

Daniel 10 - John Karmelich

Let me open with an old biblical belief: "In the game of life, people are both the pawns and the prizes". In effect that's the focus of the unseen world that is just as real as the world we live in. In this chapter, Daniel gives us a glimpse into that world! He was praying then an angel shows up to give him a vision that is the focus of the next three chapters. That angel told Daniel he was delayed for 21 days because the (demonic) prince of Persia delayed him. When Daniel got that vision he was a top official working in the Persian Empire. (Think Iran). That empire ruled over a vast territory. The point is they (Persia) had a demonic angelic leader who was in charge of a demonic army that fought God's will. The Persian "bad guy" had the power to delay the good angel God dispatched to answer Daniel's prayer. That good angel's visit to Daniel is the topic of Chapters 10-12. Chapter 10 is the "introduction". Chapters 11-12 explain the vision itself and that's the topic of the next lesson.

As I was studying this passage, what I kept pondering was, "What do spiritual battles look like?" What kind of weapons do angels and demons have? Can they kill each other? Is there a new group of angels and demons if they die? Is it even possible to kill them? We don't know. The bible doesn't give us the specifics of how angelic warfare works, just that it's real and it goes on all around us! All I do know is what I wrote to begin with, "In the game of life, people are both the pawns and the prizes". Think of it this way: Satan knows he has a limited but unspecified time left on earth. Heaven will have a specific but unknown number of people. Therefore the longer Satan can delay the last believer to commit their lives to believing Jesus died for all their sins, the longer Satan can rule over the earth. So however long this spiritual warfare works, people are both the prizes and pawns in that spiritual battle.

OK John, that's strange and I suppose I believe that's true. What do we do about it besides being aware of it? For starters, God calls us to get involved in that spiritual warfare. No, it's not to root for the good guys! A line from the Lord's Prayer is to "lead us not into temptation". Paul told us how we're to fight in that battle in Ephesians Chapter 6. He states what our weapons are in this battle! Those weapons are symbolic for trusting God for His protection and it includes staying active in studying His word. While we can't ever have a complete victory over sin in this lifetime, we can be led to do right or wrong since we (people) both the pawns and prizes of spiritual warfare. My point is Daniel effectively is reminding us that this war exists! We get involved by praying regularly for God to guide our lives and we need to make an effort to do His will. His will is to believe Jesus is God and He guides our lives for His glory.

With that understood, time for the details on this chapter. The last chapter was a vision given to Daniel in the first year the Persian king ruled over that empire (they defeated the Babylonians). In this chapter, it is now two years later. Daniel is an "old man" living in that kingdom and probably retired from what he did (a government leader). This was after the Israelites were allowed to return to their land. Realize only a small number of Israelites went back (less than 50,000 as stated in Ezra and Nehemiah). Daniel didn't go back and scholars speculate he was too old to travel. Others believe he stayed to witness to all the Jewish people who didn't go back. Either way, he records his final vision near the end of his life in the City of Babylon. (Just like God gave the apostle John "Revelation" near the end of his long life).

After stating when this was written (536BC) and that many people living there then knew who he is by his given name (Belteshazzar, given to him by the Babylonians) he then stated that the vision he got in the next two chapters was true and correct as it's written in this book! Before I go further, if this vision describes a lot of death and destruction of God's people, why didn't God prevent it? In effect it's asking why does God allow evil to exist? One of the reasons is God allows free will to show how corrupt we are without His guidance as well as the influence of sin in this world. Of course a lot of horrible things

occur in this world. If there was no eternity, this world would be a very unfair place to exist. I need to state all of this because the this lesson and the rest of Daniel deals with a lot of horrible things that will occur after Daniel's time over the next four centuries as well as a lot of end time horrible stuff.

With that statement out of my system, let's get back to Daniel. The text says he fasted for three weeks. A fast can be no food for a period of time or it could be a deprivation of a type of food. A biblical fast is to deprive oneself of something one enjoys or needs to commit more time to God and remind us just how serious we should be about our prayer life! For Daniel to do a 21 day fast when he did meant that he had to avoided the Passover celebration that year. Bottom line is he ate a vegan diet during that time and avoided anything pleasurable to eat as to show his commitment to serving God.

When that time frame ended, he gets a heavenly vision. He sees a vision of a man who looks like what Jesus looked like in Revelation 1 (Verses 13-16). It's considered a classic debate if Daniel saw an angel that reflected what God looked like or Jesus Himself. I take the view that God Himself can't be delayed for a 21 day period, because well, He's God! Others argue differently, but I take the view that the angel that spoke to Daniel was different than was Jesus in a pre-incarnate state. My view is Daniel saw God in this vision, but there was also an angel there who actually spoke to Daniel!

After a handful of verses describing what he saw, Daniel said the people with him didn't see it but they were afraid and left the scene. Daniel himself almost past out from seeing this! The text says an angel touched him and strengthened him. That angel explained to Daniel that God heard his prayer on Day 1 and it took that angel 21 days to get there due to "Spiritual Resistance". It leads back to the questions I pondered to start this lesson: Remember Daniel lived in the 6th Century BC. Yet the text here tells us that after this angel finished talking to Daniel he had to deal with the Top Demon (my title) for Persia, (the empire that Daniel was in). Then that same good angel has to go fight the top demon for Greece. (The empire that ruled that part of the world two centuries later.) It implies every nation or place has a top demon and a good angel in charge of their troops. It shows us spiritual warfare is organized and it has ranks of good and bad angels. Chapter 10 effectively ends on that point and Chapter 11 begins the vision itself that incorporates the final two chapters of the book of Daniel.

OK I'm the first to admit, this is weird stuff. Most of us accept that there are good and bad angels in the world we can't see. None of us understand how the battles actually occur. All we can see in history as well as our lives is the results of this ongoing battle. Yes, God calls us to get involved by which we do when we pray for His guidance. "He (God) who is in us in greater than he (Satan) who is in the world" (1st John 1:5). If there's a conclusion to all of this, realize when things get tough, the answers come by "being on our knees" so to speak. As most of us watch problems in our world that we think can't come to a positive end, we need to remember that God is in the "miracle business" and His job is to guide us for His glory!

If interested, there are two other links on this chapter. They are for a more detailed lesson that I wrote about 20 years ago. Of course, you're welcome to read that if you'd like. Either way, I'm grateful that you did read this! If you're new here, realize you're always welcome to e-mail me. Thanks again, John