

Daniel 10

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 20 October 2019

Preacher: Donald John MacAulay

[0 : 00] Let's turn back then to the portion we read, the book of Daniel in the Old Testament, chapter 10. We can read again, it's verse 18.

Then again, the one having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me in his head. O man, greatly beloved, fear not, peace be true, be strong, yea, be strong.

So when he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, let my Lord speak, for you have strengthened me. And so on.

O man, greatly beloved, fear not, peace be true, be strong, yea, be strong. The chapter that we have here, chapter 10 in Daniel, is the beginning of the last section of the book of Daniel. Chapters 10, 11 and 12 continue to explain and show us the things that are to come. And I'll explain a little bit about that in a moment or two.

[1 : 22] I suppose for most of us, we're all familiar with Daniel and the Den of Lions and the various other things that happened towards the beginning of the book of Daniel, but we're not so familiar with the end chapters.

And I presume, like myself, that the reason for that was that we find them very difficult to understand. What on earth is going on, particularly when the angel speaks about the prince of Persia and so on, and who is Michael the prince and these various details.

But we will come to look at that in more detail in a moment or two. By the time we get to chapter 10, Daniel is an old man.

This is something that we often forget. He was taken away, as we see from the first chapter. He had been taken away in the captivity to Babylon or in the exile to Babylon.

Now, be careful with the difference between the two things. Really, it's an exile rather than a captivity. The people of Jerusalem and Judah who are taken to Babylon, especially those who were taken in the first time by Nebuchadnezzar, were not taken away as slaves.

[2 : 50] They were taken away as prisoners, in a sense, or more correctly, as hostages. And you remember that Daniel had been selected among others because of his intelligence and also because of his birth.

It would seem likely, although we're not told clearly, that Daniel was of either a royal line or of a Levitical line.

That is, that he was of the priesthood. But these details are very hard to confirm one way or the other. But the book of Daniel is not a book of prophecy, in a sense.

Unlike the other prophets that come before this, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and so on. It's not really prophecy. It is the story of how Daniel becomes a diplomat and eventually, probably, the equivalent of prime minister in the various kingdoms that take place in Babylon.

First of all, in Babylon itself, under Nebuchadnezzar. And then under Darius the Mede. And then under Cyrus the Persian. And you see, at the beginning of this chapter, in chapter 10, we have an exact date given to us of when this happens.

[4 : 12] In the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia, a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message was true, but the appointed time was long.

And he understood the message and had understanding of the vision. Now, that first part of the chapter is written in Chaldee, not in Hebrew. And it appears like a title to, and you notice that it authenticates both names of Daniel.

His name, first of all, in Hebrew, Daniel, and his name in Chaldee, Belteshazzar, the name that he'd been given at the very beginning when he went there. And by this time, Daniel is quite old.

This takes place around, depending on which calendar you use, if it's the Jewish or the Babylonian calendar, it's either 536 or 535 BC.

So Daniel is approaching, probably his mid-80s, coming up to 90 at this particular time. And we can work out exactly when this happened, what happens in the chapter.

[5 : 30] In verse 4, we're told, on the 24th day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that is the Tigris, I lifted up my eyes and looked.

Now, biblical chronology at times is hard to work out. But Babylonian chronology is very much easier. And we can date this together.

And it actually can be dated exactly. Believe it or not, this was on the Sabbath day that this vision took place.

And the date was the 11th of May. And you see here, of course, that it says the first 24th day of the first month.

Now, bear in mind, that is according to the Hebrew calendar. And people have worked this out very, very carefully. That's what they say, that it was a Sabbath day and it was the 11th of May.

[6 : 33] In Cushnery, I have no idea how to work it out, but you have to take the word of the experts on these things as correct. And it's not unusual that Daniel would be given this vision on the Sabbath.

It would seem that the custom was that they would gather together at this river, that is, the Tigris or the Hedical, depending on which weapon you use, in order to pray and to worship God.

