

Session 6

October 8, 2023

PREPARE FOR BATTLE

Daniel 10:1-3, 10-13, 16-19

Daniel 10 records the last vision Daniel had, a vision that ultimately closes out the book. While there is much interest in the meanings and interpretations of the vision for the End Times, those topics will have to wait for another series! Our focus continues to rest on Daniel and the lessons he left us regarding prayer. In this week's study, three stand out.

Prayer brings spiritual humility (vv. 1-3). By this time, Daniel was likely in his 90's. He had served 70 years in the courts of at least four of Babylon's kings. But rather than bask in the glow of his many accomplishments, Daniel remained genuinely humble. And his prayer life was one of the reasons for it. Earlier in the book, we were told that Daniel prayed three times a day, every day, as was his custom (6:10). Last week, we saw blameless Daniel interceding for his own sinful people and doing so from a different land and a different culture. Here, the prayer isn't just for the Jews, but for Daniel himself. And it wasn't focusing on the 70-year captivity, but rather on events that will take place in "the last days" (v. 14). From the onset, Daniel understood that the vision—and its subsequent meaning—would be exceptionally troubling for his people. As a result, he *intensified* his prayer life. "For three *full* weeks" (v. 2) could be translated "for all the days of the three seven days." In other words, those days were absolutely filled with mourning, fasting, and what I call "God focus." Such was the burden Daniel carried. For reflection: *The great Reformer Martin Luther once said, "I have so much to do today that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer." What was his point?*

Prayer brings spiritual help (vv. 10-13). In the interceding verses, Daniel received a divine visitation. The description given in verses 5 and 6 sounds very much like those assigned to our Lord in Rev. 1. The messenger who came to him was certainly special, and there is no reason to reject the notion that it was Christ Himself. Daniel's reaction to Him in verse 9 supports this. In verse 10 and following, another angel shows up with a very encouraging message. The reason for this encouragement is found in verse 12: "Don't be afraid, Daniel...for from the first day that you purposed to understand and to humble yourself before your God, your prayers were heard. *I have come because of your prayers.*" Prayer is one of God's great mysteries. On the one hand, some people believe that our prayer actually changes God's mind. That's one extreme...and it violates God's sovereignty. Others believe that prayer doesn't really affect anything God does, but rather changes *us*, bringing *us* in line with God's will. Like so many difficult topics, the truth likely lies somewhere in the middle. Notice in Daniel's case, God spoke to him not because Daniel demanded it, but because he was *receptive* to the truth and *humbled* himself before God. For reflection: *I have often said the important thing is not HOW prayer works, but THAT prayer works! And since God's word tells us to pray...we ought to, whether we understand it or not!*

Prayer brings spiritual health (vv. 16-19). Everything God has to say is true, but that doesn't necessarily make it good news. Simply put, sometimes the truth hurts! And sometimes the truth *scares*. Notice the terms Daniel used in verses 16 and 17: he is *anguished*, *overwhelmed*, *powerless*, *weak*, and *breathless*. And all as the result of a vision of the future that lay far, far beyond Daniel's own life. The messenger "with human likeness" (likely the angel Gabriel

mentioned in chapters 8 and 9) encouraged Daniel by *touching* him (vv. 16 and 18) and *speaking* to him, calling him *treasured by God*, blessing him with *peace*, and challenging him to *strengthen* himself (v. 19). If you continue into verses 20 and 21, you will see another amazing encouragement. This messenger admitted that he himself was in the midst of spiritual warfare (literally!), had joined forces with Michael the archangel, and essentially needed to get back to the battle! Yet the vision was so important, and Daniel's recording of it, that he was compelled to share it. Hence, Daniel was made privy to the astonishing cosmic battle being waged between God and the Adversary. For reflection: *Read Isaiah 6 and compare that encounter with Daniel's here. What similarities do you see? What kinds of applications can we make?*