

The Book Of Daniel (Part Seven)

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Please turn to Daniel 9 as we continue this series. At the beginning of Daniel's intimate and very personal prayer to a God who is thought as one near at hand, Daniel addresses Him as the great and awesome God here in Daniel 9:4.

Daniel 9:4 And I prayed to the Lord my God, and made confession, and said, "O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments,

Such encouraging words and obviously he is in awe of that God.

The original Hebrew root word from which the English word 'awesome' is translated in verse 4 means: dreadful; frightful; to fear and reverence. So in other words, Daniel addresses Him as the Great and frightful God who is to be feared and revered. That does not sound like a God that is near at hand, does it?

Daniel has always stressed God's involvement in human history. For Daniel up to this point in Chapter 9, God had been first of all the Lord of human affairs; of Daniel's affairs; of Israel's affairs; of Babylonian affairs; immersed deeply in the current of human events and interested in every detail. But now Daniel is reminded again, for his good and ours, that the God that he is dealing with is above and beyond and has His own life, His own place, and His own fellowship. His Holiness is not to be destroyed nor is His being exhausted by His immersion in human history.

He is not worn out by all the working in the world. His throne is never insecure when earthly empires are tottering. He has His heavens, His angels, and His arch angels and other thousands of thousands. This and nothing less is to be the setting and the basis for Daniel's new and deeper experience and assurance about prayer.

Is our God too small in our way of thinking? I think sometimes He is. It is also important for us to learn this kind of lesson. Our own belief about prayer is determined by our belief about God. But we always tend to set our thoughts about God within a very limited framework to drag God down to our level, to rob Him of whatever attributes and to make Him purely one sided.

We therefore emphasize the glory of His nearness and His involvement in our affairs, His identification with us in history, that we lose sight entirely of His independence of us, of the awe-inspiring aspects of His glory. We like to think of Him primarily as a God of friendly love, as we understand love.

We comfort ourselves with the knowledge that the we can appeal to Him as one who can be moved with compassion, that we can plead with Him as one who listens and understands. All this is true of Him, but if our relationship with Him is to become ultimately satisfying and lasting, we have to anchor ourselves in His eternal and unchangeable faithfulness and omnipotence as we root ourselves in His love. While He gives us everything, we must remember that He Himself is none the poorer for all His giving. He is loving and just within the framework of His own sheer exalted Holiness.

Now Jeremiah found that many other prophets of his time had lost all their reverence and fear of God because they had lost all vision of His Holiness and Majesty. They were teaching only the pleasant things about Him that they could dream up in their own dreams. They called Him a God at hand and they thought of Him as constantly at their beck and call.

Their gospel was a new friendly God close to people, loving everyone, much like Protestantism is today. They omitted speaking about His Holiness or His anger and they purposely avoided telling people that they should turn from their evil doings. Jeremiah called upon both prophets and people to look again at the God that they were looking at one-sidedly, and for the sake of everything they lived for to regain the truth about Him in His wholeness.

Jeremiah 23:23-24 “Am I a God near at hand,” says the Lord, “And not a God afar off? Can anyone hide himself in secret places, So I shall not see him?” says the Lord; “Do I not fill heaven and earth?” says the Lord.

He is a much greater God than many people often think of Him. Many think in a one sided way, that He is only at our beck and call; that He is only there to love us. But that is not true, He is there to rule the universe as well and we should never forget that. We too lose not only our reverence and fear, but also our assurance when we think of Him only as being at hand and not also as being a far off.

God is the God of the universe, not just the god of our hearts. Jesus told us, when we pray, to say, “Our father in Heaven.” And he always tried to anchor our thoughts on Himself as our trusted friend who will be with us forever and never fail in friendship and

understanding. But the last view He gave of Himself was of His ascension to that very Heaven to which Daniel's thoughts were raised by the ministry of the angels.

While reading Jeremiah and realizing that the Most High God is the God of all universal and national events and especially of Israel, and that the 70 years of the desolation of Jerusalem are almost up, Daniel turns to God in prayer seeking mercy for Jerusalem. In his prayer, Daniel is indirectly asking for prayers to what is on his mind. He wants to know how long it will be until the Lord redeems Israel. He wants to know when will the Messiah arrive to accomplish this.

