

Message #13
Daniel

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4/2/2023

THE WAR OF THE WORLDS DANIEL 10:1-11:1

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW

Wikipedia reports that there are currently 40 ongoing wars and major conflicts happening around the world directly involving three dozen countries. There is another reference work called *The Encyclopedia of Military History: From 3500 BC to the Present*. The authors there list 4345 wars and major battles that have been fought in the last 5500 years. According to another source there has not been a year since the time of Christ that has not seen at least one war going on somewhere in the world. In the last century World Wars I and II reached new heights, or depths, in the numbers of people who were adversely affected by war.

How is it that seemingly intelligent, civilized human beings can be so bent on mass destruction and collective killing? Within the lifetimes of some of us the government of a nation from which many of us trace ancestry set out to systematically destroy an entire race of people. In the process the Nazis succeeded in killing six million Jews. How can such brutality and irrationality exist in the world?

Part of the answer that the Bible gives us is that we human beings have a sin nature. We have a bent toward self-centeredness. That self-centeredness can lead to bad things. The Bible also tells us that there is an unseen war going on about us in another realm. The war in this supernatural world has a direct bearing on the wars in our own visible world. It even has a direct bearing on the individual level in our own personal conflicts.

Chapter 10 in the Book of Daniel gives us a unique glimpse into this unseen war. As we examine this passage today, we are going to learn something about the reason for many of the troubles in the world and also about what difference we can make in these visible and invisible worlds.

I.
(PROJECTOR ON--- I. HOW SHOULD WE LIVE...) One of the two basic questions which the Book of Daniel answers for us is: HOW SHOULD WE LIVE IN AN OFTEN GODLESS SOCIETY?

A.
Daniel #10 gives us unique insight into a related question: WHY ARE OUR SOCIETIES GODLESS in the first place? (I. HOW SHOULD... A. WHY ARE OUR SOCIETIES...) Knowing why we have such godless societies may help us to understand how to live in this kind of environment.

The first part of the answer is that societies are composed of sinners. We saw last week in #9 that Daniel acknowledged the sin of his own people. In v. 5 he confessed, “...**we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules.**” The descendants of Abraham were chosen by God to be the objects of His blessing, but they were still all sinners.

This sin problem is endemic to us humans. In the New Testament (ROMANS 3:23) in Romans 3:23 the Bible declares, “...**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...**” The Bible says that we are sinners in thought, word, and deed. We are legally guilty before a holy God, and we have a sin nature inherited from the first man and woman.

Chapter 10 describes an additional reason for why our societies are often godless. (PROJECTOR OFF) This chapter provides the introduction to the fourth and final vision in the Book of Daniel, which is described in Chapters 11 and 12. The story in these three chapters is the last recorded event in the life of the great godly statesman Daniel.

According to the summary statement in v. 1 the vision came to him in the third year of King Cyrus. The year was 535 or 536 BC. Daniel was about 85 years old. This was two years after the angel Gabriel’s earlier appearance to him. It was shortly after the first return of Jewish exiles to Judah. Daniel may or may not have been retired from government service. Clearly he was still actively serving God.

We are told in vv. 2 & 3 that he had been mourning and fasting. His fast consisted of abstaining from tasty food, meat, and wine. The specific reason for Daniel’s distress is not described, but we can make an educated guess. In the first year of his rule over the conquered kingdom of Babylon King Cyrus of Persia issued a decree that the Jews could return to Judah to rebuild their temple in Jerusalem.

Forty-two thousand Jews did return to Judah and begin work on the temple. But according to Ezra #4 soon after the work began, the Jews were confronted with opposition, and their rebuilding program ground to a halt. News of this must have been distressing to Daniel.

(TIGRIS RIVER) One day while he was contemplating these circumstances, standing by the Tigris River, someone appeared to Daniel. This was no ordinary individual. This may well have been an appearance of the Son of God. In the Book of Revelation the Apostle John later had a vision in which he saw Jesus Christ. The description of him in Revelation #1 is very similar to what we have in vv. 5 & 6 in our passage.

(REVELATION 1:14) In Revelation #1 vv. 14 & 15 we read, “**The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire,**

(REVELATION 1:15) **his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters.**” Notice the similar description.

