

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

This evening, we are going to be in Daniel 10 –

And the topic of our study is going to deal with spiritual warfare.

It has been said that before you get involved in a war, you should try to know a little something about your enemy.

In the book *The Art of War*, written twenty-six hundred years ago, author Sun Tzu observed:

If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles.

If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat.

If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.

This is true in the physical realm as well as the spiritual realm.

The problem is that many Christians don't take spiritual warfare seriously.

Some Christians do not even believe in a literal devil.

Instead they believe he is simply a biblical symbol for evil.

Turn with me to 1 Peter 5,

[1Pe 5:8 NKJV] 8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

We should be vigilant; we should be prepared because sooner or later, we are going to be attacked.

In our text this evening, the curtain is pulled back and Daniel gets a firsthand look at spiritual warfare.

Let's pray...

Let's read our text first and then we will come back and dissect it.

[Dan 10:1-21 NKJV] 1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message [was] true, but the appointed time [was] long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision. 2 In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. 3 I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled. 4 Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that [is], the Tigris, 5 I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist [was] girded with gold of Uphaz! 6 His body [was] like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and

feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude. 7 And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. 8 Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength. 9 Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground. 10 Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and [on] the palms of my hands. 11 And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling. 12 Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. 13 "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. 14 "Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision [refers] to [many] days yet [to come]." 15 When he had spoken such words to me, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. 16 And suddenly, [one] having the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke, saying to him who stood

before me, "My lord, because of the vision my sorrows have overwhelmed me, and I have retained no strength. 17 "For how can this servant of my lord talk with you, my lord? As for me, no strength remains in me now, nor is any breath left in me." 18 Then again, [the one] having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me. 19 And he said, "O man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace [be] to you; be strong, yes, be strong!" So when he spoke to me I was strengthened, and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me." 20 Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come. 21 "But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince.

So here in chapter 10, we see that last of the visions that were given to Daniel.

In chapter 7, Daniel was given the vision of the beast coming out of the water as God gave him an insight into the major empires that were going to rule on earth.

In chapter 8, Daniel was given a closer look at what was going to happen when the Mede-Persian empire was going to be defeated by Alexander the Great and the Greek Empire – that vision included the persecution that the Jews were going to face under Antiochus Ephiaphanes – remember, he is the one who sacrificed pigs in the temple as well as the Antichrist.

In chapter 9, Daniel was given the vision of the seventy weeks, including the last week, the tribulation period that has yet to occur. And further persecution that is going to come upon the Jews as well by the AntiChrist.

So this last vision is going to take up the last three chapters in the book of Daniel.

[Dan 10:1 NKJV] 1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message [was] true, but the appointed time [was] long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision.

Daniel is around 85 years old now – he has been in Babylon for about 73 years now.

I had you make a note of the time, the third year of Cyrus.

The reason that it is significant is because the Jews were only supposed to be in exile for only 70 years – remember that God had said they would remain in exile 70 years because they didn't keep the Sabbath year for 490 years.

Turn with me to the book of Ezra 1,

[Ezr 1:1-4 NKJV] 1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also [put it] in writing, saying, 2 Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has

commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which [is] in Judah. 3 Who [is] among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which [is] in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel (He [is] God), which [is] in Jerusalem. 4 And whoever is left in any place where he dwells, let the men of his place help him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, besides the freewill offerings for the house of God which [is] in Jerusalem.

So in the first year of Cyrus, God moves Cyrus to issue the decree that the Jews can return home –

And as you continue to read the book of Ezra, one finds that not many people returned to Jerusalem.

Even though it had been 70 years since they had worshipped the Lord in the temple.

They preferred to stay in Babylon.

They preferred to remain in the foreign land worshipping foreign gods.

And the small remnant that returned to Jerusalem – as they started to clean up and rebuild, they encountered opposition and then the work came to a stop and it didn't resume for another 16 years.

[Dan 10:2-3 NKJV] 2 In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. 3 I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

So Daniel, upon hearing about the bad news that is happening back in Jerusalem – he begins to intercede for them.

He cried out and pleaded to the Lord for 21 days – he changed his diet, he fasted and mourned. He stopped wearing deodorant – that is what it means that he did not anoint himself.

We must remember that fasting is all about denying our flesh – humbling ourselves to be able to discern God's will.

[Dan 10:4-6 NKJV] 4 Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that [is], the Tigris, 5 I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a **certain man clothed in linen, whose waist [was] girded with gold of Uphaz! 6 His body [was] like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.**

After 21 days of intense prayer, Daniel receives an answer –

He sees this certain man – and the question everyone asks is who this certain man is.

Turn with me to Revelation 1

[Rev 1:12-16 NKJV] 12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 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.

The description of the certain man that Daniel saw states that the certain man was clothed in linen and his waist was also girded with gold.

14 His head and hair [were] white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire;

The certain man in Daniel face bright like lightning and his eyes were like fire.

15 His feet [were] like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; 16 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.

The certain man in Daniel's vision is also identified in a similar way by his voice and his feet.

Now, the person that John saw in Revelation 1, is Jesus Christ –

Some bible scholars believe that the certain man here in Dan 10, is a Christophany – the manifestation of Jesus Christ in the OT.