The seventy weeks prophesy in Daniel 9:20-27 is the Lord's answer to Daniel's prayer. If Daniel is truly concerned about the accomplishment of God's purposes, he must think in terms of seventy weeks of years. The arch angel Gabriel, the same one whom Daniel had seen before, was sent from heaven came near him and touched him and said that he was commissioned to impart Daniel skill and understanding.

Daniel 9:20-23 Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God, yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore, consider the matter and understand the vision.

One of the most important contributions of the book of Daniel is its new insistence of the link between faith and intelligence. Why not just have a blind faith with no intelligent thinking at all within it? We are to think things through so that we can do the works part of faith. Verse 22 shows that wisdom and understanding is a gift. But in verse 23, he was still told to look into this matter, consider the word, and understand the vision.

Now Daniel's prophecy of seventy weeks in Daniel 9:24-27 provide the chronological framework for Messianic prediction from the time of Daniel to the establishment of the Kingdom on earth.

Daniel 9:24-27 "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up

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vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy. "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined. Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate."

So for the average person reading this for the first time, their head is spinning and they are confused. Most of the more modern translations have done a better job translating this passage than the translators of the King James version. The King James translators spoke of seventy weeks which is unnecessary misleading, while the more modern translators used the word "sevens."

Now in Hebrew, the word is actually the word 'seven' or perhaps more accurately a group of seven something. It could mean a week, because a week is a group of seven days, but it does not actually mean week. In this case, as nearly all writers recognize, it is a group of seven years.

If literal weeks are involved, the prophesy is meaningless since nothing important occurred within the time frame. If weeks of years are involved, then the time period embraces the years from the giving out of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem to the days of Jesus Christ.

Now the captivity, which was then drawing to a close, had lasted seventy years. In verse 24, Daniel was told by the angel that it would yet be seventy weeks till the anointing of the Messiah. Of course those are not literal weeks as I just mentioned; they are years.

Now let us calculate the seventy weeks prophesy. The seventy weeks is general understood to mean seventy weeks of years, that is seventy-sevens of years or seven times seventy years. That calculates out to 490 years. And if the angel was saying that the captivity has been seventy years, the period between the captivity and the coming of the Messiah will be seven times that long.

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Seven and cycles of seven sometimes have symbolic meanings as follows: The date from which the seventy weeks was to be counted was the decree to rebuild Jerusalem. We see that in verse 25. There were three decrees issued by Persian kings for this purpose. The principal one of these was in 557 B.C., the one given by Artaxerxes described in Nehemiah 2:1-8. The seventy weeks is subdivided into seven weeks, sixty-two weeks and one week.

It is difficult to see the application of the seven weeks, but the sixty-nine weeks, including the seven, equal the four hundred and eighty-three days. That is on the year for long theory; this is the commonly accepted interpretation principle mentioned in Ezekiel 4:6.

Therefore, the four hundred and eighty-two days translates to four hundred and eighty-three years using the three hundred and sixty day prophetic years.

So we have two figures here, we have the four hundred and eighty-three years, and we have 457 B. C. Adding four hundred and eighty-three years, that is sixty-nine weeks or four hundred thirty-three days (prophetically) to 457 B.C. brings us to 27 A.D., the very year that Jesus was baptized and began His public ministry.

Now we must remember to add the one year which is gained in making the transition from B.C. to A.D. There is a 1 B.C. and there is a 1 A.D. because there is no year zero; one year is gained and must be added to the A.D. date.

For clarity, let me give you a brief summary of what I just explained. Through the angel Gabriel, God revealed to Daniel that it would be sixty-nine weeks from the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem, until the appearing of the Messiah and that He would confirm the covenant with many for one week. Using the prophetic day for the prophetic year principal, we find that the sixty-nine weeks would equal four hundred and eighty-three years.

The principal decree to rebuild Jerusalem was in 457 B.C. and it was exactly four hundred and eighty-three years until Jesus was baptized and began his public ministry in 27 A.D. So we see that God is faithful to perform His word. The fact that it was 27 A.D. when Jesus was baptized and began His ministry is an extraordinary fulfillment of Daniel's prophesy even to the year.

But what of the last week; what of the final seven years of the four hundred and ninety year series? It is significant that in Daniel's prophesy of the seventy weeks, Jesus the Messiah was to be cut off in the midst of the week. This prophesy has the application of

a day for a year, so that this seventieth week became a literal seven years.

