

## **Lifting The Veil On The Spiritual Realm**

(Daniel 10:1-21)

**Story:** I recently read a story of an unforgettable baptism. Construction on a new church building was nearly complete, with the baptistery functional even though changing rooms were not yet available. When the need arose to use the baptismal, sheets were hung to serve as temporary curtains so those being baptized could change.

The last person to be baptized, on this one particular Sunday morning, made her way down into the water. Terrified of going under, she had been assured there was no reason for concern. But panic seized her in those final seconds before being lowered into the water. She clawed the air for anything to keep from going under. Within her grasp was the curtain hung behind the baptistery, which formed the front partition of the men's changing room.

Having just stepped from the baptistery, there stood a man completely naked. Realizing something dreadful was wrong, he turned around, only to see the entire congregation gaping at him in embarrassed astonishment. Assessing the situation quickly, he did the only sensible thing—he dived into the baptistery—with the preacher and the panic-stricken woman!

**Intro:** On rare occasions in the Bible, the curtain is lifted to unveil things in the spiritual realm that are normally kept from our human viewpoint. Chapter 10 in the Book of Daniel lifts the veil concealing the spiritual realm for the reader to see the unseen. This chapter provides a rare look into the spiritual realm, and the battle that rages between the angelic forces of God and the demonic forces of Satan.

As the Holy Spirit lifts the veil in this tenth chapter of Daniel to provide us with a rare glimpse into the spiritual realm, may we, by God's grace, see, believe, and behave in a way consistent with the truth revealed here. May God grant us the ability to see the unseen and then to live in the light of these spiritual realities. May we become a praying church, filled with believers who love to share the Good News about Christ with the lost, so they can come to faith in the Savior.

## An Overview of the Text

Chapter 10 does not stand alone, but serves as the introduction to Daniel's final vision recorded in chapters 10–12. Chapter 10 is the introduction to the vision, with chapter 11 providing a prophetic panorama of events concerning Israel, that would occur from Daniel's day to the end of time. Chapter 12 concludes with a word on the horrific suffering associated with the Great Tribulation (v. 1), and a prediction of the resurrection of all the righteous Old Testament saints at the second coming of Christ (Rev. 20:4-6), and also the resurrection and judgment of the wicked at the end of Christ's Millennial rule (Rev. 20:5). According to Daniel 12, verse 7, all the suffering of God's chosen people, Israel, will be consummated when the final three-and-a-half years of the seven-year Tribulation period are completed. The final verse of the book promises Daniel that he would soon enter into his rest, but he would rise again and enjoy his allotted portion/rewards at the end of time.

As in past lessons, we will only be able to consider chapter 10 this morning. We will look at chapters 11 and 12 in two consecutive lessons, to be taken up after two messages pertaining to Easter.

Verses 1-3 provide a brief description of the setting of the vision. Verses 4-9 describe the heavenly messenger. The reason for the angel's visit and an explanation for his delay is disclosed in verses 10-14. Finally, verses 15 through 21 provide a record of the angel's strengthening of Daniel, along with the part he plays in spiritual matters that take place in heaven and on earth. **Look first with me at the Setting Of The Vision (10:1-3)**

### I. The Setting Of The Vision (10:1-3)

1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar; and the message was true and one of great conflict, but he understood the message and had an understanding of the vision. 2 In those days I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks. 3 I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all, until the entire three weeks were completed.

Verse 1 informs us that Daniel's final recorded vision takes place in the "third year of Cyrus king of Persia." This would have been in 336 BC.

Daniel would have been in his mid-eighties by now. We also know that during his first year as king, Cyrus had issued a decree in 538 BC. allowing the Jewish exiles to return to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple of God (Ezra 1:1-4). Daniel was too old to go with those who returned, but he continued to pray for their success. While serving under Cyrus, Daniel received a message, presumably from God, that foretold of “great conflicts” that the Jewish people would continue to face. Daniel, understanding the significance of the vision, fasted and prayed for three weeks. He sought God in prayer concerning his people’s destiny. Once again, God honored His prophet’s prayers. He dispatched His angel to provide Daniel with understanding of what would happen to his people in the latter days. From Daniel’s day until the establishment of Messiah’s glorious Kingdom following the Tribulation period.

## **II. The Vision Of The Heavenly Messenger (10:4-9)**

### **A. Daniel’s vision of the heavenly messenger (vv. 4-6)**

**4** And on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I was by the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris, **5** I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen, whose waist was girded with a belt of pure gold of Uphaz. **6** His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult.

After three weeks of fasting and praying Daniel was visited by a heavenly being while he and several other men were standing beside the Tigris river. He was not transported to this place in his vision, as in chapter 8, but was already here when the vision appeared to him.