Now, you remember that there are many Jews in Babylon. They have been taken away into exile here. And you remember also, if you go back in the history of the Jews, that the reason that they have been taken away, and the reason that Jerusalem has been destroyed and the temple destroyed, was because of idolatry.

Worshipping of idols. Now, I'm not going to go through the whole history of that, but again, if you go back, you'll find, of course, very clearly, that the northern kingdom, the kingdom of Israel, had fallen into idolatry, first of all, and had been destroyed, captured by Assyria, and its people taken into exile and scattered throughout Assyria.

And Israel had been repopulated by a mixture of Assyrian tribes. From which come the Samaritans, and that was why there was so much problem between the Samaritans and the Jews later on.

[8 : 11] And it is then that the ten tribes of the north disappear. We never hear of them again.

They're gone. But the two tribes of the south, Judah and what was left of Benjamin, the smallest tribe, remain in the kingdom of Judah for a period of time yet.

But warning after warning, God gives them, you remember particularly through Isaiah and Jeremiah, that warnings have been given that unless they turn from their idolatry, that God was going to take them into captivity or exile, whichever word you prefer, in Bible.

And you'll find that very clearly in the book of Jeremiah. And you see, in fact, that Daniel has been meditating on that particular book, that he has been reading it in a previous chapter, where he talks about chapter 9 and verse 2.

If you look back to chapter 9 and verse 2, you'll see the reference that Daniel makes there. This is in the first year of Darius.

This is a few years before chapter 10. And in verse 2, in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet that he would accomplish 70 years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

[9 : 45] And it is now coming towards the end of these 70 years. Cyrus has permitted Ezra and Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem at different times.

And the rebuilding of the wall and the rebuilding of the temple is actually on the way. You can read about that in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

But the fascinating thing is that if you go to the prophecy of Isaiah, written 700 years before, in Isaiah 44 and 45, that Isaiah prophesies that Cyrus will be the one.

And he calls him my servant, Cyrus, who will allow the Jews to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild the temple.

Because the period of cleansing from idolatry would then have taken place. It is in Babylon that the Jews first begin to worship in synagogues.

[10 : 52] That's where the synagogue originates from, from Babylon. And they bring that custom back with them when they return to Judah and to Jerusalem.

Because, of course, the temple was in ruins for a considerable number of years. Daniel himself never returned.

Daniel died in Babylon. and if you wish, you can actually visit his tomb even up to this day. He is buried in Susa, nowadays in modern Shush, in Iran.

And if you Google it, you can see images of the tomb of Daniel, which is venerated by Muslim and Jew and Christian alike.

Because they are all in common in the origins of their faith. And so Daniel then, having probably retired at this stage from his diplomatic career, if we put it that way, is worshipping with others at the banks of the river Tigris on this Sabbath morning.

[12:06] And he is given this vision. And you notice that Daniel does not prophesy. He simply records the visions. And the visions are of course prophetic.

What does he see? And what is he told? Well, we'll come to that in a moment. Previously, before this, in chapter 9, he has spent a long period of time in prayer and in mourning and fasting.

If you look at chapter 9 in verse 3, you'll see, I set my face towards the Lord God to make requests by prayer and supplications with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.

And I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession and said. Now, I'm not going to go through the prayer. This is a number of years before.

But what he's praying for is, of course, for the children of Israel, the Jews, to be restored to the whole. but he's also praying for forgiveness for their idolatry and for his own sins as well.

[13:15] And if you jump forward in chapter 9 to verse 21, we see something that helps us understand what happens in chapter 10.

While I was speaking in the prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reach me about the time of the evening offering.

Now, who is this? This is, of course, the angel Gabriel. Although it's spoken there as a man, it's because he appears in the form of a man.

It's the same Gabriel as appears to Mary in the New Testament. But this is the first mention of him and it's Gabriel that it seems who appears again to him in chapter 10.

We'll come to that in a moment. And what does Gabriel tell him? He tells him in chapter 9 of the coming of Messiah.

[14:16] Verse 26, after the 62 weeks, Messiah shall be cut off and stored. And we begin to see that what the book of Daniel is, is a foretelling of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It foretells with exact dating, again, I'm not going to go into all the details in chapter 9, but exactly the date when the Lord Jesus Christ will come to the earth for the first time.