Christ was cut off after three and a half years of His ministry, that is at the midpoint of the seven years, which is also the midpoint of the seventieth week. Yet it is also significant that He was cut off on the middle day of the literal week, which is Wednesday, as we call it today.

The anointed one was cut off and crucified in the midst of one week, purged away sin and brought an everlasting righteousness, which Daniel records in verses 24, 26, and 27. The missing week is the prophetic week of Christ's ministry. The second three and a half years will be fulfilled in the near future.

There are six goals mentioned in verse 24 that will have been completely accomplished by the end of the seventieth week. The explanation of which is of major importance of the understanding of the application of the vision. These are the ends to which God is working; stages in achieving them are outlined in verse 25-27.

These six goals have been initially accomplished by Christ's three-and-a-half-year ministry and by his sacrifice, and their effects are ongoing and will be completed by the end of Christ's seven year ministry. In verse 24, the six goals are divided into two sets of three.

The first set of three are concerned with a problem that Daniel addressed in his prayer, namely the grounds which God would forgive human sin. The second set of three, are the positive fulfillment of God's purposes.

I am going to go through these six goals here that were and are being accomplished in verse 24:

1) To finish the transgression. This combines the ideas of rebellion and self-assertion. It stands for sin in general in its many forms.

Israel's sin of disobedience will be brought to an end at Christ's second coming when she repents and turns to Him as her Messiah and Savior. Then she will be restored to the land and blessed and answer to Daniel's prayer. Finish means to restrain, which was begun by the preaching of the gospel and imparting the Holy spirit to believers.

2) To make an end to sins. The Hebrew verb *Hatam* from which 'end' is translated has the idea of sealing up. The thought here is sealing something up with respect to punishment. This emphasizes that Israel's sin, which has gone unpunished, would be

punished in or through Jesus Christ, our substitute, who would bear the sins of the world on the cross. Jesus' sacrifice puts an end to the Old Testament animal sin offerings.

3) To make reconciliation for iniquity. The Hebrew verb from which reconciliation comes is regularly used in the Old Testament for making atonement, especially by the blood sacrifices. But here it was announced that God has provided a way of forgiving sin without being untrue to His own righteousness by the offering of Christ. This assurance was what Daniel's prayer had been seeking after; it is the great longing expressed in the Old Testament as a whole.

Now with the penalty of sin satisfied and justification made possible, we continue with the last three points:

4) To bring in everlasting righteousness. Daniel perceived in this promise from God, that righteousness was the attribute of God alone, so it is a short step to justification by faith. The form of the verb 'bring in' means to cause to come in. The word everlasting (plural), in Hebrew, means ages. This is referring to the righteous one of the ages. Literally this phrase reads, "to bring in righteousness of ages." As a result, it is also a prophecy that God will establish an age characterized by righteousness when the Righteous one is crowned King of His millennial Kingdom.

5) To seal up vision and prophesy. That is to set a seal; to close up or to make an end to all that God has revealed. To seal a document involves closing it, but in law, the meaning is rather to authenticate it with one seal and signature. What God has revealed through vision and prophesy will be carried out; however, understanding and the interpretation of it is sealed up until the end times. All that God said He would do in fulfilling his covenant with Israel will be fully realized at the second coming of Jesus Christ.

6) To anoint the Most Holy. The ambiguity in this term, 'the Most Holy,' may best be explained by its contest. In 539 B.C. concern was centered on the Holy Place in Jerusalem and the re-dedication of the temple was not excluded, but the Lord's anointed was ultimately to be a man.

Matthew 12:6 Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple [who is the subject of the vision and prophesy.]

This speaks of the enthronement of Christ, the anointed one, as King of kings and Lord of lords at the beginning of the millennium.

Now verse 24 is speaking of the accomplishment of God's purpose for all history. If we look at this from our own vantage point, it was accomplished partly by the coming of Christ, but it still has to be consummated.

Ephesians 1:10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

I Corinthians 15:28 Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

Now let us end Daniel 9 with these two conclusions. First, God has a time table in world history and He is working careful according to that plan. This does not mean that we are always able to understand His time table or see His plan except in general terms, but we know that He is unfolding His time table and that one day Jesus Christ will come again, and all who are in rebellion against Him and His Kingdom will be judged.

Second, although God works according to His own time table without deviation, He nevertheless also works through people. That is what we saw when we consider Daniel's prayer of confession, which he prayed in light of God's word that the captivity of the people would last only three more years.

