

ing to answer our prayers. The devil is obviously very eager to prevent those prayers from being answered.

3. *The devil is no match for the Lord.* While it is clear that there is a struggle between evil and good forces, Daniel 10 encourages us with the fact that God's angels prevail over evil angels, even if that means that the Lord needs to send added reinforcements.

4. *All human beings are under the influence of unseen intelligences.* Persia is an earthly kingdom, apparently under the charge of human beings. On the human level, Persia has its own king and various rulers of rank and authority. But Daniel's insight brings to view a behind-the-scenes "prince of the kingdom of Persia." This is obviously not a human prince, since the angel Gabriel is himself engaged in personal warfare with this being. Verse 20 informs us that not only is there a demonic prince over Persia, but also the angel mentions "the prince of Grecia." We can only conclude that Satan is running a very highly organized operation. It seems that he has divided up this world with all its various human kingdoms and appointed demons to focus their deceptive and destructive energies on territories he has delegated to them. One demon-prince obviously is responsible for the kingdom of Persia. Another is responsible for Grecia.

We would not be stretching our imaginations to believe that Satan is still just as organized today as he was during the time of Daniel. No doubt he has demons exercising their unseen influence in every governmental structure of mankind on earth today.

Michael

But his power and cunning are no match at all for even one human being who has allied his entire heart and life with the Lord. While the angel refers to the prince of Persia and the prince of Grecia, he also speaks of another prince named "Michael." To Daniel, the angel says that Michael is "*your* prince." Michael is the ally prince of God's followers on earth and the chief opponent of Satan and all of his angels.

The incident recorded in Daniel 10 is not the first time Satan and his demons encounter Michael. Revelation 12:7 tells us that "there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found anymore in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Revelation 12:7-9).

Here are the two sides clearly portrayed. On the one hand, there is "Michael and his angels." On the other hand, we have "Satan . . . and his angels."

The little book of Jude in the New Testament calls Michael "the archangel" (Jude 9). The expression *archangel* literally means "the chief angel." From the descriptions of Michael given in Daniel and Revelation, Michael is the one who leads the heavenly angels in their warfare against Satan and his angels.

At the battle of Jericho, Joshua encountered this same commander of heavenly angels: "And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, 'Are You for us or for our adversaries?' So He said, 'No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.' And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, 'What does my Lord say to His servant?' Then the Commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, 'Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.' And Joshua did so" (Joshua 5:13-15, NKJV).

Interestingly enough, the word *commander* in this text is exactly the same Greek word that is translated *prince* in Daniel chapter 10. The Hebrew word is *sar* and designates "one who is a captain, chief, prince or ruler." Joshua encountered the same personage brought to view in the book of Daniel as Michael, the prince, or commander-in-chief of all the angelic forces of heaven.

Who exactly is this commander of the heavenly hosts?

The passage we have just quoted from the book of Joshua clearly answers the question. You will notice that when Joshua encountered Michael, he fell on his face to the earth and "did worship." You will also notice that this worship was not refused. On another occasion, the apostle John encountered an angel who refused his worship, acknowledging he was merely an angel and not divine. (See Revelation 19:10.)

As Joshua worships before Michael, his response to this level of reverence is to accept

it with these words: "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy" (KJV). Significantly, there is one other place where such words are recorded in Scripture. God got the attention of Moses with a burning bush that was not consumed by the fire that engulfed it. The Bible says that "God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, 'Moses, Moses.' And he said, 'Here am I.' And He said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, 'I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God'" (Exodus 3:2-6).

Later on the divine personage whom Moses encountered in the burning bush identified Himself by a special title: "And God said unto Moses, 'I AM THAT I AM': and He said, 'Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you'" (Exodus 3:13-14). In the New Testament, the Lord Jesus Christ identified Himself by this very same title: "Jesus said unto them, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I AM'" (John 8:58, NKJV).