Looking up, Daniel saw a person with human characteristics but with qualities which seemed to far surpass those of any mere man. Clothed in linen, his waist was girded with a belt of the finest pure gold. Somehow the splendor of this creature’s body could not be concealed by the linen garment, for Daniel tells us his body shone like beryl.

The face of this heavenly messenger was also striking. His face radiated

with the brightness and brilliance of lightening. While lightening is a phenomenon which lasts but for a few seconds, the brilliance of this being's face was constant. His eyes were like flaming torches. His arms and feet are described as having the appearance of polished bronze. When he spoke, it was not the sound of one magnificent voice, but more like the combined voices of a symphonic multitude.

There has been a great deal of scholarly debate concerning the identity of this heavenly messenger. Was he the angel Gabriel or a theophany (a pre-incarnate manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ). The majority of Bible commentators take this to be another appearance of the angel Gabriel. He is the angel who God had previously sent to reveal truth to Daniel. Dr. Pentecost explains, "Angels, who dwell in the presence of God who is light, are themselves clothed with light, and Daniel saw something of heaven's glory reflected in this angelic visitor" ("*Daniel*" in *BKC*, 1367).

Some Bible students contend that this **man** was the pre-incarnate Christ because the description of this heavenly being is identical to that of Christ in Revelation 1:13-16. The biggest problem with taking this to be a pre-incarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, is this heavenly messenger, as we shall see, was hindered from coming to Daniel for three weeks by the demon prince of Persia (v. 13). He was not able to break through to Daniel until the archangel Michael came to his aide. **For our purposes we will refer to this angelic messenger as the angel Gabriel.**

#### B. Responses to the vision (10:7-9)

7 Now I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, while the men who were with me did not see the vision; nevertheless, a great dread fell on them, and they ran away to hide themselves. 8 So I was left alone and saw this great vision; yet no strength was left in me, for my natural color turned to a deathly pallor, and I retained no strength. 9 But I heard the sound of his words; and as soon as I heard the sound of his words, I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.

While only Daniel saw the vision of the angel Gabriel, the others who were with him experienced a certain terrifying dread. They ran to hide themselves. Daniel was left alone in the angel's presence, and no strength was left in him. Daniel fell face down on the ground before the angel, and when Gabriel spoke to him, he fell into a deep sleep.

### III. Reason For The Angel's Delay: *Satanic Opposition* (10:10-14)

10 Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. 11 And he said to me, "O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. 12 Then he said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. 13 "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. 14 "Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future."

10 The angel Gabriel reached out a hand and touched Daniel, lifting him from the ground so that he was now on his hands and knees. As in previous visions, Gabriel once again lets Daniel know that he is "a man highly esteemed by God" (cf., 9:23; 10:19). 12 He encouraged the elderly prophet, and told him not to be afraid. He let him know that from the first day that he had set his heart on understanding the vision, and humbling his heart before God, his words were heard, and Gabriel had been dispatched to answer him.

Gabriel next lifts the veil into the spiritual realm as he explains the reason for his delay in coming to Daniel. He explains in verse 13 that even though he was dispatched to provide Daniel understanding into his vision the first moment Daniel's prayer reached God's throne in heaven, he was prevented from coming by the demon prince over Persia. This demon prince blocked Gabriel, God's angelic messenger, for three weeks, until Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help him. Michael is the second angel to be named in the Bible. He is referred to as "one of the chief princes" (verse 13) and later as "Israel's prince" (verse 21). He is called an archangel in Jude 9.

Who are these angelic and demonic "princes," and what role do they play in the events which take place on earth? It seems safe to say that the "princes" referred to in chapter 10 are not human rulers but angelic powers. Michael is the prince over Israel's affairs. It would appear that the princes over Persia (verse 13) and Greece (verse 20) are fallen angels, whose dominion is restricted to a particular geographical and political nation.

What we learn from this is that the spirit world, both angelic and demonic, is highly organized—far more than most of us have ever realized. Daniel chapter 10 lifts the veil to provide us a glimpse into the spiritual battle that rages all around us. Apparently every nation on earth has a demonic angel assigned to influence the people in that nation for Satan’s kingdom. In the same way, every nation has a godly angel assigned to oversee the affairs and extension of God’s kingdom. According to chapter 12, verse 1, Michael is one of the chief angelic princes tasked with guarding the affairs of Israel. The writer of the Book of Hebrews lets us know that every Christian has a guardian angel assigned to care for them (Heb. 1:14).