This is another way of saying what we do for God and in obedience to Him counts. We may not see how it counts right away. When we witness to someone and that person believes in Jesus Christ, we may not see that person ever again; even if we do, we can never know the full extent of what God is accomplishing through our obedience, but we can know that God is doing what He wants to do and His will will be done.

Daniel 9, puts the new covenant in a new context.

Daniel 9:26-27 “And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined. Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.”

Daniel 9:25-27 is written in a poetic, nonlinear style, which for today's readers causes many to misinterpret these verses and wrongly conclude that the antichrist will make peace with many or with the Jews for seven years. This misinterpretation results because the descriptions of the Messiah and the beast are interwoven in verses 26-27.

The Messiah is described in the first half of verse 26-27, while 'the prince who is to come,' the image known as the beast and also the vial person, the little horn, is described in the second half of the same verses. The Messiah mentioned in the first half of verse 27 is prophesied to confirm a covenant with many for one week.

In verse 27, the word many is not quite complete. Its literal 'the many' is speaking of a specific group; whenever it is used in the Old Testament, it refers to either the covenant people—Israel or to the saints. Jesus says in Matthew 26:28

Matthew 26:28 For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

This covenant is the one called the new eternal or perpetual covenant by the New Testament writers. Confirm means strengthen or make firm. This helps confirm that this reference is to the new covenant, which is an everlasting covenant that fortified the fundamental requirements of the old covenant.

This covenant profoundly changes the lives of those making it. Under its terms of conditions, we receive the forgiveness of sins, the Holy Spirit is imparted to us, and we are able to internalize God's laws. We are granted eternal life.

The total overthrow of opposition had been pronounced by Gabriel in Daniel chapter 9, but that could hardly be the final message. We would expect there to be far more positive assurance for God's people, and this is given in the longest and most detailed vision in the book.

Like the previous revelation, it is prefaced by self-discipline and fasting on Daniel's part. The longest prophesy in the Bible is Daniel 11. The 10th chapter is the prelude, and chapter 12 is the completion.

Daniel 10:1-4 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message was

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true, but the appointed time was long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision. In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. 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. Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that is, the Tigris.

The visions of the book of Daniel tend to increase in length and complexity as they unfold, or to put it another way, later visions expand the earlier ones. This feature is more evident as we come to the last three chapters. They form a unit, the longest unit in the entire book, and they contain a vision; up to this point the visions have been handled in one chapter each, now there is a lengthy vision presented in chapter 11, which is prefaced by chapter 10 and a post script in chapter 12 is added.

Chapter 10 tells how the vision came to Daniel. Daniel had been mourning for the trials God had shown were to come upon His people, and he had sought assurance from God that they would not be destroyed by especially intense persecution that the last part of the preceding vision describes. In fact, he may have been troubled by even more immediately concerns.

The third year of the reign of Cyrus in Babylon would have been the year 536 B.C., just a few years before Daniel's death. Now this places the vision one or two years after the first group of exiles had returned under Zerubbabel, the Persian appointed governor of Judah, and Joshua the High priest.

Now they arrived in the summer of 536 B.C. By the autumn, they had cleared the temple area and resumed the daily sacrifices, and by the following spring had laid the foundation of the temple. But then the works stopped. Daniel may have heard of the cessation of the work and been alarmed by it. It stopped for fifteen years, until God sent Haggai, one of the minor prophets, to instruct the remnant to resume the work, which they did.

Now chapter 10 gives insight into Daniel's concern for his people and for the work being done so far away in Jerusalem. It contains additional important lessons about prayer as well. Chapter 10 opens the door on spiritual warfare that we know from other passages is being waged around the work of God. The chapter begins by saying that the message Daniel received concerned a great war, described in chapter 11. But before this earthly war is described, we are given a glimpse of a greater earlier war going on in heaven.

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The story recounts how, on the 24st day in the first month (Nisan) of the year, just 10 days after the Passover, after Daniel had been mourning and praying for three weeks and as he stood on the bank of the Tigris river, he suddenly saw an angel.

It says here that he was mourning and praying and did not eat certain foods during that time, but we know that during the days of Unleavened Bread, we are to eat Unleavened bread every day. One of the comments that Daniel makes about what he was doing leaves the door open for him having to continue to eat unleavened bread during the days of unleavened bread, because he said he did not eat pleasant food. It is just a speculation, but since he was not eating and drinking during that time, he must have taken the wine at Passover and also eaten unleavened bread.