The *I AM* whom Moses encountered in the burning bush was none other than Jesus Christ in His preexistent Deity before His incarnation. It was also Jesus Christ who introduced Himself to Joshua as "the Commander" of all of heaven's angelic forces. Likewise, Michael, the chief angel brought to view in the book of Daniel, is the Lord Jesus Christ. Of course, Jesus is not an angel in the common sense in which we think of angels. They are created beings—created, in fact, by Him. He is not a created being. He is the Son of God. But the word *angel* literally means "messenger." In this sense, even we fallen human beings can be angels. The book of Revelation portrays the people of God at the end of time as three angels, messengers, flying in the midst of heaven declaring the everlasting gospel to the inhabitants of the earth. It is in this sense that Jesus Christ is spoken of as Michael, the archangel. He is the supreme Messenger, sent from heaven to earth with the message of eternal salvation. There are at least two Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah that designate Jesus as God's Messenger. (See Isaiah 42:19; Malachi 3:1.)

There is no threat to the deity of Christ in recognizing Him as Michael, the archangel, or chief Messenger of God the Father. Actually, it brings us great encouragement and comfort to know that the one whom Daniel was told is our Prince is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our principle Defender in the great controversy between good and evil. All matters regarding each one of us rests primarily in the hands of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Under His authority there is enlisted all the angels of heaven to hear and answer our prayers.

Like Daniel, each of us is greatly beloved of God. His sympathetic ear is ever open to the faintest cry of the human heart. He is ready to respond immediately to the needs of every soul, however wayward and unworthy. Satan has enlisted the full force of his energy to oppose all who put their trust in Christ. Jesus said that Satan is "the prince of this world" (John 12:31), and he is using his influence to try and block the steady stream of light God issues forth from heaven to earth. But he will not succeed, as Daniel 10 so graphically communicates. Though he may appear to be the prince of this world at present, ultimately he will be defeated. Day by day, as the world seems at times to be spinning out of control with sin and suffering, Michael and all the heavenly hosts are breaking through the barriers of darkness. They are enlightening the minds of all who truly want to know the healing truth of the gospel.

With all of this insight from Daniel 10, we ought to pray, and pray without ceasing. We ought to plead with God for understanding of His Word, for insights into His great redeeming love. We ought to pray to God for the salvation of our friends, families and neighbors. We ought to pray that Satan's power will be crippled continually and that the world will be flooded with the knowledge of Christ as "the Savior of all men" (1 Timothy 4:10).

We ought to pray!

The Unsealing of Daniel

Study Number 12



The last three chapters of Daniel are linked together by one vision. Chapter 10 offers an introduction to the vision, chapter 11 contains most of the vision itself, and chapter 12 contains a small portion of the vision and a close to the book of Daniel.

In this study we will consider Daniel's personal experience with God as portrayed in chapter 10. As we do, a clear and sobering revelation will confront us: there is absolutely nothing in us that can recommend us to God. However, this is not because He doesn't love us. He does, infinitely so. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

It is His great love that leads Him to relate to us on the basis of His "unearnable" grace rather than on the basis of our personal merit. The plain fact of the matter is, if God were to treat us as we deserve, not one of us would be able to garner in ourselves a sufficient quality or quantity of righteousness to earn divine favor. So rather than condemn us and cast us off, our God of infinite love pours forth His favor as a free gift. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

With those few words of introduction, now let us explore Daniel's personal encounter with God.

Glimpses of Jesus

Can you imagine what it would be like to suddenly find yourself in the visible presence of God? The very idea seems both exciting and terrifying. Although we have not had the experience for ourselves, we do have the privilege of reading in Scripture a number of firsthand testimonies from those who have found themselves, on certain occasions, in the immediate presence of Deity. The prophet Daniel is one of those individuals.

Daniel's final vision, recorded in chapters 10 through 12 of his book, is a follow-up to what he had been shown in previous visions, only this time with greater detail. The vision was so impressive, and Daniel desired so earnestly to understand its meaning, that he committed himself to a three-week time of prayer and fasting: "In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled" (Daniel 10:2-3).

Toward the end of his fast, the aged prophet was "by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel." Suddenly, something incredible happened—unlike anything Daniel had ever experienced: "I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: His body also was like the beryl, and His face as the appearance of lightning, and His eyes as lamps of fire, and His arms and His feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of His words like the voice of a multitude" (Daniel 10:4-6).

