perhaps I should spend several weeks over this but my style is much more to pull out some truths for you and encourage you to go digging for more.

Particularly those of you who have told me Daniel is your favourite book.

Perhaps I should take a few weeks off and get each of you to come up and tell us why Daniel is such a favourite and all the things that Daniel has taught you. We should be encouraging one another like that – perhaps standing here might scare the living daylights out of you but then you expect me to do it each week.

Each week you only get to watch one of me while I get to watch up to twenty of you!

I must think on that – I might be onto a good idea.

Anyway that will not work this week and so I have prepared something else based on Daniel 10.

So let's start with verse 1

Daniel 10:1 (ANIV)

¹ In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel (who was called Belteshazzar). Its message was true and it concerned a great war. The understanding of the message came to him in a vision.

It was the first year of Cyrus and so Daniel was an old man – at least by our standards.

He had been taken into exile and had seen his nation through the exile and was now waiting to see his nation return.

Again we need to remember that scripture is not a history book even though all the facts it has told us about history have been shown to be true or not yet proven one way or the other.

Nothing the bible says on history has been shown to be untrue.

Daniel has been given a revelation about a great war and this was a true revelation.

Dear Daniel in his style wants more – he wants to understand his revelation.

Given his experiences by now I might be getting to the point where I would just go away and ponder this a bit but Daniel seeks more than that and gets his understanding through a vision.

But the vision did not just appear one day. Daniel is showing us that we must press on in our prayers – as we learnt last week not as a shopping list but in prayer, praise and confession.

And Daniel knew about that – he had done this early in his book and I am sure did it many times on his ways through although we are not told them because this is not an autobiography but is Holy Scripture which is good for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training (2 Tim 3:16)

And so we have Daniel

Daniel 10:2-3 (ANIV)

² at that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. ³ I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over.

This is Daniel humbling himself – Humbling – a word we don't use very much nowadays and certainly we do not understand the biblical meaning of it and so this is one of the points we are going to pull out today.

Do you remember way back in Chapter 1 a young Daniel humbled himself and asked his boss to test him and won the right not to eat all the luxury items and to stick to a diet of vegetables?

Here he goes again. Verse 2 calls it mourning but verse 12 says he was humbling himself before his God.

So what is humble for us? It's a word we would link with fail and being at the bottom of the heap but that is not what it means biblically.

Here one of the top rulers of Babylon is humbling himself before his God while at the same time still ruling a great chunk of Babylon – the two do not seem to be going hand in hand but the bible says they do and we know the bible is true.

Well of course we all know the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector from Luke – definitely not humbling himself before his God.

And yet we all know the scripture in 2 Chron 7 – if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways etc.

Now hidden in there we have the definition of humble for this day and age.

- Pray – talk to their God but in a big open Daniel sort of way
- Seek – that is what Daniel was up to and was going to get a great big result.
- Turn from their wicked ways – confession as we looked at last week and ongoing confession of our sins has to be a part of humility as it leaves us righteous and we know the prayers of the righteous are effective.

But it has to be between you and God – if you are doing it to be seen by the fellow saints you have already had your reward!!

So Daniel is seeking understanding and let's see what happens.

- 4-6 He sees a great vision (but this will turn out to be only the messenger)
- V 9 he falls into a deep sleep face towards the group
- V10 he is trembling on his hands and knees
- V11 he stood up trembling
- This great messenger had been delayed by the enemy for 21 days

And from this I am meant to find a way to encourage you to engage in spiritual warfare in our day and age.

Well take comfort – not many are called to operate at Daniel's level and those that are God prepares for that role just as Daniel prepared for seventy years or so.

But you are called to operate at some level and so I want to teach you something about spiritual warfare that satan loves to hide from us and would like us to treat as a bit of a joke just as he tries to hide so many of his ways in the joke book.

They are no joke and we need to be alert to them.

The point this morning is territorial spirits. The reading mentions the Prince of Persia (now Iran) and Greece.

Now the spirit of Iran is an active part of the world's problems today not only in Iran but in the many vassal states it influences.

- Syria
- Iraq (even after opposing it for many years)
- Yemen
- Israel
- Jordan

And I could list many more.

When you read your newspaper in whatever form you receive it do you pray against the spirit of Iran?

Probably not.

Or what about closer to home?

Our own area is home to dark influences such as the temple down the road. That gives a spirit influence over an area.

Or other influences such as witches covens and other black arts. Oh satan would love us to joke about them but they are real and present dangers. Do we pray against these?

Do we do as Daniel did and pray for understanding – pray for our spiritual eyes to be open so that we can pray against these things – so that we can engage in spiritual warfare?

As we seek to understand we need to be prepared for what we will get and this takes us to a very important scripture for those engaged in spiritual warfare which after all is all of us whether we like it or not. You enlist in the army and you enlist in the fight.

That important scripture – the armour of God in Ephesians 6 – anyone quote it for me?

Ephesians 6:10-18 (ANIV)

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

The armour is important and we should all know the elements listed there but also notice words that are used around it:

- Strong in the lord
- In his mighty power
- Stand firm appears several times
- Pray in the Spirit
- We alert
- Pray for the saints

Spiritual warfare is a very real thing if we are prepared for it – if we are not we are probably out of the field of battle already.

We win when we focus on seeking understanding of God's ways – too many people spend their time trying to understand satans ways. Don't make that mistake.

We are up against real spirits – don't be fooled into thinking they are a joke – the devil is a prowling lion seeking whom he may devour and if you are not careful you will be devoured and not even notice!

We have the weapons for war but like good soldiers we need to be following our captains orders – hence the need to understand for we are not meant to be mindless in all of this but active participants.

Some final words from hymns we use:

For I'm building a people of power

Arise a mighty army – we arise

An army of ordinary people

Onward Christian soldiers

We are an army – we have the most powerful weapons on the battlefield and we can and do win in prayer and action.

There is a phrase used in various armies and elite units – believe in your training and that is my challenge for you today.

Believe in your training!!

Because you can defeat the enemy and we can make a difference here and throughout the world. We do not need to be many – Christ started his Church with 12 and we are more than that.

Believe in your training