Angels are not usually described in much detail in scripture, but this angel is described in verse 5-6. Daniel 10:5-6

Daniel 10:5-6 I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz! 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.

Obviously, this is not a man, he just looks like a man. The Bible does not name who it is, but he is undoubtedly an angelic creature, most likely Gabriel the archangel. This angel has a dazzling glorious body, blazing eyes, and a booming voice. If this angel is this glorious, what extraordinary glory our God must have above and beyond that.

Daniel 10:7 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.

The others did not see anything, but the hair rose on the back of their necks and they felt cold chills all over. They did not know why, all of a sudden, something of tremendous power was near them.

Job 32:8 But there is a spirit in man, And the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding.

Maybe the spirit in man within them was aware that something powerful was nearby and that feeling made them want to get out of there as quickly as possible. So that picture is terrifying, but somewhat humorous because they were probably falling all over themselves to desperately flee what was going on. They could not see, but they certainly feel or sense the presence of the angel.

Daniel 10:8-9 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. 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.

This figure was so overpowering that Daniel's strength faded away and fell to the ground as if he were in a deep sleep. He probably passed out and even when the angel came to him, touched him and raised him up, he still stood trembling.

Daniel 10:10-12 Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands. 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. 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. [answered prayer]

We see here two major requirements for answered prayer: 1) set your mind to understand what God has to reveal to you, and 2) humility. That is not all there is, but those are two major qualities we should have when we pray.

This awesome being of power was so great that normally courageous men were so frightened they high-tailed it out of there. Nonetheless something contended with this great being face to face and kept him from getting to Daniel for three full weeks. How can we possibly imagine the enormous supernatural struggle that went on between Gabriel and this other being? We just cannot picture such a robust combative wrestling match at that level. Whatever it was, that withheld the angel Gabriel from reaching Daniel must have been of tremendously powerful might. What is amazing too is that this great struggle was going on without Daniel even being aware of it. Somehow a malicious demon tried to thwart Daniel's prayer from being answered, but it was

answered.

Daniel 10:13 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.

Jude 9 Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

It was not until two of them ganged up on this other being that the two great and mighty archangels were able to subdue the other. It is obvious that the king of Persia mentioned here was none other than Satan. So there is Gabriel and Michael, two archangels fighting with Satan, who took one third of the angels with him when he rebelled against God.

Now this section of Daniel 10 really contains a great deal of encouragement. We can understand why the apostle Paul and the psalmist wrote that the angels were ministering spirits. They minister to the heirs of salvation—that is you and me, the converted, baptized and who have God's Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? [speaking of the angels]

Psalms 35:4-7 Let those be put to shame and brought to dishonor Who seek after my life; [this is the psalmist speaking here] Let those be turned back and brought to confusion Who plot my hurt. Let them be like chaff before the wind, And let the angel of the Lord chase them. Let their way be dark and slippery, And let the angel of the Lord pursue them. For without cause they have hidden their net for me in a pit, Which they have dug without cause for my life.

They (angels) protect us and stand between us and possibly extermination from Satan and his demons; that is encouraging. We are not aware of how many times an angel intervened on our behalf to save our lives, to deflect the power of these malicious, evil, and fallen spirit beings from us. God protects His elect saints continually and consistently, not just in dramatic interventions, but even in situations when we are not

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even aware that they are taking place.

Sometimes God allows some of Satan and his demon's darts to reach us for our own spiritual growth. Not many of them get through if we have the armor of God. Nothing happens to us unless God allows it.

Daniel 10:14 Now I [Gabriel] 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.”

Now remember that Gabriel was commissioned to do the same thing that he did in chapter 8.

Daniel 8:16 And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, “Gabriel, make this man understand the vision.”

So he was commissioned at that time as well to help Daniel understand the vision. So this was an ongoing thing here. Gabriel was also commissioned to tell Zechariah that his wife Elizabeth was going to have a son, John the Baptist.

Luke 1:19 And the angel answered and said to him [that is Zechariah], “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings.

So Gabriel has had very personal contact and interaction with God's people. It is very encouraging to know that God takes such personal interest in us, sometimes through His angels and even sometimes through His arch angels.