[Dan 10:7 NKJV] 7 And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

This shows that there was something supernatural about this vision.

Daniel's companions didn't see what Daniel saw, but apparently they saw something because it scared them and they ran.

[Dan 10:8-9 NKJV] 8 Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength. 9 Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.

Only Daniel was left, and what he encountered was so incredible, it overwhelmed his physical strength and he swooned.

The prophet was able to hold on to consciousness until the visitor spoke, then it was just too much for him and he fainted.

Daniel's reaction here reminds us that when Christ comes, the people of the earth will indeed bow before Him.

Even those who opposed Him will bow!

Many people have the mistaken idea that if they ever do have to stand before God in judgment, they are going to tell Him a thing or two.

They picture themselves defiantly walking up to God and laying the blame for their sin and failure at His feet.

They picture themselves arguing or bargaining with God.

But think of it – if godly, holy and righteous Daniel was wiped out when he saw the Lord, what will be the reaction of the ungodly?

[Dan 10:10-13 NKJV] 10 Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and [on] the palms of my hands. 11 And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling.

Now, starting in verse 10 – we have an encounter between Daniel and an angel.

This is not an encounter between Daniel and the certain man –

And the reason that we know this is because of certain things he is about to tell Daniel.

12 Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. 13 "But the prince of the

kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the **chief princes**, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.

So this angel tells Daniel that he was sent to him 21 days earlier, but the reason that it took so long was because he was being hindered by this Prince of Persia.

Okay – this is pretty strange –what does it all mean?

How can an angel be hindered – who would hinder him?

Well, that really isn't too tough a question.

Can humans hinder angels?

When we consider that 1 angel destroyed all the firstborn of Egypt in the 10th plague and that 1 angel killed 185,000 enemy soldiers in 1 night, it seems unlikely the hindering agent here is a man.

No, the only one who can hinder an angel is another spiritual being.

This prince of Persia is most likely a demon.

For 21 days, this angel struggled with the Prince of Persia until Michael; the archangel – that is what is meant by chief prince - came and helped him out.

Spiritual Warfare!!!

Daniel had to wait 21 days – praying persistently.

Church, could it be that some of the “delays” that we experience in life are also attributed to the warfare that is occurring behind the scenes.

So the question becomes – how do we handle spiritual warfare???

Because **we** play a part in this spiritual battle as well.

Turn with me to Ephesians 6 –

[Eph 6:10-18 NKJV] 10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual [hosts] of wickedness in the heavenly [places]. (Spiritual Warfare) 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 **praying**

always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints--

Our part in the warfare is to take up the spiritual weapons that Paul describes.

Some of these are qualities we need to build up in our lives.

And each one of these is a requirement – we cannot simply choose which ones we will take into battle.

We need to be dressing in the full armor of God.

Many times, we go into battle without the sword of the Spirit – we don't read the Word of God. Then we fall and we are left wondering what happened?

We neglect prayer because we are too busy – however, it is through prayer that spiritual strength and the armor of God go to work

Now, the reason I said that the identity of the individual that touched Daniel starting in verse 10, is an angel is because Jesus Christ cannot be restrained by a fallen angel or a demon.

Jesus Christ does not need the help of Michael, the archangel to help Him.

[Dan 10:14 NKJV] 14 "Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision [refers] to [many] days yet [to come]."

Once again, Daniel is going to see more persecution that the Jewish people will have to endure.

[Dan 10:15-17 NKJV] 15 When he had spoken such words to me, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. 16 And suddenly, [one] having the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke, saying to him who stood before me, "My lord, because of the vision my sorrows have overwhelmed me, and I have retained no strength. 17 "For how can this servant of my lord talk with you, my lord? As for me, no strength remains in me now, nor is any breath left in me."

While one angel stands before him to give him understanding, another comes and touches his lips to allow him to speak.

The idea we're to gather from all this is that when the veil between the spiritual and the earthly realms is drawn aside and human beings are allowed to encounter the spiritual, we are horribly ill-equipped.

Daniel is left weak and panting for air.

[Dan 10:18-21 NKJV] 18 Then again, [the one] having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me. 19 And he said, "O man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace [be] to you; be strong, yes, be strong!" So when he spoke to me I was strengthened, and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me." 20

Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come. 21 "But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince.

Here the angel who's going to give the interpretation tells Daniel what's going to happen after he gives it to Daniel.

He's going to return to heaven, and will once again be hindered by the spiritual prince of Persia.

This spiritual battle is thought to have been fought during the time of Esther – if you ever read the book of Esther, the Jews were in danger of being annihilated because of a royal decree of a different Persian King.

It appears that there was a spiritual battle behind the scenes as Esther intervenes on behalf of the Jews.

After the prince of Persia has been overcome, then battle will have to be done with the spiritual prince of Greece.

When the Greeks defeat the Persians, Epiphanes who we spoke of earlier is going to want to destroy the Jews as well. And it is most likely that the demonic forces were influencing Epiphanes to do what he did toward the Jews.

And in the very last verse, the angel reminds Daniel that God is sovereign and all of this He has already appointed to happen.

The good news is that God wins and those who have placed their faith in the Lord Jesus will be with Him in heaven throughout eternity.

Amen.

Let's pray...