If indeed this is the Son of God in our passage and not just an angel, then the being who appears in v. 10 in our passage must be different. (PROJECTOR OFF) For v. 13 says that this second being needs help in defeating the Prince of Persia. Certainly no created being would be capable of withstanding the all-powerful Son of God. Apparently this latter being is an angel. Perhaps it is Gabriel who appeared to him earlier.

This angel speaks to Daniel, and in v. 13 he gives us information that provides a fascinating glimpse into the activities of the supernatural world. He makes reference first to the “prince of the kingdom of Persia.” There are at least four observations that we can make about this Persian prince.

(PROJECTOR ON--- PRINCE OF PERSIA 1) First, he is not a human being. It is doubtful that any human could hinder the task of one of God’s angels in the way that this angel’s task has been hindered. Within the scope of their permitted action the Bible portrays angels as being superior in power to human beings. In the days of King Hezekiah the Bible says that one angel killed 185,000 soldiers in one night.

(PRINCE OF PERSIA 2) Second, this Persian prince must also be an angel. Michael is called a prince just as this other being is called a prince. But Michael, who is mentioned in v.13, is also called a chief prince. From Jude v. 9 in the New Testament we know that Michael was an archangel. The Persian prince must also be an angel, apparently a powerful angel.

(PRINCE OF PERSIA 3) Third, this Persian angel is an **evil angel**. For he opposes God’s purposes. The Bible later calls bad angels “demons.”

(PRINCE OF PERSIA 4) Fourth, this fallen angel, called the “prince of the kingdom of Persia,” has evil power over Persia. Satan is three times called “the prince of this world” in the Gospel of John. When the devil tempted Christ three times in the wilderness, the Evil One offered our Lord dominion over all of the kingdoms of the world.

So it would seem that Satan has authority to assign fellow fallen angels to lead his work in the different nations of the world. Perhaps the United States has a chief demon with the responsibility to turn our country away from God and His principles. Keep that in mind the next time that you hear about proposed legislation in Congress that would seemingly be in direct conflict with Biblical values. Perhaps there is a demonic force behind it. (PROJECTOR OFF)

Besides what we are told about the demonic prince, v. 13 in our passage also gives us inside information about the good guy Michael. It says that he was a “chief prince,” apparently a chief angel. He came to help this angel who was talking to Daniel. Our verse says that he was the counterpart of the Persian prince. Perhaps he was the leader of God’s angelic forces in relationship to the kingdom of Persia. In any case Michael helped this other angel in some way to be able to get to Daniel. The fact that one angel needs another angel’s help to accomplish his task shows that these demonic forces are strong.

Verses 20 & 21 and #11 v. 1 give us additional information about these spiritual beings and conflicts. Verse 20 tells us that the angel talking to Daniel is going back to fight against the prince of Persia. The exact nature of this fight is not described.

Mention is also made of a Greek prince who is coming. In v. 21 Michael is described as “your prince.” Chapter 12 v. 1 expands on this description to say that Michael stands guard over “your” people, that is, the Jews. So this chief prince, or archangel, is responsible to the Lord for overseeing and protecting God’s work with Israel.

Finally, #11 v. 1 tells us that the angel speaking to Daniel arose to be an encouragement and a protection for Darius during the first year of his reign. That was also the year in which Daniel was thrown into the lion’s den. As a result of his escape Darius issued a decree giving special recognition to the Jewish people. Also in that year Cyrus gave orders that the Jews should be allowed to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. So it would seem that the Lord was using angels to help accomplish His purposes at that crucial time. No doubt He also uses them today.

According to the Book of Jeremiah God had promised that after 70 years the Jews would return from the captivity to their homeland. He also said that the temple would be rebuilt. Satan’s goal is always to frustrate God’s purposes. What we get a glimpse of here in this chapter is a hint of the spiritual opposition that was being raised by Satan’s forces to keep God’s purposes from being accomplished. It seems as though these two opposing forces were fighting over who would influence the kings of Persia.

Cyrus issued the decree allowing the Jews to return. But the people in Jerusalem ran into opposition. Would the Persian rulers allow the work of rebuilding to continue? Would God’s purposes be thwarted?