Getting back to Daniel, is it not remarkable that when Daniel prayed God sent His powerful heavenly being to bring him the vision of the future which we find in the next chapter? The prince of the Persian kingdom (who we must understand to be an evil but correspondingly powerful spirit, not a mere ruler) resisted at him, so that for three weeks he was unable to come to Daniel.

This great struggle required the special intervention of Michael, the archangel, to resolve it, as I mentioned earlier. And when Michael was sent the battle between these good and evil spirits tipped in direction of the Spirit messenger Gabriel, and he arrived

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at last to give Daniel God's message. Good always and ultimately triumphs over evil.

This is a remarkable glimpse into the battles that are being waged in heaven, although it is different from anything we find elsewhere in the word of God; it nevertheless fits what we are taught about spiritual warfare.

The first two chapters of job are one example of this teaching. These chapters do not speak of outright warfare or struggle, but they show a scene in heaven in which Satan and his angel appear before the throne of God and in which God answers Satan about his righteous servant Job.

Job 1:8-10 Then the Lord said to [in the original it is “the Satan.” Just keep in mind that it is talking about a specific being] Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?” So Satan answered the Lord and said, “Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.

Satan replies that Job fears God only because God has blessed and protected him and challenges God to take away his possessions predicting that Job will then curse God to His face. God gives His permission, but Job does not curse God as we know. Even after Satan is given permission to take away his property and possessions and health and all that he has, Jobs still does not sin; and as if that was not enough, we read in Job 2:9-10

Job 2:9-10 Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!” [that has to be the absolute worst advice anybody has ever given in the history of the Bible and of man] But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

He does not charge God with any wrong doing. All of us can take away from them how we must face our trials. He did not sin with his lips.

Now in I Kings 22:21 we have another insight into the spiritual warfare that surrounds us and the work God does through His people. This chapter contains the story of Micaiah, a true prophet of the Lord and four hundred false prophets of King Ahab. You may

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remember that I used Micaiah and King Ahab as an example in my last sermon on Daniel 8, but this is a different aspect pulled from a later part of that story.

Micaiah told Ahab that he had seen the host of heaven standing around God's throne, suggesting how Ahab might be lured into attacking Ramoth Gilead and meeting his death there.

I Kings 22:21-23 Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord, and said, 'I will persuade him.' [keep in mind that this is an evil spirit here] The Lord said to him, 'In what way?' So he said, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And the Lord said, 'You shall persuade him, and also prevail. Go out and do so.' Therefore look! The Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours, and the Lord has declared disaster against you."

God had apparently permitted or allowed a lying spirit, that is a demon, to speak through the four hundred prophets as a means to bring about Ahab's death. Though God Himself does not do evil, He sometimes uses evil agents to accomplish His purposes by allowing them to do what they normally do. He did not tell them to go lie; He just did not restrain them.

Now in the next to the last book of the minor prophets, there is an even more powerful scene. Zechariah the prophet sees the high Priest Joshua; this is the same one who Zerubbabel, the governor, led the fifty thousand Jews back to Jerusalem just a year or two before this vision in Daniel.

Joshua is standing before God's altar and Satan is there to accuse him. Joshua is clothed in filthy clothes symbolic of his and the nations sin and Satan is no doubt pointing to the filthy garments asking what right a man so morally deficient has to minister before God in His temple. But God rebukes Satan.

Zechariah 3:4-7 Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, "Take away the filthy garments from him. [Joshua]" And to him He said, "See, I [Jesus Christ] have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes." [Now in place of these he is given rich garments and a clean turban symbolic of the righteousness of God imputed to him.] And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the Lord stood by. Then the Angel of the Lord admonished Joshua, saying,

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“Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘If you will walk in My ways, And if you will keep My command, Then you shall also judge My house, And likewise have charge of My courts; I will give you places to walk among these who stand here.

So Joshua is accused of being sinful by Satan, and God gave Joshua conditionally, as only God could, if he would obey and submit to God from then on. Repentance was required on Joshua's part and obedience and overcoming was to follow as his continued responsibility, therefore Satan's accusation was made null and void.

In Revelation 12 there is another scene that has bearing on this spiritual warfare. An actual battle is described involving the same arch angel Michael.

Revelation 12:7-11 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. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

Michael is the spiritual prince and guardian of God's people. Jude 9 identified Michael as the arch angel attributing to him words that echo the angel of the Lord's answer to Satan, the accuser, in Zechariah 3:2.

