

DANIEL 10



T. M. Moore

A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe

Daniel 10
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Daniel 10: Introduction

God is imparting important revelation to Daniel, insights and understanding His people will sorely need as they return to rebuild the temple and their city.

But it's a heavy burden for Daniel, and he is nearly exhausted by it. The Lord Himself comes to strengthen the faithful prophet, for He knows only Daniel is up to this important task.

The spiritual power that enabled Daniel to fulfill his calling is still at work in the world. But it's not the only spiritual power at work, as Daniel was made to know. We must strive like Daniel to receive God's Word, take up our calling with His strength, and pray for the people of God to be revived and renewed.

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1 The Discipline of Mourning

Introduction

Prior to chapter 10, Daniel received thrilling, albeit frightening, visions of the coming of God's Kingdom and Messiah. These were visions of promise, hope, triumph, and joy; but they also included many terrible things yet to come before that promised victory would be realized. Indeed, we must enter the Kingdom of God through many trials, and while we rejoice in our trials and temptations, we must also be prepared to mourn (cf. Jms. 1.2-4; 2 Cor. 12.20, 21).

Read Acts 14.21, 22.

Read Daniel 10.1-3.

Think it through.

1. Daniel is about to report a message that led him into a period of mourning. Why? Should what God reveals in His Word lead us at times into weeping and mourning? Explain. We all know what it's like when we're expecting something really good. We get excited, and that excitement can make us impatient. "Good things," we know, "come to those who wait." The Good News of the Kingdom is ours by grace through faith, but *entering* the Kingdom is just the beginning. There is always more of this Good News – this "great salvation" (Heb. 2.3) – than what we've ever known before. And for this, we must wait. But how do we do that?

2. Daniel was expecting something really good. All those faithful Israelites who were returning to rebuild the temple and Jerusalem would have had Daniel's words, and thus would have been expecting something good as well. But Daniel was careful to explain that much tumult and turmoil must transpire *en route* to the promised Kingdom and covenant of the Messiah. The people would need to know how to wait and persevere. How would you describe Daniel's response to this revelation in verses 2 and 3? Why did he do this? What was he hoping to accomplish by this? Should Christians include anything like this discipline of mourning in their own spiritual practices? Explain.

Meditate.

"He says that the mourning had been protracted 'for three weeks,' because he had fasted for all that space of time. He calls fasting 'mourning' in the same sense used by our Lord, when he defended himself and his disciples from the detractions of the Pharisees. When the disciples were reproached by the Pharisees because they were not fasting, the Lord answered, 'The wedding guests cannot mourn,' that is, fast, 'as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they?'" *Ephrem the Syrian (306-373 AD)*

I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet... Revelation 1.9, 10

All who are brethren with Daniel and John understand, Lord, that we live in Your Kingdom amid many temptations and trials, and we need Your patience to wait and persevere in...

Pray Psalm 102.1-14.

Here is a psalm of mourning because of desolation. It speaks of the withered, dry, desolate condition of God's people, but it ends in hope and resolution. As you pray this, reflect on the state of churches in our country, and pour your heart out in grief to the Lord.

Psalm 102.1-14 (*Leominster: Not What My Hands Have Done*)

Lord, hear my prayer and cry; hide not Your face from me!
In my distress and tears I sigh – Lord, hear my earnest plea!
My days like smoke blow past; my bones are scorched with sin.
My heart, like wilted, withered grass bends low to earth again.

With loudest groans and cries, and leanness in my soul,
No shelt'ring place arrests my eyes, no rest to make me whole.
My enemies grow strong; I weep with bitter tears;
My days are like a shadow, long; God's face is no more near.

But You, O Lord, abide forever in Your place.
Arise and stand on Zion's side and lavish us with grace!
Revive Your Church, O Lord! Let all her dust and stones
Be strengthened by Your mighty Word, and compact be as one.

2 An Overwhelming Vision

Introduction

Daniel receives yet another vision, this time from “a certain man” whose appearance is so overpowering and awesome that it leaves Daniel prostrate on the ground and without strength. What will follow is still more detail concerning the revelation Daniel has already received. This round of revelation emphasizes the direct hand of God in the historical events that are shortly to unfold.

Meditate on Revelation 1.9-13.

Read Daniel 10.4-9.

Think it through.

