

Life in the Lion's Den

"The Last Vision"

(Daniel Chapters 10-12)

Lesson #11

Scripture: *Psalms 27:14 "Wait for the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD."*

Introduction:

I went to preaching school with a man who became a dear friend to me. He had just got out of prison and wanted to become a prison minister. I remember that he was quite paranoid at first, which is a typical concept for those who live behind bars.

We spent lots of time talking together and became really good friends. I helped him acclimate back into society. I asked him what he had done to get into prison and he wouldn't tell me. He was convinced that I wouldn't give him the same chance that I would if I didn't know.

I didn't like that answer, but accepted it because I felt God's urging in my life. In prison his wife had divorced him and he had been converted to Christ by some faithful brethren in Oklahoma. He had even written a little book about conversion with pictures that he had drawn.

After preaching school this man was faithful to his commitment and to work in the harvest fields of concrete and barbed wire prisons. He won the trust of his wife back and they both went on to be with the Lord last year.

This year I found out that he had been a PEDI file. I wish I could have had the chance to know that while we were friends for two reasons: First so I could have been tested in regard to true love and so I could have encouraged him along the way.

Regardless of my help for him...he found courage in the Lord and no doubt at all went on to fight many battles for the Lord.

Transitional Statement:

Chapter 10-12 are one final vision given to Daniel. Today as we study through the preliminary thoughts of this vision, we are encouraged to more closely understand the spiritual battle that exists in the heavenly realm and to be strong and courageous.

I. In a vision, Daniel gets a message from God of war

Daniel 10:1

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.

- A. 3rd year of Cyrus536 BC
- B. A “message” was given to Daniel within a vision
 - 1. “message” here means a thing, a matter or a cause
 - a. And it was “revealed” meaning to denude in a disgraceful sense...expose
 - b. i.e. it won't be a pretty thing for God's people to go through
- C. The message was true.
 - 1. You know not all messages originate from God, a point worthy of making.
 - 2. Daniel was clear that this message was 100% true
 - 3. But the time appointed was long in nature....Hebrew
- D. The message was one of “great conflict”
 - 1. Particularly in the Hebrew “War”
- E. And Daniel, has some limited understanding of the message and vision without explanation.

II. The message is very disturbing to Daniel

Daniel 10:2-3

2 In those days, I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks.

- A. For 21 days Daniel “mourned” or bewailed
 - 1. Was this deep mourning brought on by fear of what was going to befall Israel?
In my thinking Daniel has already shown greater faith than this.
 - a. On the heels of the 70 weeks vision I can't help but to think part of this wailing is simply open shame of Israel. It very well may be, that Daniel, now more clearly than ever, sees the big picture of God recoiling from his people and the terrifying way that Israel will be thrown around as a dirty shirt in the middle of world wars. It seems that Daniel has a real sense here that Israel is the one being publicly exposed and disgraced.

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.

B. During this time Daniel limits his food and drink He fasts

1.. Humbling himself and setting his heart to understand God's will, see Verse 12

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

2. Daniel even skipped the daily skin ointments

a. Which were a daily custom

b. Only the sick, mourning or those facing crises didn't anoint themselves

III. The heavenly messenger

Daniel 10:4-6

4 On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I was by the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris,

A. The 24th day of the first month

1. Which was the last day of Passover.

2. In its basic form Passover signifies a persons trust in God's protection and deliverance of His faithful people. Exodus 12

a. A thought certainly to consider deeply by the end of the book of Daniel.

B. Daniel was on the banks of the Tigris river

1. Between Babylon and Persia

2. With some other men...verse 7

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.

C. Daniel sees a heavenly messenger dressed in linen with a belt of gold.

1. The description of Jesus in Revelation 1:13-16 comes to mind immediately

a. Could this be the pre-incarnate Jesus of John 17:5 ?

- b. This could be a real possibility even though our world today always paints pictures of a soft Jesus cuddling some lamb, a more realistic image would be of a battle commander engaged in war, who rides on a white horse as a conqueror (Rev 6), and who treads out the wine press of God's fury in this world, and is seen as victor on the final bloody spiritual battle field

- a. Let's hear John tell it ☺

Revelation 19:11-16

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. 12 His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. 13 He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. 15 From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

- c. Jesus says in Matthew 10:34

" Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword."

- d. It's comforting to me to know that our Lord is actively involved in battles of this life...something that God's people will need reminded of during the 400 year interlude between testaments...and something we need to help us through each struggle today as well.

2. This man in linen cloth sounds like the description of the one on the throne in Ezekiel chapter one, who is overseeing God's judgment and justice on this earth.....who really meets the same description as Jesus, but could be the angle Gabriel.

- D. Ultimately, whether this is Jesus or not ... it won't change the intention of this story, it only becomes richer with this possibility.

IV. The message was more than mortal man could handle.

Daniel 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.

A. Daniel alone saw the vision.

1. But something about what was happen to Daniel as this vision began, or the mere unseen presence of this messenger scared the snot out of the other men and they ran away and hid themselves.

