

## Sermon – 02/12/2007 pm

### Daniel's Divine Visitation

Study Text: Daniel 10:1–21

Daniel was a man of prayer. In the first year of Darius he prayed earnestly for the people of God who were in exile. He fasted and confessed his sin and the sin of the people. While doing so the angel flew to his side with an answer to his prayer. He came to reveal to Daniel God's plans for the future of his people and his kingdom.

#### Daniel

Daniel was still seeking the face of God two years later – the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia. He was fasting once again and not eating any fancy food like meat or wine. He was not *anointing himself* (10:2) which probably means not shaving or even washing. He says he was mourning for three whole weeks.

Why was Daniel mourning? His prayer for the exiles and for the holy city had been answered. In his first year (538BC) Cyrus decreed that Jerusalem and the temple be rebuilt (Ezra 1). Zerubbabel led a contingent back to Judah and Jerusalem. Worship was restored and rebuilding commenced. But in the second year opposition arose and the king, probably the son of Cyrus acting as regent, ordered the work to stop. If such news reached Daniel he would have had good reason to mourn and pray.

It may be asked why Daniel was still in Babylon and not back in Jerusalem. He was over 80 years old at this time, and so left the work of rebuilding to younger men. Moreover, what these rebuilders need most was someone who would engage in the hidden but strategic work of prayer for the defence and advance of the kingdom of God.

Remember how Moses prayed for Joshua and his troops as they fought the Amalekites (Exodus 17:8f). Aaron and Hur had to hold up the hands of Moses for it was when his hands were held up in prayer that victory came. The work of prayer is just as important as being on the frontline. The work of rebuilding the temple required ongoing prayer for opposition would be ongoing.

Is it not the same in the church today? The other day a minister spoke of the great unity that was in his congregation. But in such a situation he feared an attack of Satan. There is no place for complacency and indeed no time for rest if the kingdom of God is to advance. At student camps we attended prayer was offered up around the clock. Our society wants to have shops and pubs and gambling houses open 24/7. Will the church meet the challenge with prayer 24/7?

Praise God for faithful prayer warriors in the church today. Such people may be unknown to us, but they are well known to God. When we were on the mission field, one old invalid lady always prayed for us. We never got to meet her but the Lord heard her prayers. One Bible commentator writes that it is often Danielle's rather than Daniels who are most faithful in prayer for the church of God in the local area and worldwide.

Daniel was by the river, maybe a place of prayer during the exile, when he looked up and saw something awesome. John was worshipping on the Lord's Day when he had a similar vision. We will come to the actual vision shortly but notice the response of Daniel. See how many times he says he *has no strength* (4x) or that he *trembled*. Daniel fell on his face trembling when he saw this great vision (10:8). He was speechless until 'one like the son of men' touched his lips (10:16). This one sought to comfort and strengthen Daniel, for he had important news for him – news he wanted Daniel to understand.

Seeking the face of God in prayer is not something we take lightly. The great and awesome God is on the throne. His glory is dazzling, indeed blinding. His presence caused Ezekiel and others to go dumb for a time. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist was dumb after being in the presence of the Lord. Daniel, like these other men of God, realised the depths of his human frailty when in the presence of the Lord (10:8). The apostle Paul had a 'thorn in the flesh' which always reminded him of the Lord's words, *my grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness* (II Corinthians 12:9).

## Divine Visitor

Now we will turn to focus on the man Daniel saw in his vision. He saw a man dressed in linen with a belt of gold (10:5). Linen was the dress of priests (Exodus 28:42). The priests were the ones who offered sacrifices in the temple to make atonement for sin. It was around the time to the Passover that Daniel had this vision. Daniel saw the true *High Priest who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens* (Hebrews 8:1).

With the gold belt around his waist this man was like the vision of John in Revelation 1. The parallel goes further with 'eyes like fire' and 'feet and arms of bronze'. In trying to describe this glorious man Daniel said his face was like lightning. Great brilliance and power are associated with lightning. The 'one like the son of man' who John saw was the risen Jesus. Daniel saw the same Lord Jesus. This is a Christophany, an appearance of Jesus before his incarnation.

Only Daniel was fit and ready to receive this vision. Those with him by the river, like the companions of Paul on the Damascus Road, heard the sound but saw nothing (Acts 9:7). They fled in fear. Daniel was left alone, prostrate and trembling before this glorious man.

This glorious man touched Daniel and addressed him as the *man greatly beloved* (10:11). This is what Gabriel said to him in the previous chapter (9:23) and also what the 'one like the son of men' said later in this chapter (10:19). However this does not mean this glorious man was Gabriel. Neither does it mean the 'one like the son of men' was Gabriel. As we have seen Jesus is called 'one like the son of man' in Revelation. The title comes from Daniel 7:13.

This glorious man later touched Daniels lips and enabling him to speak. His words and his touch strengthened Daniel. He was in the presence of God and was about to given a message for the people of God and for the world – a message about the future. *The vision refers to many days yet to come* (10:14). Daniel would have the solemn privilege and responsibility to convey God's word to his people and to the world.

*Do you know why I have come to you* the glorious man asked Daniel (10:20). Daniel would have been asking the same question – 'what is this vision all about?' This was not simply a wonderful ecstatic experience to make him feel good. This was a visitation from heaven to

convey truth. *I will tell you what is noted in the scripture of truth* (10:21). In other words Jesus would tell Daniel what was 'written' in God's diary, a diary which contained not only past events but also future events for this world, and especially for the people or the church of God. This is the content of the closing chapters of Daniel.

## Devil

Daniel was mourning for three months. Why the delay in getting an answer to his prayer? Daniel was told the reason in a verse that is one of the most mysterious in the whole Bible (10:13). Who could have hindered the Lord Jesus in his coming? *The prince of the kingdom of Persia*. This was a heavenly being not an earthly man for Michael the archangel contended with him. We rarely consider this dimension to our lives, and some dismiss it altogether. But the Bible clearly teaches about angels, good and bad, angels of God and angels of the devil.

Ephesians 6:12 is a verse we read together and a verse we must reflect upon. We are in a spiritual battle; we fight *against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places*. This is exactly what Daniel was being told about. The kingdom of Persia had its earthly ruler and it also had its 'prince of the air'. This prince was behind the decree to stop the rebuilding of the temple. There was also a prince behind the kingdom of Greece (10:20). The devil inspired these men to exalt themselves against God and oppose his divine purposes.

Spiritual warfare as we call it is not like earthly warfare. We must take up the armour that God gives us in this battle, the battle for the kingdom of God. We take up different weapons, spiritual weapons not carnal weapons. (II Corinthians 10:4). Prayer is the most important of these weapons as Daniel well knew. Do you know how important it is to pray? You will be more earnest in prayer if you recognise and understand that your struggles in this world are not against flesh and blood but against your enemy the devil who prowls around like a lion seeking whom he may devour.

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