Glory Dust

This description of the person Daniel saw is strikingly similar to what the apostle John was shown as recorded in the first chapter of Revelation:

“Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength” (Revelation 1:12-16, NKJV).

There is no question that this “One like the Son of Man” is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ in His glorified form. And Daniel’s vision is precisely the same as John’s. We can only conclude that Daniel, like John, beheld the glorified Christ.

Glory Dust

Not only did Daniel and John both behold the same vision of the Son of God, but both men were affected in the same way by what they saw. John says, “When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead” (Revelation 1:17). Daniel is more graphic as he explains how he felt in response to the vision: “And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength” (Daniel 10:7-8).

This is what is known in laymen’s terms as “laying the glory of man in the dust.” Christ has a way of doing this with even the holiest of men. Righteous as Daniel’s character was, all his goodness became as corruption as he beheld the contrasting purity of Christ. Daniel sensed, in other words, that he was wholly dependent upon the mercy and goodness of God. He could see nothing in himself that would make him worthy of God’s favor and salvation.

Rubbish

Consider also the experience of the apostle Paul. As a Pharisee of the Pharisees, he had become quite impressed with himself. He reveled in his own righteousness, believing himself to be worthy of God’s favor due to his long list of religious accomplishments. But after his vision of Christ on the road to Damascus, he regarded his righteousness, though it may have been blameless in the sight of men, as mere “rubbish.” Listen to Paul’s own testimony:

“I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith” (Philippians 3:4-9, NKJV).

This man, who had been so tireless and careful in his efforts to do what is right in the sight of God, once he encountered the true beauty of the holiness of Christ, confessed himself to be the chief of sinners: “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life” (1 Timothy 1:15-16, NKJV).

You will notice in this passage of Scripture that the very fact that Paul was a great sinner is the reason why he obtained such great mercy. And the mercy God manifested in Christ toward Paul is to be taken as “a pattern” of how God deals with all fallen human beings. We are each one of us, if we truly see ourselves as we are in the light of Christ’s purity, the chief of sinners. We are all in need of great mercy from the One who alone is the source of forgiveness and eternal life. Apart from that mercy, not one human being would be able to stand before God and live.

Undone

The prophet Isaiah had a similar experience as he saw a vision of the glory of the Lord in His heavenly temple:

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!’ And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. So I said: ‘Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts’” (Isaiah 6:1-5, NKJV).

Isaiah was a holy prophet of God, one of whom we have no record of unfaithfulness to the Lord. The same is true of Daniel. The entire record of his life in Scripture reveals faithfulness and loyalty to God. On one occasion an angel from heaven told Daniel that he was “greatly beloved” in heaven. (See Daniel 9:23.) In fact, he had such an impeccable integrity and an excellent spirit that even his enemies could find no fault with him. And yet, in the presence of the Lord, in the splendor of God’s glory and perfection, we find prophets such as Daniel and Isaiah turning pale with weakness. Their own righteousness became as filthy rags before them. Daniel said that his comeliness, his beauty of character, became as corruption before his own eyes.



Such is the experience that all of us must have if we are to truly be partakers of the righteousness of Christ. He does not expose our weakness and sin in order to crush us, but rather to bring us to a place where we can truly sense the enormity of our need for His grace. Only when we are humbled before God through a realization of our total unworthiness can we be exalted into the abundant life that He wants so desperately to bestow upon us.

No Fear

As you might imagine, Daniel’s encounter with the glorified Son of God produced in him a great fear. “I stood trembling” (Daniel

10:11). What kind of fear was Daniel feeling as he stood before the Lord? The context leads us to only one conclusion. The infinite holiness of God’s character made painfully distinct Daniel’s sinfulness as a fallen human being. The fear he felt was fear of condemnation, fear that in his fallenness he could not find favor and acceptance with such a righteous being.

