

Peace, Strength, and Courage

The key to successful living as a young person is to live in your young body with the mind of an old person. For that reason, it is very helpful for us to learn from old Daniel (probably at this point in his 80's). We would learn from him in this chapter two primary lessons: we really need the Lord, and the Lord really meets our need.

Daniel 10:1-11:1

1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar. And the word was true, and it was a great conflict.¹ And he understood the word and had understanding of the vision.

2 In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks. **3** I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks. **4** On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river (that is, the Tigris) **5** I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. **6** His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude. **7** And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves. **8** So I was left alone and saw this great vision, and no strength was left in me. My radiant appearance was fearfully changed,² and I retained no strength. **9** Then I heard the sound of his words, and as I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face in deep sleep with my face to the ground.

10 And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. **11** And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly loved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you." And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling.

12 Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. **13** The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, **14** and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come."

15 When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and was mute. **16** And behold, one in the likeness of the children of man touched my lips. Then I opened my mouth and spoke. I said to him who stood before me, "O my lord, by reason of the vision pains have come upon me, and I retain no strength. **17** How can my lord's servant talk with my lord? For now no strength remains in me, and no breath is left in me."

18 Again one having the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me. **19** And he said, "O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage." And as he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me." **20** Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come. **21** But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince.

11:1 "And as for me, in the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to confirm and strengthen him.

I. We really need the Lord (vv. 1-4).

A. We live in a world hostile to God's Kingdom.

We can see that Daniel was fasting and praying during a season (Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread {first month in the Jewish year---v. 4}) that should have been very celebrative for him. It seems that the reason for his mourning and fasting had to do with the circumstances of his fellow Israelites in Jerusalem. (See Ezra 4.) We too have many sorrows and many discouragements in our attempts to serve the Lord faithfully in our generation. We really need the Lord.

B. We live in a world hostile to God's Kingdom.

Daniel says four times in this chapter that he has no strength. This is not just because he is old and feeble, but rather because he is wise. He knows he does not have, and never has had, the strength to fix the most important problems in his world.

II. The Lord really helps us (vv. 10:5-11:1).**A. He reveals Himself (vv. 5-9).**

The man in this vision looks an awful lot like Jesus Christ, as He is described in Revelation 1:12-16. God reveals His sovereign power and majesty to us, and yet notice that Daniel still says he has no strength. Perhaps that is because, even when we have a vision of the sovereignty of God, it doesn't strengthen us unless we also are assured of His love for us. This brings us to the next major point of the narrative.

B. He touches us (10:10-11:1).

Three times in this text Daniel says he was touched (vv. 10, 16, 18). We can see four things God did for Daniel in these touches:

1. God loves us (v. 11). The Hebrew word here is the noun form of the verb "covet," as in the tenth commandment. So, literally, Daniel is "the man coveted"(by God). Wow, what a status!
2. God hears us (v. 12). The angel assures Daniel that because he sought to understand God's Word and humbled himself, heaven has heard his prayer. What an amazing promise!
3. God teaches us (vv. 13, 14). Note what the angel teaches Daniel: there are spiritual powers that operate "behind the curtain" of our human affairs that actually determine the circumstances of our daily lives. This is why the Apostle Paul says, "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God...." After these three elements of His touch, Daniel still says, "no strength remains in me..." (vv. 16, 17), so God provides the final element of strength.
4. God comforts us (vv. 19, 20). See what the angel tells him. He "will return to fight against the prince of Persia.". He goes to war for us. The great warrior angel, Michael, is mentioned in v. 13 as one who is engaging the battle. Who is this Michael? We also read of Michael in Revelation 12 where he casts Satan from his heavenly throne, removing his ability to blind the nations. God, in short, sends out His heavenly host of angels to defend, protect, and rescue His children. Ultimately, of course, it is our Lord Jesus Christ Who comes as our chief warrior to save us.

This, then, is our great comfort, our help in time of need: our Lord Jesus Christ, Who loves us and hears us also fights for us that we may make it home safely. Daniel then says, "you have strengthened me." God really meets all our needs.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is it important for us to know our own weakness relative to the challenges we face in this world?

2. What sometimes makes us think we are actually strong rather than weak?

3. How does a clear vision of God's sovereign majesty help us in this life? Why is that vision on its own not adequate to strengthen us for the challenges we face?

4. What are the ways God "touches" our lives to strengthen us? Which one of those ways is most important for you personally to believe today? Why?

5. If Jesus is our great warring Savior, why did He come to earth so meekly in His first advent? Why will He be quite different in His second advent? Why should that encourage you?

Going Deeper

1. How have you allowed yourself to think of this world in merely secular and human ways?

2. How have you allowed yourself to act as though there are no ultimate spiritual realities?

3. How do you need to alter your approach to solving the major problems in your life?