

GOING WITH GOD

Sermon Ten

A GLIMPSE OF GOD AT WORK

Daniel 10

As our exciting journey with this man Daniel starts to draw to a close, we now encounter Daniel as an old man at the age of eighty five. He had come into exile in Babylon at the age of fifteen and in the ensuing seventy years he had seen God work and move in amazing ways. God had revealed both Himself as well as his prophecies to him in ways few men had experienced. In his old age however, God was still not finished with Daniel and in chapter ten, he gives to Daniel just a small glimpse of God at work to encourage him in his old age. There are just three pictures that I would like to highlight in this passage which will hopefully encourage us that God is still at work and is in fact winning the battle.

1. AN ANGUISHED PROPHET vs's 1-3

The first picture we have is of an anguished prophet. For three weeks Daniel had fasted and prayed and sought the face of God continually. What had caused Daniel to become so disturbed? The previous year King Cyrus had allowed the first fifty thousand exiles to leave Babylon and return to Jerusalem to rebuild the city as well as the temple. Daniel had gotten word that they had arrived and had begun rebuilding the temple. However he had just heard that the rebuilding of the temple had been resisted and finally stopped recorded for us in Ezra 4. He knew his people were suffering hardship in the ruined city of Jerusalem and wondered if God would keep his promises made to Jeremiah. You can understand Daniel's frustration. After seventy years in exile, in which God dealt severely with his people, they return to their beloved Jerusalem

only to have their efforts frustrated and their suffering continue. So near but so far!

There was a second reason why Daniel had fasted and prayed. He longed to understand more about the visions and prophecies God had given to him and the future of Israel. Daniel knew he did not have many years left and he longed to reveal to his people all that God had in store for them to encourage and strengthen them. God laid a burden on Daniel's heart and because he prayed and fasted we have the privilege today of reading this book with all of God's revelations and what a blessing it has been!

What a picture of the prophets heart, not concerned for himself but for his people in Jerusalem and those who would follow him. His heart moves the heart of God who reveals himself to Daniel to encourage this old man in his faith.

2. AN AWESOME PICTURE vs's 4-9,

God's heart is once again moved by the humility of this man Daniel and he gives to him an amazing picture or vision for his encouragement.

The first vision in verses 4-9 is in all likelihood a vision of the pre-incarnate Christ in all his glory. The description of the glorious man resembles the description of the glorified Christ given in Rev 1:12-16 and John responded to this vision in the same way Daniel did by falling on his face.

Why would the Son of God appear to Daniel at this time?

Throughout the Scriptures you find the Lord Jesus appearing at significant moments in time to deliver a special message. He would appear in different forms depending on the person and the circumstances. To Abraham the pilgrim, Jesus came as a traveller in Gen 18, to Jacob the schemer, He came as a wrestler, Gen 32. Before Joshua attacked the Jericho Jesus came as the

Captain of the Lord's armies, Josh 5: 13-15 and to Isaiah he revealed himself as the King on the throne, Isa 6. To the two Jewish exiles however, Daniel in Babylon and the Apostle John on the island of Patmos, Jesus appears as the glorified King- Priest. At the end of his life as an encouragement Daniel is given a picture of the glorious King of Kings and Lord of Lords. It is not surprising that Daniel only had this vision of Jesus later in his life after years of faithful ministry. Matt 5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God". It costs to see God in this way.

3. AN ALMIGHTY POWERSTRUGGLE vs's 10-21

As if it were not enough for God to give him a glimpse of his greatness and glory, God now gives to Daniel a picture of an almighty battle that is raging in the heavenlies, a

battle that the angels of God are winning and hence a picture of great encouragement.

In the passage we are given the impression that the glorious Christ disappears of the scene and Daniel is now joined by an angel, probably Gabriel and is helped to his feet in verse 10. Gabriel then reveals to Daniel the almighty powerstruggle that is raging in the heavenlies between the forces of evil and the forces of God. For three weeks Daniel had been praying for wisdom to understand the visions he had already seen, but no answer seemed to be coming. Why did God not immediately answer the prayers of his beloved disciple and put him out of his misery? Gabriel gives the answer. The prince of the kingdom of Persia, and evil angel had attacked Gabriel the angel who was bringing the answer to Daniel. Michael the archangel comes to Gabriel's assistance and together they defeat this evil angel. Therefore it is only now that Gabriel

can bring the answers Daniel was seeking. What an amazing insight into the spiritual battle that rages all around us and how there are warring and ministering angels that minister to us. Here I am reminded of the words of the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 6:12, ‘
“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms”. For most of our lives we live blissfully unaware of the battle that rages around us. When our prayers are not immediately answered, when we suffer trial and difficulties, maybe we need to remind ourselves of the battle raging and that we are effected by this. At the same time we need to praise God for his warring and ministering angels that he sends to serve us. How Daniel must have been so encouraged when he received this amazing insight into what had prevented him

from receiving the understanding that he sought. Praise God that he is on the throne and that by the blood of Jesus the forces of evil have been defeated and that the ultimate victory has already been won! The delay in rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple were again as a consequence of the evil forces behind the local rulers of the area. What can we do in this battle? We need to pray for when we do God releases his forces into the battle. In 2 Kings 6 we are given a wonderful picture of this. The prophet Elisha is with his servant and they have been surrounded by an enemy army that is bent on killing them. In desperation Elisha’s servant asks him what they are going to do. From verse 16 Elisha responds to his servant,
“Don’t be afraid, the prophet answered. Those who are with us are more than those who are with them. And Elisha prayed O Lord open his eyes so that he may see. Then the Lord opened the servant’s eyes, and he looked

and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. As the enemy came down towards him, Elisha prayed to the Lord, Strike these people with blindness. So he struck them with blindness as Elisha had asked”.

The amazing truth of this story is that the forces of heaven are at our disposal and are activated and released through the prayer of the saints.

This is available to each one of us. What an encouragement this should be to us! We need to take note that the battle rages on. As soon as Gabriel had finished instructing Daniel he left to join Michael in fighting the princes of Persia and Greece.

Prayer is the key to spiritual battle. Paul highlights this in 2 Cor 10:4-5,

“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to

demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought and make it obedient to Christ”. What power is available to those who pray!

CONCLUSION

And so in this amazing chapter God gives to Daniel and to us just a small glimpse at how he is at work. We have been encouraged that he sees and knows our hearts of anguish and that he responds to hearts of humility. We have been encouraged by the glorious picture of Jesus that reminds us of his greatness and majesty. Finally, we have been reminded of the spiritual battle that rages around us and that we have warring ministering angels who fight the battle on our behalf. We have been reminded of the awesome power that is available through prayer. What an

encouragement to an old man like Daniel at the end of his
life and what an encouragement o you and me!