With this revelation of the spiritual struggle behind the scenes, we can better appreciate the spiritual battles that ensued in the historical events that followed. The temple in Jerusalem was eventually rebuilt seventy years after it had been destroyed. Fifty-five years later a man by the name of Haman tried to have the king of Persia destroy all of the Jews in the empire. Perhaps the evil prince of Persia was involved. But the Book of Esther tells us that God intervened, and Haman was killed instead.

A hundred years after that we learn from Josephus that Alexander the Great came to Jerusalem, fully intending to destroy the city. But when the high priest showed him the Book of Daniel, he saw the prophecy concerning himself and relented.

One hundred fifty years after that, as we saw predicted in our study of #7, Antiochus Epiphanes set out to compel the Jews to adopt Greek culture and religion. He tried to abolish Jewish religious practices. In the process he killed thousands of Jews. But in the end he was defeated.

Two hundred years after that the Son of God showed up on earth. The devil sought to thwart His purposes. He used evil King Herod in an effort to kill Him soon after He was born. He possessed one of His twelve disciples who betrayed Him to the evil religious leaders. Then on that fateful Friday the devil and his forces won what seemed to be a great victory as the God-man Jesus was crucified on the cross. But that seeming tragedy was turned around on Easter. We remember those significant events this coming week. Through the centuries the spiritual struggle with the Jews as the centerpiece has continued.

Why are our societies so often godless? Because people are sinners and because evil demonic forces are at work behind the scenes. In the last century Adolf Hitler set out to destroy the Jews. People look at that and pass it off simply as the result of anti-Semitism, nationalism, and a little derangement. But it was more than that. You probably never read about it in school in the history books--- I did not--- but all of the top leaders of Nazi Germany had links with the occult. Adolf Hitler in his earlier years studied telepathy and other occult mysteries. He was influenced by the works of leading occultists in Germany and was a personal friend of some of them.

A childhood friend by the name of August Kubizek (PROJECTOR ON--- AUGUST KUBIZEK) once described an experience that he had with Hitler after the two of them had attended an opera by Wagner. Kubizek says, **“I was struck by something strange, which I had never noticed before... It was as if another being spoke out of his body, and moved him as much as it did me. It wasn’t at all a case of a speaker being carried away by his own words. On the contrary: I rather felt as though he himself listened with astonishment and emotion to what burst forth from him with elementary force. I will not attempt to interpret this phenomenon, but it was a state of complete ecstasy and rapture.”** Hitler later recounted that incident and declared, **“In that hour it began.”** (*The Nazis and the Occult*, Dusty Sklar, p. 50) That certainly sounds to me like an experience of demonic possession, or at least demonic influence.

One of the chief instruments of persecution of the Jews was the SS. (THE NAZIS AND THE OCCULT) In her book *Nazism and the Occult*, Dusty Sklar says, **“We know that it was an occult society. This may enlighten us as to how more than a million SS men could change, in the space of a few years, from ordinary citizens to mass murderers.”** (p. 93) Such activity is consistent with what the Book of Daniel reveals to us about the spiritual activity of demonic forces behind the scenes. (PROJECTOR OFF)

In our day Iran threatens to destroy Israel. In a speech in October 2005 Prime Minister Mahmoud Ahmadinejad argued that **“Israel must be wiped off the map.”** In recent times the Iranian government puts “Death to Israel” on banners at official parades. Ballistic missiles are fired against targets shaped like the Star of David.

There is a spiritual war going on in our world. One of the scenes of battle is the fate of the Jewish people. God has promised that Israel will one day enjoy prominence in an

earthly kingdom that will be led by Christ who will return to earth. Satan is fighting to keep that from happening. He wants to snuff out Israel and the Jewish people.

There is also a spiritual war going on right here in Boulder City and in the Las Vegas valley. Las Vegas promotes itself as "Sin City." The casino industry promotes worship of Lady Luck, who was called the goddess Fortuna by the Romans. It is vital that we Christians recognize the reality of this spiritual warfare if we are going to live successfully in an often godless society. (PROJECTOR ON--- EPHESIANS 6:12) Ephesians #6 v. 12 tells us, "**For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.**" These demonic forces are out to do us in, as individuals and as churches.