Gabriel informs Daniel in v. 14 that he had been dispatched to provide him with understanding of what will happen to his people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future.” The vision pertains not only to Daniel’s people, the Jews, but to “the latter days,” days yet future.” As we have learned from the previous visions in this book (chaps. 2, 7, 8, and 9), Christ will not appear in His glory until the time He comes in power and great glory to render judgment upon the Gentile nations, and to establish His Millennial Kingdom. Christ’s coming in power and great glory is that which ends God’s prophetic program for Israel. Chapter 11 will provide several prophecies concerning the Gentile nations, and their repeated attacks against God’s people, Israel. Verses 36-45 will provide additional details of Antichrist’s future career.

#### **IV. Daniel’s Strengthening By Gabriel (10:15-21)**

v. 15-17—The insights Gabriel shared with Daniel concerning the spiritual battle that rages continuously between God’s angelic forces and Satan’s demonic forces caused Daniel to be overwhelmed and speechless. Daniel was totally exhausted from the three weeks he had spent in prayer and fasting. Moreover, the visions of Israel’s coming sufferings left him in anguish, and feeling utterly unworthy to even speak. His strength vanished, and he seems to have gasped for breath.

Gabriel once again reaches out and touches Daniel and tells him to not be afraid, vv. 18-19

**18** Then this one with human appearance touched me again and strengthened me. **19** And he said, “O man of high esteem, do not be afraid. Peace be with you; take courage and be courageous!”

**v. 20**—As soon as Gabriel spoke to Daniel he received strength and said, “May my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.”

**20** Then he said, “Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come. **21** “However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince.

Gabriel lets Daniel know that he had to return to fight against the prince of Persia, and he would also have to fight against the prince of Greece as well. As noted in our study these princes are demonic forces of Satan. These two nations, Persia and Greece, have been discussed in detail in chapter 8, and will be discussed again in chapter 11. Gabriel assures Daniel that before he leaves to resume the fight with the demonic princes of Persia and Greece, he will tell Daniel God’s plans for Israel under Persia and Greece (11:2-35) and later in the Tribulation (vv. 36-45) and the Millennium (12:1-4). Gabriel tells Daniel that the only one who is able to stand with him against these evil Satanic forces is Michael, the chief prince of Israel.

I am reminded of another lifting of the veil to expose the spiritual world recorded in the sixth chapter of 2 Kings. Israel was at war with the neighboring nation of Aram (v. 8). Every time the king of Aram planned an attack on Israel, the prophet Elisha would inform the king of Israel what the king of Aram was planning. The Israelites were always one step ahead of the Arameans. Well, as you can imagine, the king of Aram was enraged over this thing; **v. 11** so he called his servants together and demanded to know which one of them was betraying him to the king of Israel? “One of his servants informed him that it was Elisha the prophet, who tells the king of Israel the very words you speak in your bedroom” (**v. 12**). The king of Aram ordered his men to find out where Elisha was staying, so he could capture him. **v. 13** He was informed that Elisha was staying in Dothan. **v. 14** So the king of Aram sent horses and chariots and a great army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city.

**15** Now the attendant of the man of God had risen early in the morning and gone outside. In the light of the rising sun, he saw the enemy’s army surrounding them, Struck with fear he ran to his master Elisha and asked, “What shall we do.” **16** Elisha calmly told his servant not to fear, “for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” **17** Elisha then prayed that God would

open the eyes of his servant, so that he could see the unseen forces in the spiritual realm. The servant saw the heavenly forces, the horses and chariots of fire surrounding the town of Dothan.

At times, God graciously lifts the veil allowing His servants a glimpse into the spiritual realm. At the birth and baptism of our Lord, the veil concealing the glory of Christ was lifted, and the heavens opened revealing the angelic hosts, and God the Father proclaimed how pleased He was with His Son. At Christ's transfiguration, the veil was again lifted, allowing His inner circle of disciples, Peter, James, and John, to see a preview of Christ' coming in resplendant glory.

The conflict between God and Satan rages on even today. Christ's death on Calvary's cross has ensured Satan's ultimate defeat, but it has not ended his diabolical warfare. However, we who are Christians do not have to fear, for our victory over Satan and his demonic hordes is guaranteed because "greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

### **What do we learn from this chapter?**

1. This chapter informs us that prayer is one of the ways in which the saints can engage in the unseen spiritual warfare going on all about us. It was in answer to Daniel's prayer that the vision was given and the angel Gabriel appeared.
2. If we were permitted to see the invisible spiritual warfare that is raging all around us, we would be just as frightened and amazed as Daniel was.
3. Even though we cannot see the invisible forces surrounding us, we should always be encouraged by the invincible power of God with in us.
4. May God help us to get busy sharing the life changing news about the forgiveness of sin and eternal life He has graciously provided for any and all who will believe in and receive His blessed Son, Jesus Christ our Lord!

Closing prayer:

**Closing Song: He Will Carry You.**