And it also foretells, as you see in that verse, after the 62 weeks, Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself. It foretells why Messiah will die, that he will die not for himself, but for us.

In chapters 10 and chapters 11, several years later, here the angel gives a message, we'll come into the detail of it in a minute, to Daniel, of what is going to happen between the present time and the coming of Messiah.

That's what chapters 10, 11, and 12 are all about. the first coming of Jesus. And you see, the chapter of Daniel's book, the final chapter of Daniel, really closes the Old Testament.

[15:54] All the prophecies that follow the minor prophets as we refer to them, either chronologically take place before this, the book of Daniel was not right by the Jews among the books of prophecy, but as a book of history and a book of wisdom.

And Daniel does in parallel to us exactly what is to happen in the book of Revelation in the New Testament. Try and think of it all as if Daniel closes the Old Testament in the same way as the book of Revelation closes the New Testament.

and there are similarities between the vision that Daniel gets here and chapter one of Revelation.

And we'll look at that in detail in a minute. So if we read at verse five and see the vision, the first thing that Daniel sees, I lifted my eyes and looked and behold a certain one clothed in living.

Now that is always a sign of an angel. The living, the holy garment always signifies an angelic presence. But his waist is girded with gold of Uphos.

[17:10] Now this is only the second time that the term gold of Uphos appears in Scripture. it's usually always gold of Ophir. It may well be the same place. It appears in Jeremiah 10 but nobody knows where Uphos actually was.

It may well be the same place as the gold of Ophir. His body was like barrel and again there's great difficulty in understanding exactly what that means.

We know that it was a stone of some kind but according to the ancients which stone it actually was and what colour it was is a matter of debate. His face like the appearance of lightning his eyes like torches of fire his arms and feet like burnished bronze and colour and the sound of his voice or his words like the voice of a multitude.

Now turn with me for a second to the first chapter in Revelation. The first chapter in the book of Revelation you remember that John has been exiled to Patmos again probably by the emperor Domitian it may have been Nero but most sources seem to think it was Domitian and we see at verse 10 in chapter 1 I was in the spirit on the launch day and I heard behind me loud voices of a trumpet saying I am the Alpha and the Omega the first and the last but you see right in a book send it to the seven churches which are in Asia and then you get the list of the seven churches and I turned to see the voice that spoke to me and having turned I saw seven golden lampstands and in the midst of the seven lampstands and here's the parallel passage one like the son of man clothed with a garment down to his feet and girded about the chest with a golden band his head and his hair were white like wool as white as snow and his eyes like a flame of fire his feet were like fine brass as if we find in a furnace and his voice as the sound of many waters he had in his white hand seven stars out of his mouth met a sharp two-edged sword and his countenance looked like the sun shining in its strength and when I saw him I fell at his feet as dead but he laid his white hand on me saying to me do not be afraid

I am the first and the last I am he who lives and was dead and behold I am alive forevermore now that person is clearly identified for us as the Lord Jesus Christ but you notice that John's reaction to the vision is very similar to Daniel's I fell at his feet as dead and that's exactly what we see with Daniel and we see in the verses that follow in verse 7, 8 and 9 when Daniel sees this vision the other men don't see it but some great terror falls on because they realise that Daniel was seeing something and they fled behind themselves and you see in verse 8 when I saw this great vision no strength remained in me for my vigour was turned to clarity in me and I retained no strength now is this the Lord Jesus Christ who appears to Daniel well that's a very interesting question and the theologians have debated that for years some think it is some think it's not some think it's an angel but Daniel hears we'll come back to that in a moment in verse 9 hears the sound of his words and when I end the sound of his words