1. How many similarities can you identify between what Daniel saw in these verses and what John saw in Revelation 1.9-13? How about in the responses of these two saints? Verse 7 reminds us of Paul’s experience on the Damascus road (cf. Acts 9.1-9). Explain. Who was this “certain man” Daniel saw? How can we explain this? Theologians use the term *theophany* to refer to a manifestation of the Son of God prior to His incarnation or after His ascension. We might expect the theophany received by John to be more detailed than that received by Daniel. Why? We can describe Daniel’s response to this vision as worshipful and ready. Explain.

2. Meditate on Colossians 3.1-3. What should we expect to see as we set our minds like this? How can the visions of Daniel and John help us? Why is so much brightness associated with this vision? In painting, bright colors seem to come forward, toward the viewer. How does knowing this enhance the power of the visions received by Daniel and John? How often should we contemplate this vision of Christ (cf. Ps. 16.8)? Suggest some ways to do this. How should you respond?

Meditate.

“We must lift up our eyes if we are to be able to discern a mystical vision.” *Jerome (347-420 AD)*

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Colossians 3.1-3

I lift my eyes to You, Lord Jesus. Help my vision of You to be clearer and more consistent, so that I...

Pray Psalm 102.23-28.

Do you feel weakened in the presence of the exalted Christ? Should you?

Psalm 102.22-28 (*Leominster: Not What My Hands Have Done*)

Yet let us tell God’s Name and praise His glorious grace;
Let all as one His love proclaim together in this place.
Though now our strength is low; though shortened grow our days,
Our God will not forsake us so, but keep us in His ways!

Of old You made the earth and heavens by Your hand.
Though they shall perish You endure; forever shall You stand.
They change, yet You remain the same, without an end.
Our children shall Your favor gain, and theirs shall be Your friend.

3 Of Seen and Unseen Things

Introduction

As the revelation continues, we gain new and deeper insight to the workings of human affairs. The nations of the world are subject to governance by spiritual powers – “princes” – not all of which are friendly to the purposes and people of God. Here we learn that even the mundane affairs of politics, war, and governance are determined by events in the unseen realm of spiritual beings. And over them all, God rules to His own ends, as Elisha understood, and as God has been explaining to Daniel – and us – from the beginning of this book.

Read 2 Kings 6.8-18.

Read Daniel 10.10-14.

Think it through.

1. Put yourself in Daniel’s place: How weighty these revelations must have been, to have driven him to his hands and knees! Weightiness is often associated with the glory and presence of God in Scripture. Indeed, the word *glory* derives in Hebrew from a root that means *to be heavy*. Paul puns on this in 2 Corinthians 4.16-18, in which he claims to look not at seen things only, but “at the things which are not seen.” What does he mean? Should we, like Daniel and Paul, be looking at unseen things? Should God’s revelation of His glory drive us to our knees (2 Cor. 3.12-18)? Should we experience His revelation in Scripture as *heavy* and *weighty*? Explain. But – oh! – that hand of comfort, just as with the apostle John (cf. Dan. 10.10-12 with Rev. 1.17). Why was that hand extended to Daniel? What followed that steadying and comforting touch? How do we experience that touch, when we are confronted with the weightiness of God’s glory? What are the implications of this for us, as we search out the glory of God in His Word?

2. We learn from the Messenger that spiritual entanglements and engagements caused a “delay” in Daniel’s prayers being answered. He was heard, and his request was granted from day 1 of his 21 days of prayer and fasting (v. 2), but it pleased God to allow the details to be sorted out first in the unseen realm for those 21 days (v. 13), before they began to be enacted in the material realm of time and history. Would extending the period before beginning to answer Daniel’s prayer have been beneficial for him? How? Does this help us in understanding why God sometimes “delays” in answering our prayers? Some kind of conflict between spiritual forces (“princes”) is mentioned in verse 13 (cf. Ps. 35.4-7; 91.9-13). Apparently certain angels – good and evil – are appointed over the affairs of nations. Why is this important to know? Should we expect *our* prayers, like Daniel’s, to be able to affect world conditions? Explain. What would such prayers look like? Do you pray that way? Should you?

Meditate.