So Michael's battle with the dragon probably marks the time of trouble mentioned in Daniel 12:1, which is also the great tribulation. The passage in Revelation 12:7-11 is the closest descriptive parallel in scripture to the heavenly messengers struggle to reach Daniel recorded in Daniel 10.

The key passage to all these biblical references to spiritual warfare is the concluding portion of Ephesians in which the apostle Paul encourages Christians to arm themselves with the armor of God and stand against Satan's power. We are to play our part in these battles and this proves it.

Ephesians 6:10-18 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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. 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. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

That is a lot of work and no human being can do all that without God's Holy spirit empowering him. It is a lot of power to be given to human beings as well to be able to resist the powerful Satan. According to these verses, the kind of spiritual warfare we see in Daniel affects every Christian.

We are not told much about the spiritual world in the Bible. These passages are only glimpses into the unseen world around us, but we are told what we need to know about the activities of the angel and what to do about it.

The good or righteous angels, are mentioned in the Old Testament over 100 times and in the New Testament more than 160 times. We are told that they are God's messengers and this is what the word Angel means: messenger. They are immortal. They do not die though; they are created beings; and therefore they have not eternally existed. They exist in vast numbers. The book of Revelation speaks of thousands upon thousands of them.

They possess the elements of personality because they render intellectual worship to God. Some of these qualities are indicated by the terms used to describe them in scripture. They are called the heavenly hosts in Luke 2:13. They are called powers and authorities in Ephesian 1:2 and Colossians 1:16.

Alongside these good angels are also a vast host of bad angels who fell with Satan at the time of his original rebellion against God. They are bent on opposing God's rule and doing His people harm. The Bible describes these fallen angels as a terrifying force, not

to induce terror in us, but rather to warn us that that we might draw close to God for protection.

The number of these great hosts can be gauged from the fact that Mary Magdalene alone is said to have been delivered from seven of them and the many called themselves Legion that possessed the man that Christ encountered in the territory of the Gerasenes. Luke 8:27-33 is the written account of this.

Luke 8:27-33 And when He [Jesus] stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!" For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness. Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him. And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss. Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them. Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned.

So I ask you what is God's purpose in telling us of this host of evil spirits? We have been forewarned that an enemy relentlessly threatens us, an enemy who is the very embodiment of rash boldness and military prowess and of crafty wiles, of untiring zeal and swiftness, of every conceivable weapon and of skill in the science of warfare. It is impossible for any human being to fight this on their own. We must have God's Holy spirit and we must have the armor of God.

We must be aware of this dangerous adversary and make every effort to resist his distractions and temptations; and let us not be overwhelmed by carelessness or fainthearted, but with courage let us stand steadfast in the spiritual combat. It is a combat, a battle, and a war.

At the head of these fallen angels is Satan, whom the Bible describes as a powerful foe, and there are many jokes about the devil—some possibly inspired by the devil himself to make us think lightly of him and thus lower our guard. But Satan is no lightweight; he

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is evil, real, and personal. When we talk about Satan being evil, real, and personal, we must not over-exaggerate the case because he is a spiritual rather than a material being. Many people in the world who believe he exists are inclined to think of Satan more or less as equal to God, but that is not the case.

It is true that he is a counterpart of the greatest of the good angels, like Michael and Gabriel, but he is not a spiritual counterpart of God. God is God, and every other being, other than the Son of God, has been created by God and is therefore limited for the simple reason that he or she has been created by God.

God is omnipotent, He is all powerful and Satan is not. God can do anything He wishes to do. Satan, like the rest of us, can only do what God permits him to do. This is God's universe not Satan's, not even the grave is Satan's. God created the abyss where He will one day confine Satan and his followers. God is omnipresent, His spirit is everywhere at once. Listen to what David says here in Psalm 139:7-10

Psalm 139:7-10 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me.

This cannot be said of Satan. He can only be in one place at a time. Consequently, he must tempt one person in one place at one time or he must extend his influence to one of the other fallen angels who fell and followed him.

The result is that although Satan's influence is widespread, concerning the seven billion people on earth, few people have been directly targeted by or tempted by Satan himself. In fact, in all the Bible, we know of only six human beings who were tempted by Satan himself. Eve, but not Adam; Job; Jesus Christ; Judas; Peter; Ananias, but not his wife Sapphira. I will add here the beast and the false prophet probably as well. No doubt there have been many others, but these are the only ones that the Bible tells us of specifically.

