

## **The Man Above the River**

Welcome to Harvest Community Church

Series: The Book of Daniel

### **Daniel 10:1**

Daniel is now close to 90 years of age. This vision happens in the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia, **536** years before the birth of Christ. Cyrus is mentioned more than thirty times throughout scripture. He reigned over Persia, which is modern day Iran and Iraq. He is important to Jewish history because it was under his rule that the Jewish people were first allowed to return to Israel after seventy years in captivity.

**150** years before Cyrus lived, the prophet Isaiah called him by name and gave the details of his kindness to the Jewish people. **Isaiah 45:1, Isaiah 44:28** Cyrus' decree of releasing the Jewish people is recorded in **2 Chronicles 36:22-23** As we learned earlier in Daniel, the book of Ezra teaches how Cyrus not only released the Jews but assisted them in rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem under Zerubbabel and the High Priest Joshua.

Daniel served as a chief counselor to Cyrus, so it is reasonable to assume that he had something to do with the king being influenced to show kindness to the Jews. The Historian **Josephus** tells us that Cyrus was informed of the biblical prophecies concerning him. Imagine finding out that you were named 150 years before you even were born and became king. The obvious person to have shown Cyrus the scrolls was Daniel. Cyrus was known for his advancement of human rights, his brilliant military strategy and his ability to bridge the eastern and western cultures.

### **Proverbs 21:1**

Chapter 10 sets the stage for the amazing prophecy to be given in chapter 11. Daniel tells us that the appointed time was long or a time **far** into the future - which described a time of great persecution and testing for the people of Israel. Israel was going to face times of war and hardship.

### **Daniel 10:2-3**

Daniel was in mourning because so **few** Jews had returned with Ezra from exile.

**Ezra 2:64-65** Some believe it was because Ezra faced severe opposition in rebuilding the temple. Daniel did not go back with Ezra's group of exiles because he was about 84 years old at this time. Daniel could serve the exiles better from his high position in government than he could with them in Jerusalem. We do not know how many Jews were in exile but only 50,000 returned to Israel.

While fifty thousand returned to Jerusalem the rest stayed in Persia. They were content to remain in captivity and away from all that God was **restoring** in Jerusalem. The older generation brought into captivity and the new generation born into captivity had made an entirely new life IN their captivity. How many of us embrace all of the gifts God gives to us? How many of us continue to live in captivity and remain in bondage to fear, resentment, bitterness and depression? In order to embrace the freedom they were given they would have to leave their familiar and **rebuild** in the promise. For many this was a price that they were unwilling to pay. There is a lot for us to learn concerning the response of so many.

Daniel was driven to his knees in intercession for a full three weeks. He did not eat anything but vegetables and, because bathing was not a regular thing in those days, he did not practice normal physical hygiene. This self-denial was intentional, noticeable and part of humbling himself before God and man. Daniel was interceding for the people of Israel who had lost their spiritual way and who were content to remain in exile. INTERCESSION is defined as – holy believing persevering prayer where someone pleads with God on behalf of others who need His intervention.

### **Daniel 10:4-11 (NLT)**

This is an amazing experience that few people have had. Daniel had a similar response to that of Isaiah when he saw the Lord. There are those that believe that this was an angel and others who believe that this was the pre-incarnate Christ because of the similarities with what the Apostle John experienced on the Island of Patmos. **Revelation 1:12-18** We know that Ezekiel also saw angels clothed in linen. **Ezekiel 9:2**

Daniel was with other people when he saw this vision but no one else saw what Daniel saw but they were impacted by what was happening. They became so afraid that they ran and hid. This is very similar to what happened to Paul on the way to Damascus when he was still Saul.

### **Acts 9:3-7**

These cases remind us that we can be close to the presence and power of God yet miss the message through lack of spiritual perception.

Even though Daniel was a man of God all of his life, he was still stunned by the presence of God. As godly as Daniel was, he was undone by this vision of the glorious man. Daniel's experience shows us that even the holiest of men fall short before God. Notice how one touch from Jesus or an angel can give us strength. We sang a song a while ago written by the Gaither's called "He touched me". Not only did the angel touch Daniel to give him strength he spoke to him in a way that would strengthen his inner man. **Daniel 10:11 (NLT)** This was the second time Daniel was called greatly beloved (Daniel 9:23 previous to this). Each time it was in relation to Daniel's being favored with a great and significant revelation of the future. The touch of God and approval of God on your life is no small thing. As children of God, we don't just have His touch we are His. We are also beloved and precious to God. Do YOU see yourself this way?

It is significant that this touch took Daniel off of his face but only to his hands and knees. The angel instructed Daniel to stand to his feet on his own. He needed to know that he was able to stand before God as a righteous man. What a revelation, what a thing to learn later in life.