“We cannot possibly doubt that this prince of the kingdom of the Persians was a hostile power that befriended the nation of the Persians as an enemy of God’s people. For in order to hinder the good which he saw would result from the archangel’s solution to the question for which the prophet prayed to the Lord, in his jealousy he strove to prevent the saving comfort of the angel from reaching Daniel too speedily and strengthening the people of God, over which the archangel Gabriel was set.” *John Cassian (360-432 AD)*

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2 Corinthians 4.17, 18

I need Your strengthening, comforting, and enabling touch today, O Lord. Please fill me with Your Spirit so that...

Pray Psalm 102.1-13.

Let the weightiness of this psalm become your own weightiness, as you intercede for the Lord's Church, which has wandered from His protection and ways. Call upon Him to arise and have mercy on His people.

Psalm 102.1-14 (*Leominster: Not What My Hands Have Done*)

Lord, hear my prayer and cry; hide not Your face from me!
In my distress and tears I sigh – Lord, hear my earnest plea!
My days like smoke blow past; my bones are scorched with sin.
My heart, like wilted, withered grass bends low to earth again.

With loudest groans and cries, and leanness in my soul,
No shelt'ring place arrests my eyes, no rest to make me whole.
My enemies grow strong; I weep with bitter tears;
My days are like a shadow, long; God's face is no more near.

But You, O Lord, abide forever in Your place.
Arise and stand on Zion's side and lavish us with grace!
Revive Your Church, O Lord! Let all her dust and stones
Be strengthened by Your mighty Word, and compact be as one.

4 The Burden of Truth

Introduction

Daniel is overwhelmed and worn down. He is bent and speechless and can think of nothing to say. His strength fails him, and he can barely breathe. Such is the burden of truth. Daniel knew it, as did Isaiah before him. Do we?

Read Isaiah 6.1-13.

Read Daniel 10.15-17.

Think it through.

1. Daniel was in the midst of receiving further revelation from God. In his mind, he added what he was hearing in this chapter to what he had heard since he was but a youth (Daniel 2). God's truth about what was yet to come was piling up on Daniel. Describe the physical effects of this latest round of revelation on him. Why was this such a heavy burden for him? Why was he so troubled about what God was showing him? How was he able to bear this burden, and to commit it to writing (vv. 10, 16)?

2. Daniel was shown nations coming under the judgment of God, struggles in the spiritual realm, and the ultimate desolation of his own nation. He was crushed by what God revealed to him. Meditate on Romans 1.18-32. The truth about our world is that God's wrath *is being poured out* even now. What forms does that take? Does this trouble you? Meditate on Revelation 20.11-15. Should knowing this affect how we live in the present? Explain. Daniel bore the heavy burden of truth which God revealed to him in his Word, and he faithfully proclaimed as much of it as he knew, even though he did not fully understand it. How should his example instruct us? Where can we find the strength to bear the burden of truth as God intends?

Meditate.

"For whenever all the strength of our life and its glory pass from us, then are we strengthened by Christ, who stretches forth his hand and raises the living from among the dead, and as it were from Hades itself, to the resurrection of life." *Hippolytus (fl. 222-245 AD)*

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. Romans 1.18, 19

Father, give me a heart for the lost! Let Your goodness lead me to repentance for any sins! Help me to bear the burden of Your truth each day, and I will...

Pray Psalm 102.8-17.

Being a witness for Christ can be risky, but we are called to reach out to the lost with the Good News of Jesus. Pray for those who may yet be enemies of God (Rom. 5.10). Give your fears of being a witness over to the Lord, and call on Him to rise and have mercy on you as you bear the burden of His truth today.

Psalm 102.5-14 (*Leominster: Not What My Hands Have Done*)

With loudest groans and cries, and leanness in my soul,
No shelt'ring place arrests my eyes, no rest to make me whole.
My enemies grow strong; I weep with bitter tears;
My days are like a shadow, long; God's face is no more near.

But You, O Lord, abide forever in Your place.
Arise and stand on Zion's side and lavish us with grace!

Daniel 10

Revive Your Church, O Lord! Let all her dust and stones
Be strengthened by Your mighty Word, and compact be as one.

5 Strengthening Touch and Word

Introduction

Daniel is strengthened to bear even more of the burden of truth, just as Joshua had been strengthened many years before. The presence and Word of the Lord can do the same for us.

Read Joshua 1.1-9.

Read Daniel 10.18, 19.

Think it through.