[20 : 58] I was in a deep sleep on my face with my face to the ground and then the hand touches him now commentators debate whether the hand that touches him is the same hand as belonging to the man that he's seen in the vision or not and this is where it becomes a little bit confusing and the hand touches him and lifts him onto his hands and knees and then speaks to him and he said to me O Daniel great man greatly for love and understand the words that I speak to you and stand up for I have now been sent to you now there's the key words I have now been sent to you that would seem to indicate very clearly that the person who is speaking is not the Lord Jesus Christ but an angel who has been sent probably deviant but it may not have been the angel is not identified he does not identify himself now it's curious isn't it that before this vision is given to Daniel and before the person speaks to him you remember from verse two that Daniel had been in 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 what was he mourning for it may well have been similarly to the prayer that he has in chapter nine for his own sin and the sin of the Jews that caused him to be in Babylon in the first place others think that he had received the news from Jerusalem of the difficulty that Esra and Nehemiah were having in rebuilding the temple and how the Samaritans had set themselves against them and again you can read that in the books of Esra and Nehemiah but bear in mind that Daniel has been mourning and almost certainly praying for this period of three weeks why is that important well follow what the angel says to him in verse 12 then he said to me do not fear

Daniel for from the first day that you second have to understand and to humble yourself before your God your words were heard God hears the prayers of his people you notice very clearly from the first day that you began to pray in earnest does that go back to the beginning of Daniel's life or is it simply the period before this we could interpret it either way or both ways but notice that his words have been heard and I have come because of your words now you and I when we pray nowadays we do not expect an angel to come and answer our prayer why not why not do we take it for granted that because nowadays we are in the 20th century etc and so on because of the revelation

of the new testament do we take it for granted that angels no longer interact on our behalf if we do then we are very very mistaken the new testament tells us very clearly that the angels of god and I have more to say about this this evening when we have a look at jacob's ladder and his vision there that the angels of god hebrews 1 tells us that they are ministering spirits sent to help the people of god and at the end of the book of hebrews the writer says to us he says don't forget to entertain strangers for thereby he says some have entertained angels unawares angels unawares you and I are given a glimpse here into a world that we have no understanding of and generally no vision of because we are shown here and given information on the spiritual battle that is going on between the angels of god and satan and his angels and that battle has been outlined upon us in some parts of the old testament we see it in the book of john we see it in other places as well but we should never think that that battle is over satan has been defeated yes his angels know that they are defeated how many times do you see for example when jesus deals with demon possessed people that the demons know exactly who he is and not only know who he is but they say to him have you come to cast us into the place of torment is this the time is this the end time but we know that it's not that the end time will not come until what we see in the book of revelation is fully revealed to us until the second coming of the lord jesus christ and you see how the book of daniel now fits in with that it tells us of the first coming of the lord jesus christ in chapter 9 and chapters 10 11 and 12 tell us everything that will happen between this period when daniel is in babylon until the coming the first coming of the lord jesus christ this is what it's referring to in verse 20 do you know why i have come to you now i must return to fight with the prince of persia and when i have gone forth indeed the prince of greece will come who is that that's alexander the great and in chapter 11 and chapter 12 we are told very clearly of the what we call the intertestamental period the 400 years before the end of the old testament between the end of the old testament and the beginning of the new and we see there details on the maccabean revolt we see it on pompey's destruction of jerusalem 164 bc and we see also jesus referring to the abomination of daniel which was what antiochus epiphanius did in the temple by sacrificing a pig on the altar in the year 164 bc where the altar was desecrated and that leads to the maccabean revolt and many of us don't spend enough time looking at the history between the old testament and the new testament but we have to see how these things fit together and so the book of daniel shows us what is to come up to the coming of christ and the book of revelation shows us what will happen at the second coming of christ so the details are laid out very clearly for us but if we come back to daniel what do we see we see that the main theme of the book of daniel all the time is god's sovereignty god is in control in taking daniel to babylon and appointing him as a diplomat in the den of lions in the furnace etc and so on with nebuchadnezzar god is in control and just as he prophesied through isaiah that silas the servant would carry out the necessary regulations to allow the jews and to finance the rebuilding of the temple god is constantly rebuilding his kingdom constantly rebuilding his place of worship now that doesn't mean of course that the place of worship has to be a physical house you see that daniel with the others here have gone out to pray and to worship by the side of the river you see that in the book of ezekiel as well you remember lydia in the new testament where paul finds that where have they gone they've gone down to a river where prayer was apt to be made so there is nothing unusual about that but there is something very unusual that we see here in verse 13 the prince of the kingdom of persia withstood me 21 days now we can decipher what follows behold michael one of the chief princes that when we're talking about princes the word prince here is being used to refer to angels and angels in positions of authority and it would seem very clearly that whatever the satanic angel is that is controlling persia that he was able to withstand daphia for 21 days notice exactly the period of time that daphia was praying three weeks morning a full three weeks but on the 22nd day