**Hebrews 4:16** There is nothing like being in the presence of Almighty God both in His sheer power and majesty but also in experiencing His grace. Paul learned that HIS grace is sufficient and His power is made perfect in our weakness.

### **Daniel 10:12-19**

It is in this passage that we learn many lessons about prayer. Daniel was told that from the first day that he humbled himself that God heard his words and that the angel came because of his words.

We can't pass this over lightly. An angel was dispatched because of Daniel's prayer. This is another of many reminders in the Book of Daniel that prayer matters. It isn't merely a therapeutic exercise for the one who prays.

It is here in Daniel that we learn and gain insights about prayer and spiritual **warfare**. *'The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me'* - Since this prince was able to oppose the angelic messenger to Daniel, we know this was more than a man. This prince was some kind of angelic being, and we know he was an **evil** angelic being (demon) because he opposed the word of God coming to Daniel and stood against the angelic messenger.

The ancients were comfortable with the concept and reality of the **existence** of two worlds, the seen and unseen. Today many without faith in Christ dismiss the spiritual realities as mythology. Daniel also introduces us to the unseen organization and hierarchy that is in the spirit world. The word **prince** has the idea of a ruler or authority. This fits in well with the New Testament idea that angelic ranks are organized and have a hierarchy.

**Ephesians 1:21, Ephesians 6:12, Colossians 1:16, Colossians 2:15**

These angelic ranks seem to include both faithful angels and fallen angels. Apparently, this was a demon of high rank that opposed the answer to prayer. On three occasions, Jesus referred to Satan as the prince of this world. **John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11**

Daniel also mentions a spirit prince of the kingdom of Greece, so it is reasonable to surmise that there are also unseen "princes" over other nations and areas like America, England, Brazil, Russia, China and so on.

We are told that this angelic battle went on for twenty-one days. The correlation between Daniel's time of self-denial and prayer and the **duration** of the battle between the angels and the prince of the kingdom of Persia establishes a link between Daniel's prayer and the angelic victory. Since the angelic victory came on the 21<sup>st</sup> day, we can surmise that if Daniel would have stopped praying on the 20<sup>th</sup> day, the answer may not have come. There is a reason that some things we are praying for feel like we are in a battle – we are! There are battles that we are a part of that we cannot see but we know we are in the middle.

One of the things that we learn is that there are **hindrances** to prayer. Some of them are the unseen battles happening in the spiritual realms. There are other things as well that hinder our prayers:

- Our **motivation** **James 4:3**
- Our **sin** **Isaiah 59:1-2**
- **Idolatry** **Ezekiel 14:3**
- **Stinginess** **Proverbs 21:13**
- **Unforgiveness** **Mark 11:25**
- **Disunity** between husband and wife. **1 Peter 3:7**
- **Unbelief** **James 1:5-7**

We also learn that our prayers bring angels into the battle. Michael is an archangel and is known throughout scripture to be a warrior angel. He is mentioned in the books of Revelation and Jude.

In his encounter with the angel, Daniel needed to be **touched** and strengthened again. Daniel was still weak in the knees. There are times that God will desire to speak things to you that will require Him to strengthen you so that you are able to receive what He wants to reveal. *'Because of the vision my sorrows have overwhelmed me'* - The ancient Hebrew word translated *'sorrows'* has the thought of twisting or writhing pain. It is used in several places in the Old Testament for labor pains in childbirth. Daniel was so severely affected by this vision that he could barely breathe, much less deal with prophetic complexities.

### **Daniel 10:20-11:1**

Every step of the way there is opposition in the spiritual to the things that God is bringing to pass in the **natural**. As Christians we must never lose sight of this.

*'I must return to fight with the prince of Persia'* - Daniel was about to receive the answer to his prayer, but the battle was not over for his heavenly messenger. First, he must battle the prince of Persia, then the prince of Greece. God watched out for Israel, working **behind** the scenes in the spiritual realm. *'The heavenly warfare is to be directed against first Persia and then Greece, because each of these in turn will have power over God's people.'*

*'No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince'* - Michael seemed to be an angelic **protector** of Israel, battling against the demonic representative of Persia or any other who opposed God's people. Just as there "territorial evil spirits" there are holy angels assigned to protect God's people and uphold God's will. On earth, Israel seems lowly and weak; but in the heavens, Israel has the mightiest representative of all.

Daniel was living in Persia but soon they would be overcome by the Greeks. This will lead us into the full prophecy given in chapters 11-12.

One of the interesting things that we are introduced to is the Book of **Truth**. Most commentators agree that the Book of Truth contains the commands of God concerning the future. Much like when kings make a decree concerning something and the command is put in motion. God has already **determined** the outcome of history and no matter how much Satan fights against it, His word and will is Truth and it is as good as done.

**John 17:17, Psalm 119:160, Daniel 8:26**