1. The “*one* having the likeness of a man” touched Daniel and spoke to him. He had more to say to Daniel, and Daniel would need strength from outside himself to be able to bear and convey this further burden of truth. Does the Lord “touch” His people like this today? That is, how are we able to know His strengthening presence and power, a power that works within us according to His good pleasure (cf. Eph. 3.20; Acts 1.8)? That power came to Daniel when he was weak and helpless. When should we most expect the power of God to touch and strengthen us? How can we know this power, and how should we expect it to affect us (Eph. 5.18-21)?

2. The Messenger commanded Daniel to “be strong, yes, be strong!” What was the effect of this command, coupled with the touch of verse 18 (v. 19, end)? What was Daniel saying? How was he strengthened? Was this primarily an *inward* strength, in his soul, or an *outward* strength, in his body? Was it both? How was he strengthened in his soul – his mind, heart, and conscience? How would this strengthening have been manifested in his body? Should we expect the indwelling Spirit of God, working with the Word of God, to strengthen us in similar ways (2 Cor. 3.12-18)? Explain. Should we expect this *daily*?

Meditate.

“When the strength of our life fails and we leave behind all earthly glory, so that we are no longer strong in it, then we receive the power from God, as Christ stretches out his hand upon us and says, ‘Be bold and strong.’” *Ammonius of Alexandria (late fifth, early sixth century AD)*

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Philippians 2.12, 13

Lord, too often I rely on my own strength to think, feel, and will, when I should be relying on You and Your Word and Spirit. I know that if I were only more faithful in seeking You, You would...

Pray Psalm 102.23-28.

Let this be the day you begin to seek the Lord’s strength more consistently for every area of your life.

Psalm 102.22-28 (*Leominster: Not What My Hands Have Done*)

Yet let us tell God’s Name and praise His glorious grace;
Let all as one His love proclaim together in this place.
Though now our strength is low; though shortened grow our days,
Our God will not forsake us so, but keep us in His ways!

Of old You made the earth and heavens by Your hand.
Though they shall perish You endure; forever shall You stand.
They change, yet You remain the same, without an end.

Daniel 10

Our children shall Your favor gain, and theirs shall be Your friend.

6 Cosmic Conflict

Introduction

Daniel receives cryptic but illuminating insights into the larger picture of the cosmos, where spiritual forces struggle for supremacy in a battle for supremacy that plays out among the nations of earth. God is sovereign even over all this strife, and His eternal Word remains true. He made all this host – spiritual and material – and He is completely at rest, and totally in control. In His rest, we can rest, too (Heb. 2.18, 19).

Meditate on Genesis 2.1-3.

Read Daniel 10.20, 21.

Think it Through

1. In these verses I sense a deliberate double-use of the word *prince*. We've seen that this word refers to spiritual forces, some wicked, some not, which exercise some kind of authority over nations. But here, because a chronology is indicated, I think the temporal *princes* of Persia and Greece are also in view. Do you agree? Explain. What does this suggest about the relationship between events in the unseen world and those in the seen world? How did Paul describe this in Ephesians 6.10-20? Does this cosmic conflict involve us? Does it still involve nations and peoples? Explain.

2. The great angel Michael has been assigned as the *prince* of the people of God ("your" here is plural). The Messenger Who speaks to Daniel – the Word of God – seems to be Commander-in-Chief in this cosmic conflict, and He says only Michael strives with Him against the foe. The Word does not mean that no other spiritual beings have joined the conflict. He probably refers to Michael here as the field general, coordinating the efforts of the others (cf. Rev. 12.7-9). This vision must have been frightening, given what it tells us about spiritual conflict raging all around us, catching up nations and empires and multitudes of people. But the Word insists He's only telling Daniel "what is noted in the Scripture of Truth." What do you suppose this means? What is the relationship between what God has *decreed* (cf. Eph. 1.11), what the Scriptures *reveal*, and what actually *happens* on earth? Why should this give us comfort, even given the cosmic conflict in which we are engaged? How should this affect our attitude toward the Scriptures?

Meditate

"Truly marvelous are the secret counsels of God, for it indeed came to pass that after the Jewish people had been freed from captivity, Alexander, king of the Macedonians, slew Darius and overthrew the kingdom of the Persians and Medes, so that the prince of the Greeks did overcome the prince of the Persians." *Jerome (347-420 AD)*

And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. Revelation 12.7, 8

Thank You, Lord Jesus, that the war is won because of Your victory. But the battles still rage, and I must engage them today. Help me to...