[31 : 34] Gabriel if it is Gabriel is able to come to Daniel now there's things there we don't understand we don't how can we understand what goes on in the spiritual realm of the fight between God's angels and the angels of sin we would always think that God's angels would be victorious and in the long run they will be but somehow here we see that Gabriel has been hindered from coming to answer Daniel's prayer from coming to him until Michael one of the chief princes comes to help now who is this Michael Michael is only mentioned here in the book of Daniel and again in the letter of Jude and again in the book of Revelation and Michael is referred to later on in the

New Testament as the arch angel he's the only one to whom that title is given the arch angel and it is Michael one of the chief princes and that seems to suggest that there are other archangels that we don't know their names of at least not in scripture here anyway came to help me you see even though the answer to prayer may be delayed it will still come it will still come and when Daniel is speaking and listening here you notice that he is told I have come to make you understand what would happen to your people in the latter days for the vision refers to many days to come 400 years later when he had spoken such words to me I turned my face towards the ground and became speechless you know it's the same posture as John has in the book of Revelation then suddenly one I mean the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips and I opened my mouth and spoke and here it becomes a little confusing who is it who touches his lips and you see again in verse 18 the one having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me and speaks to him now that is clearly the angel probably gave him but here in verse 16 many commentators think that this is the Lord Jesus Christ who actually comes and touches Daniel lips it's very difficult to know for sure it may well be David but there are the two opinions and you can make your own mind up on what that is but much more important is what happens as a result of this verse 18 the one having the likeness of a man touched me and you notice he strengthened he strengthened and see the message that is given to Daniel oh man greatly beloved that's the same message that is given to you and I every single day that if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ oh man oh woman you are greatly beloved no matter what situation you're in and when you look at Daniel's life he had some real difficulties difficulties that you and I have never had to face but he is greatly beloved you notice before we've been told that his prayers were hurt but he is a man greatly beloved and he is told fear not how many fear not appear in scripture I wonder if you have any idea I haven't counted them personally but Google is a wonderful thing and Google tells you that there are 364 fear not in scripture one for every single day of the year this is God's message to his people that whatever situation you are in you are greatly beloved fear not peace be to you be strong yea be strong and when God speaks to you you are strengthened there's the comforting message that we get from the people that go down it's not what happens after that these prophecies or the vision with the prophecy included in it have been fulfilled they show us and lead us forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and then when we look towards the end of the New Testament John tells us so clearly the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ Jesus Christ himself has spoken about it many many times but we see how the whole thing forces again and whenever you are suffering when you are in despair when you are in difficulty remember the message of the angel all man all woman greatly delight fear not peace be to you be strong yea be strong isn't that a comforting message to you this morning that no matter what will happen round about this and as we see our country in a period of crisis and time we are told as the people of God that we are greatly beloved fear not why because

[37 : 42] God is in control and that is the message of the Duke of David it's the message of the whole of Scripture God is in control and he although it seems to us at times that the world is in chaos nevertheless God is in control and he is capable of bringing to you an answer to your prayer it may not come for three weeks it may be delayed it may be delayed for even longer than that but your prayers have been heard your prayers have been heard you might never see in this world the answer to some of your prayers particularly as you pray for your children and your grandchildren and perhaps the others you might never see them come back my mother prayed for me for forty years she never saw me come back but her prayer was answered and it may be the same with you as well may the Lord bless these meditations on this world this morning