When we as individuals or as a church attempt any kind of significant work for the Lord, we might as well count on getting opposition. The demonic forces of evil don't want to see people trust Christ as their Savior and grow to maturity in Christ. They don't want to see unity among believers. They don't want to see these things happen, and they have powers to hinder us from accomplishing them. If we just float along in our lives as individual Christians, or as a church, and never seem to encounter any significant problems or opposition, chances are it is because we aren't any threat to Satan.

B.

Because we live in an often godless society that is partly the result of evil spiritual forces at work in the spiritual realm, we need to rely upon divine resources. There are two things that we need to have. The first is WE NEED TO HAVE PERSEVERING PRAYER. (I. B. WE NEED TO HAVE PERSEVERING PRAYER.) We need to persevere in prayer.

According to v. 2 Daniel had been mourning, and apparently praying, for three weeks. The reason for the mourning and prayer is not specifically stated. But given the background that we have discussed it would seem that he was praying that the rebuilding work on the temple in Jerusalem might continue.

So he was praying for fellow believers in a place distant from himself who were faced with opposition to God's program by evil forces, human and supernatural. There is a lesson and a reminder for us in this that we should remember fellow Christians in other parts of the world who are faced with persecution for their faith. If we had a little of the spiritual concern which Daniel had, we might remember to pray for the persecuted church throughout the world.

Verse 12 also indicates that Daniel was praying for an understanding of the events going on around him. Things were confusing. He had prayed for an early end to the captivity. King Cyrus had issued a decree allowing the return of the Jews and the rebuilding of the temple. But now work on the temple was coming to a halt. What was going on?

Daniel waited three weeks for an answer to his prayer. That is less time than many of us have had to wait for answers to our prayers. But in this book we have seen some requests that Daniel made which were answered much more quickly. As a result of his persistence in prayer, we see several things happen.

First, from vv. 12 & 13 it seems as though Daniel's prayer triggered spiritual warfare. He initiated a series of events that resulted in the archangel Michael being called in to defeat the prince of the kingdom of Persia.

Persistent prayer makes a positive contribution to the spiritual warfare going on in the heavenly realm. In Ephesians #6 when Paul writes that our struggle is against the spiritual forces of wickedness, one of the essential weapons that he says that we need to use is prayer.

When you sense that you are involved in spiritual warfare, pray. Get others to pray for you. Prayer can accomplish good things that we are not even capable of knowing about.

The **second** thing that happens as a result of Daniel's persistence in prayer is that he gets an answer. As is often the case with us believers, it is not exactly the answer that he expected. For this messenger from God describes what will happen to Daniel's people in a time far in the future. Nevertheless his persistence in prayer did result in an answer, and it did contribute to the spiritual war against the forces of evil.

It was at Dallas Seminary where I learned to study the Bible. Soon after it was founded in 1924, it almost went bankrupt. Persistence in prayer and God's grace saved the day.

At noon on a particular day the creditors were scheduled to foreclose on the seminary. That morning the founders of the school met in the president's office to pray that God would provide. A Bible teacher by the name of Harry Ironside was present. When it was his turn to pray, he prayed, "**Lord, we know that the cattle on a thousand hills are Thine. Please sell some of them and send us the money.**"

While they were praying, a tall Texan with boots on and typical cowboy dress sauntered in to the business office and said, "**I just sold two car loads of cattle in Fort Worth. I've been trying to make a business deal go through, and it won't work, and I feel God is compelling me to give this money to the seminary. I don't know if you need it or not, but here's the check.**"

The secretary immediately went to the door of the president's office and timidly tapped. When she got a response, the president took the check and looked at it. It was for the exact amount of the debt. When he looked at the signature on the check, he recognized the name of the cattleman from Fort Worth. Turning to Dr. Ironside, he said, "**Harry, God sold the cattle.**"

Our struggles are ultimately spiritual struggles. So we need persistent prayer. As a church family we need persistent prayer for the various health issues in our midst. We

need persistent prayer for the opportunities we have in prison ministry and youth ministry and nursing home ministry. We need persistent prayer for our church leaders. We need persistent prayer for the opportunity we have next weekend with Good Friday and Easter services and the holiday visitors which we often have for such occasions.

C.