Pray Psalm 102.1-17.

We face many trials and struggles, some because of our lack of faith and obedience, others just because that's the way life is. Meditate on your trials as you pray, and give them over to the Lord.

Psalm 102.1-21 (*Leominster: Not What My Hands Have Done*)

Lord, hear my prayer and cry; hide not Your face from me!
In my distress and tears I sigh – Lord, hear my earnest plea!

Daniel 10

My days like smoke blow past; my bones are scorched with sin.
My heart, like wilted, withered grass bends low to earth again.

With loudest groans and cries, and leanness in my soul,
No shelt'ring place arrests my eyes, no rest to make me whole.
My enemies grow strong; I weep with bitter tears;
My days are like a shadow, long; God's face is no more near.

But You, O Lord, abide forever in Your place.
Arise and stand on Zion's side and lavish us with grace!
Revive Your Church, O Lord! Let all her dust and stones
Be strengthened by Your mighty Word, and compact be as one.

Then let the nations fear the glory of the Lord!
For He shall in His Church appear to heed our sighing words.
Then let our children learn to praise the Lord above.
He hears their groans and knows they yearn to dwell within His love.

7 Called

Introduction

Daniel is one of the most admirable characters in all of Scripture, in large part because we see him as so wise, faithful, and courageous. God set His favor on Daniel for a special calling, to serve Him in an unbelieving world, to receive and understand His Word, and to intercede for the people of God. In this calling, Daniel differs from us only in the circumstances of place and time. We, too, have been called to serve, receive, and pray. May we do so with the faithfulness and courage of Daniel.

Review Daniel 7.5, 6; 8.20, 21.

Read and Meditate on Daniel 10.

Think it through.

1. From Daniel 10 we have seen that being entrusted with revelation from God can be an awesome burden. Daniel was nearly crushed under the weight of glory God was revealing to him, and only the strength and loving touch of the Word made it possible for him to continue in his calling. What can we learn from Daniel about fulfilling our calling from God? How does this relate to our time in God's Word? Our prayer lives? Our service in an unbelieving world?

2. We have also seen in Daniel 10 the close connection between the seen and unseen worlds. Nothing on earth happens in a merely temporal and material framework. Spiritual forces – of good and evil – are everywhere active, exerting influence on decisions and actions in all areas of life. Why does this make it all the more important that we be truly spiritual people, steeped in divine revelation and clothed in prayer? How can we know when the spiritual forces acting upon us are malevolent? What should we do then?

Meditate

“For unless the angel had reassured him by touching him like a son of man, so that his heart was freed of terror, he would not have been able to hearken to God's secrets.” *Jerome (347-420AD)*

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. Colossians 3.1, 2

You have called me to Your Kingdom and glory, O Lord; and You have sent me to my world as Your witness. Use me today to...

Pray Psalm 102.1-28

Acknowledge your trials, confess your weaknesses, rejoice in the Lord's faithfulness, and call upon Him to show favor to His people, now and in the generations to come.

Psalm 102.1-28 (*Leominster: Not What My Hands Have Done*)

Lord, hear my prayer and cry; hide not Your face from me!
In my distress and tears I sigh – Lord, hear my earnest plea!
My days like smoke blow past; my bones are scorched with sin.
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He hears their groans and knows they yearn to dwell within His love.

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Let all as one His love proclaim together in this place.
Though now our strength is low; though shortened grow our days,
Our God will not forsake us so, but keep us in His ways!

Of old You made the earth and heavens by Your hand.
Though they shall perish You endure; forever shall You stand.
They change, yet You remain the same, without an end.
Our children shall Your favor gain, and theirs shall be Your friend.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. Why is being entrusted with divine revelation – the Scriptures – both a blessing and a burden? How do you experience each of these?
2. How can we know the strengthening touch of the Lord in our times of weakness and need?
3. Why is it important that we are aware of the unseen world, and that we understand as much as possible of what goes on there?
4. In what ways is your calling from the Lord similar to Daniel's? What can you learn from Daniel about fulfilling your calling?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from this study? How are you putting that lesson to work in your life?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.