B. After seeing the vision...Daniel himself:

1. Loses strength
2. Loses natural color: deathly pallor
3. Loses consciousness...faints

V. The messenger strengthens Daniel.

Daniel 10:10-11

10 Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. 11 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.

1. His touch strengthened Daniel
 - a. Here we just have to pause and think about the different ways the Lord touches our lives if we are willing to let Him.
2. He says to Daniel you need to understand what I am telling you.
3. I've been sent to you.... i.e. I bear a heavenly message.
 - a. This is very important !

VI. The messenger declares that He has come in response to Daniel's prayers.

Daniel 10:12

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.

1. It's interesting to note that the efficacy (effectiveness) of prayer (James 5:17) hinges on two very important criteria.
 - a. A heart set on understanding
 - b. And a heart that is humble
 - c. Daniel fits both bills.

VII. The messenger tells Daniel that a spiritual battle has delayed Him.

Daniel 10:13-14

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."

A. The prince of Persia here is not a physical actual person, because plainly put humans are not match for heavenly beings (Heb 2:7; 2 Peter 2:11). Heavenly beings can easily detain, blind or even kill humans at God's command and have done so throughout scripture.

1. This heavenly messenger was fighting with some evil spiritual force in Persia.

a. This battle detained His coming for 21 days until the arch angel "Michael" who was assigned to Israel (verse 21) could come and relieve Him.

2. Here it might be good to remember

a. The word's of the apostle Paul in Ephesians 6:12

12 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.

b. No more clearly can we see this than in 2 Kings 6 where we find Ben-Hadad the King of Aram upset about the prophet Elisha, through prophecy, giving away all his battle strategy to the King of Israel. Locating Elisha at Dothan he sends his army to take him out. Elisha's servant sees the great army circling the city and is terrified.

16 So Elisha answered, " Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." 17 Then Elisha prayed and said, " O LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." And the LORD opened the servant's eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. (2 Kings 6:16-17)

c. Also remembering that God has a heavenly army assigned to Israel then and the church now (Rev 1:20) to fight for His will.

3. Church, reality is so much larger than what we can see, hear, taste or touch.... and one of our greatest tasks is simply to get outside of our selves (Matt 16:24)

B. This vision is proclaimed to pertain to the future days yet to come for Israel.

VIII. The messenger and message overwhelms Daniel

Daniel 10:15-17

15 When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. 16 And behold, one who resembled a human being was touching my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke and said to him who was standing before me, "O my lord, as a result of the vision anguish has come upon me, and I have retained no strength. 17 "For how can such a servant of my lord talk with such as my lord? As for me, there remains just now no strength in me, nor has any breath been left in me."

- A. Daniel choked up and lost the power to utter even a word.
 - 1. The messenger gave him strength again.
- B. Then Daniel does what is surely a mark of his high esteem in the presence of God...he humbles himself.
 - 1. 1 Peter 5:5 says “...*GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.*”
 - 2. He goes on to say in verse 6... “*Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,*”
 - 3. Church, humility is a necessary ingredient kingdom servants.
 - a. It is the fertile soil in which growth happens.
 - b. It provides shaping ability for the clay in the potters hand.

IX. Daniel is instructed to be courageous

Daniel 10:18-19

18 Then this one with human appearance touched me again and strengthened me. 19 He said, "O man of high esteem, do not be afraid. Peace be with you; take courage and be courageous!" Now as soon as he spoke to me, I received strength and said, "May my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."

- A. He tells Daniel the continuing message of Christ... “*Do not fear*”
 - 1. Why? ...Isn't fear healthy?
 - 2. Maybe it's the connection with 1 John 4:18 that tells us that perfect love casts out fear.
 - 3. Maybe this is a call to understand the love of God ...and lay aside fearful hindrances.
- B. With this in mind the messenger bids Daniel “*Shalom*” which means peace.
 - 1. And encourages Daniel to be strong and have courage.
 - a. We probably couldn't find a better application for our personal lives than this...to remain strong and be courageous.
 - 1) I don't know why, but many times we are found looking for strength in the weakest links of our lives.
 - 2) Often we forget our real strength in God ...only to build our houses upon the sand.

3) As for our courage, often times we lose sight of the facts that God has surrounded us with a great heavenly army, and that if we remain faithfulwe cannot lose Rev 2:10

b. As a church we must remain courageous also to stay true to God's word in every respect, not bowing to the entertainment whims of other religions, not becoming tolerant of sin in any regard, not allowing public opinion to establish our doctrine and not making worship about us.

2. Jesus says in John 16:33 "...*In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.*"

X. The messenger returns to battle.

Daniel 10:20-21

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.

A. First the messenger clarifies Daniel's understanding.

B. Then he heads back to battle the spiritual forces of Persia and Greece to come.

1. Church it might do us good to remember that this life is a constant spiritual battle. We understand that truth never dies...but evil is ever present.

Conclusion:

My prayer is that we will open the eyes of our heart

-That we will set our hearts on understanding

-Humble ourselves

-Be courageous and remain strong.