Besides the need for persevering prayer this passage also teaches us that WE NEED TO HAVE STUDY OF GOD'S WORD. (I. A . B. C. WE NEED TO HAVE STUDY OF GOD'S WORD) According to v. 12 Daniel had prayed for understanding, and God had sent an angel to deliver a special revelation to Daniel concerning the future. But according to v. 13 this fallen angel in charge of Persia did not want Daniel to get this revelation. There is no way that the spiritual forces of wickedness wanted God's future program for Israel to become known. This revelation reveals Satan's future strategy, and it shows that in the end he is going to be a loser.

If Satan's forces regard God's revelation concerning the future to be so valuable, how much more should we be concerned about studying prophecy, as well as the rest of God's Word. The demonic forces of evil want to keep us away from the study of God's Word. They don't want us to learn about God's victory in the end.

That is partly why it is so much easier for us to find time to watch the news or a sports event than it is to read our Bibles. The regular intake of God's Word needs to be a priority. Even ten minutes a day spent reading the Bible will make a positive contribution to our ability to be an effective soldier in the army of Christ. In an often godless society we need persevering prayer and regular Bible study.

II.

The second question that the Book of Daniel answers for us is this: IS GOD WORTHY OF OUR TRUST? (II. IS GOD WORTHY OF OUR TRUST?) The answer is "Yes." He is worthy of our trust. Why then do not people trust him? Daniel 10 tells us that there is a spiritual war that is going on. People refuse to trust Him because they are sinful and because Satan and his forces are at work behind the scenes to convince people not to trust Him.

Satan and his forces whisper to the religious, "You're good enough. You give lots of money to charitable causes. You attend church regularly. You do good works. You're better than many of these supposed born-again Christians. That's all that you need."

With the intellectually skeptical the evil forces whisper, "You're too intelligent. You're too educated to believe all of this superstitious bologna. If you can't see it or measure it, you can't believe it."

With the down and out these evil forces may whisper, "You're too bad. You're no good. Nobody could ever love you unconditionally. You could never be acceptable to God."

The reality is that God is there, and He welcomes all who come to Jesus Christ in faith. If you have never come to the point of trusting in Christ as your personal Savior, you are not simply in some middle ground deciding between two opposing forces. The Bible makes it clear that you are part of the forces of evil.

In Ephesians #2 (PROJECTOR ON--- EPHESIANS 2:1-2) the Bible says, **“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience...”** The only remedy is to put one’s faith in Christ for eternal life.

Later in the second chapter of Ephesians Paul refers to our human responsibility (EPHESIANS 2:8-9): **“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”** Our responsibility is to receive the gift of eternal life by faith, by trusting in Jesus and what He did for us in dying on the cross for our sins.

We live in a society where people do not trust God largely because there are spiritual forces at work behind our visible world that oppose the work of God. (PROJECTOR OFF) These forces of wickedness in our era have produced a Hitler who tried to exterminate an entire race of people. They have produced a Communist government that succeeded in killing half of the people of Cambodia. They have produced governments in the Russia and China and North Korea that have suppressed religious loyalties. They have produced a religious ideology that says that being a suicide bomber will guarantee one a great future in heaven. They have produced a society that has convinced its citizens that abortion is a constitutional right for all women. In the very last days these forces of evil will produce a reign of terror unlike anything that the world has ever known.

But the spiritual forces of good will finally triumph. God is sovereign. Out of the horror of World War II God reestablished the nation of Israel. Out of the horror of the Tribulation God will establish the rule of the Messiah upon the earth.

Meanwhile the spiritual war continues. Over a century ago the Anglican bishop J. C. Ryle wrote, **“The saddest symptom about many so-called Christians is the utter absence of anything like conflict and fight in their Christianity. They eat, they drink, they dress, they work, they amuse themselves, they get money, they spend money, they go through a scanty round of formal religious services once or twice every week. But the great spiritual warfare--- its watchings and strugglings, its agonies and anxieties, its battles and contests--- of all this they appear to know nothing at all.”** (*Holiness*, p. 118) A. W. Tozer adds, **“Men think of the world not as a battleground, but as a playground.”** (*This World: Playground or Battleground*)

Will we serve God in the midst of this great cosmic conflict? Will we be serious about persevering prayer? Will we discipline ourselves to study God’s Word? Will we trust God in the face of challenges?