It is right here, in the midst of Daniel’s terrified trembling, that we observe one of the truly tender and beautiful moments recorded in Scripture. Rather than condemn, the angel informs Daniel that he is “a man greatly beloved.” With words that are obviously intended to arouse a sense of acceptance and confidence, the angel tells Daniel to “stand upright” before him. And then he tells Daniel to do what may seem impossible: “Fear not” (Daniel 10:11-12). Later on in this stunning encounter, the angel again encourages Daniel with words that restore his strength to him:

“Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me, and said, ‘O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong.’ And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, ‘Let my Lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me’” (Daniel 10:18-19).

When the apostle John encountered Christ, the same words of encouragement were spoken to him: “Fear not” (Revelation 1:17). I have heard it said, although I have not confirmed the claim, that these two words are the most often repeated phrase in all the Bible. If that is an exaggeration, we are at least safe in saying that it is definitely an often-repeated admonition. God does not want us to be afraid of Him. Reverence? Yes. Sense of holy awe? Yes. But not fear of condemnation and rejection.

The words of Jesus in John 8:11, spoken in earnest love to the woman caught in adul-

tery, “I do not condemn you,” are words that apply equally to all human beings. God is eager to forgive, not reluctant. In fact, His forgiveness is lavished upon the human family as a free gift in the person of Jesus Christ. Hanging upon the cross, under the curse of all human transgression, Jesus poured forth the true sentiment of His heart when He prayed, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

When we realize the true quality and depth of God’s love for us, that love will banish all fear from our hearts. “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love Him, because He first loved us” (1 John 4:18-19). Speaking of the born again Christian, the apostle Paul says, “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15). When we come to God through Christ, the disposition of fear gives way to a sense of adoption into God’s family. We perceive Him as our loving, gracious Father, not as a condemnatory dictator of whom we should be terrified.

There is absolutely no question about it; God is holy. It is equally true that we humans are unworthy sinners. This great contrast erects a wall that cannot be penetrated from the human side. Only from God’s side of the wall can it be broken down, and only by His love. There is a grand canyon that separates our sinfulness from God’s righteousness. The Lord does not call upon us to build the bridge from our side to His. He is the bridge builder, in Jesus Christ. From His side of the canyon the bridge of redemption is constructed. As if it were not enough for Him to build the bridge, He even crosses over to our side rather than simply urge us to venture across on our own. In Jesus Christ, He takes us by the hand and leads us over into the glorious security of His righteousness. The character of God, as revealed in Jesus Christ, persuades us that we need not be afraid of God. The Savior’s life of tireless ministry, and the self-sacrificing reality of His death on our behalf, is sufficient proof that God’s love for sinners is both tender and strong.

In His state of weakness and complete self-renunciation, the prophet Daniel found that there was a gentle hand extended to lift him up. The glory and majesty of God does, indeed, lay the glory of man in the dust, but He does not leave us there. The same hand that touched Daniel reaches out to each one of us.

Spiritual Warfare

Like other places in Scripture, Daniel 10 opens to our astonished gaze the intense spiritual battle that is continually waging all around us. If we had eyes that could see beyond our finite senses, we would behold a very real warfare between good and evil transpiring in our very world over human souls. Notice what the angel says to Daniel regarding this warfare:

“And he said unto me, ‘O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent.’ And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. Then said he unto me, ‘Fear not, Daniel: For from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. . . .’

“Then said he, ‘Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? And now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. But I will show thee that which is noted in the Scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince” (Daniel 10:11-13, 20-21).

There are a number of enlightening and helpful insights brought to view in these verses:

1. *There is a spiritual warfare occurring beyond the realm of human sight.* The angel informed Daniel that he has been engaged in a conflict with “the prince of the kingdom of Persia.” This prince, whomever he is, “withstood” the angel Gabriel in his efforts to approach Daniel to communicate God’s message. Finally, as the warfare progressed, it was necessary for the chief of all heavenly princes, Michael, to assist Gabriel in his fight against the prince of Persia.

2. *Our prayers are the focal point of great interest for both heavenly agencies and demonic forces.* It is Daniel’s prayer for understanding that brings on the intense opposition of this prince of the kingdom of Persia. Conversely, it is in answer to Daniel’s prayer that Gabriel is sent forth from the Lord to fulfill Daniel’s request. God is obviously very eager and will-