God is omniscient, He knows everything, and this is untrue of Satan. Satan does not know everything. He does know a great deal, and he is undoubtedly a shrewd guesser, but the ways of God must constantly surprise him and he has no more certainty about what is going to happen in the future than we have.

We will go back to Daniel 10 to see how Daniel is told to handle the stress of the situation. Daniel had been wakened at the appearance of the messenger and now he was also overwhelmed and speechless at learning of the angelic- demonic conflict that delayed the answer to his prayer.

Furthermore, he was overcome with anguish at the content of the vision of Israel's coming sufferings and he was left totally debilitated and gasping for breath. To meet the prophet's need, the angel first quieted the alarm in Daniel's heart. He said, "do not be afraid..." such a simple statement, but something that carried a lot of influence and encouragement. Then the angel strengthened him physically and emotionally. Daniel was then ready to receive the details of the message and we find this in verses 15-19.

Daniel 10:15-19 When he had spoken such words to me, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. 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. 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." Then again, the one having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me. And he said, "O man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace be to you; be strong, yes, be strong!" [He is talking both physically and spiritually here.] So when he spoke to me I was strengthened, and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."

In addressing the angelic messenger as "My Lord" in verses 16 and 19, Daniel was using a title of respect, something like the modern day "sir." This says a lot about Daniel—that he was respectful to God's messenger calling him sir. He did his best to show his respect for God and God's Kingdom.

Verse 19 contains words of encouragement, similar to what we would say to those who are timid and fearful. We would urge them not to yield, to make a victorious effort, to meet the danger and the difficult, and the trial... we would encourage them much the same way the angel did.

God guarantees that His people will be given the strength they need when they need it, always at the appropriate time.

Daniel 11:32 Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt

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with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.

Those who adhere to the service and true worship of the true God in spirit and in truth and who are incapable of being seduced to apostasy and sin will be made strong, and they will be spiritually strong by exhibiting great valor and showing great energy in opposing the beast and false prophet.

The word 'exploits' is supplied by the translators but not improperly. The meaning is that they would show great prowess and perform lustrous deeds in this spiritual battle. It requires great faith as the heroes of faith of Hebrews 11 showed.

The Angel declared that he would return to the fray against the prince of Persia and after that against the prince of Greece, the spiritual counterpart of the next world power to arise. This information is in preparation for the revelations in chapter 11.

Daniel 10:20-21 Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia [that is Satan]; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come. But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince. [It is a parenthetical phrase so we have to go into chapter 11:1 to finish it])

Daniel 11:21 Also in the first year of Darius the Mede, I, even I, stood up to confirm and strengthen him.)

The Bible clearly establishes that there is an angelic host, whom responsibilities and authority have been delegated by God. Gabriel came because of Daniel's appeal; he responded to Daniel's prayer. He came to Daniel's aid, but he was delayed from arriving immediately because he met resistance from another great being—the evil one, Satan.

Eventually he had to receive help from a third being named Michael identified as "your prince," and this is Israel's prince, the arch angel responsible for keeping tabs on and under God's authority, protecting the children of Israel.

This is a great encouragement to us because it shows that if it is necessary God will care for us individually even by using Israel's guardian arch angel to intervene on behalf

of one faithful individual.

We have seen an angelic being whose God given responsibility is for Israel as a whole or one individual if necessary. This carries over to us spiritually as the church, as the elect saints, as the spiritual Israel, which includes all who are baptize who have put on Christ.

Galatians 3:27-29 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

That tells us right there that we are, as God's church, spiritual Israel. We know that Satan is a great and powerful foe as I have shown, yet we are not to cower before him, but are steadfastly to resist him in the strength and armor of God.

James 4:7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

That is a guarantee. Moreover, we are to stand boldly knowing that in spite of the opposition of Satan and his hosts, in the final assessment, it will be seen that the word of God and the Kingdom of God have prevailed.

Daniel only saw the earthly scene, as we do, and his mind was troubled; but God showed that He is in control of history. He showed Daniel how it would all turn out and Daniel was strengthened by that knowledge. So must we be as we stand for God the Father and Jesus Christ. We must fight on and look for His coming, not haphazardly or apolitically, but with diligence. "Peace to you; Be strong, yes be strong"