

January 28, 2018

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

A STRONG FAITH

MINISTRY INVOCATION

“O God: You have spoken to us with power in your Words. We receive those words as law to our being. In Jesus’ Name... Amen.”

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW AND UNDERSTAND

Analyze the account of Daniel’s visit by an angel; Visualize Daniel’s state of mind during the angelic visit; and Express gratitude that God’s people always receive from God exactly what they need at the time.

THE APPLIED FULL GOSPEL DISTINCTIVE

We believe in the indwelling of the Holy Ghost for all believers and that the Holy Ghost verifies and validates the Believer as part of the Body of Christ.

Background Scripture – Daniel 10:10-19

Lesson Scripture – Daniel 10:10-19

Daniel 10:10–19 (NKJV)

Prophecies Concerning Persia and Greece

¹⁰ Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and *on* the palms of my hands. ¹¹ And he said to me, “O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you.” While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling.

¹² Then he said to me, “Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. ¹³ But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. ¹⁴ Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision *refers to many days yet to come.*”

¹⁵ When he had spoken such words to me, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. ¹⁶ And suddenly, *one* having the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke, saying to him who stood before me, “My lord, because of the vision my sorrows have overwhelmed me, and I have retained no strength. ¹⁷ For how can this servant of my lord talk with you, my lord? As for me, no strength remains in me now, nor is any breath left in me.”

¹⁸ Then again, *the one* having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me.
¹⁹ And he said, “O man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace *be* to you; be strong, yes, be strong!”

So when he spoke to me I was strengthened, and said, “Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.”

COMMENTARY

10:10 Now the vision of Christ has passed, and the interpreting angel enters the picture. He touched the prophet and raised him from the ground so that he was resting on his “hands and knees.” Daniel was “trembling” with weakness and fear and was barely able to keep himself from falling back down on his face. Although it is strange that his name was not given as in the previous two visions (cf. 8:16; 9:21), many scholars identify this angel as Gabriel, a view that probably is correct. Gabriel served as a communicator of God’s messages on several occasions. Furthermore, the interpreting angel evidently had great power (cf. 11:1), which would be true of a prominent being like Gabriel.

10:11 Daniel was addressed as “you who are highly esteemed” and was instructed to listen carefully to the angel’s words. Daniel would certainly need to listen carefully, for the message he was about to receive was “full of confusing detail couched in somewhat vague terms – from the standpoint of 535 B.C., at least.” Modern believers should note that the prophecies set forth in this revelation that have been fulfilled were fulfilled literally and exactly. This demonstrates that the prophecies yet unfulfilled will be accomplished in similar fashion.

Daniel was told to “stand up” with renewed courage and strength, for a mighty angel from the very presence of God had been sent with the answer to his prayer. He should have been honored and excited. At the angel’s command Daniel mustered his strength and rose to his feet though he was still “trembling.”

10:12 Gabriel continued to comfort God’s servant by telling him not to be afraid. Daniel was then informed that from “the first day” that he had “set” his “mind” (lit., “heart”) to pray for understanding (“to gain understanding”) and had begun to fast (“to humble yourself”) before God, his petition was heard. “To humble” oneself before God was an expression that many times was equated with fasting. God was touched by his servant’s determined prayer (“your words”), and the heavenly messenger was sent (emphatic in Heb., “I, myself, have come”) “in response to” Daniel’s pleas.

10:13 One of the strangest accounts in the Bible is now unfolded. The angel related that he was coming to bring Daniel the answer to his prayer but was delayed because “the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days.” Finally, Michael (whose name means “who is like God?”), one of the most powerful and important angels (“one of the chief princes”), came to the interpreting angel’s aid. Evidently the reason that Michael became involved and not another powerful angel was that Daniel was interceding for Israel, a nation especially entrusted to Michael’s care (v. 21).

The NIV’s “detained there with the king of Persia”²⁸ could mean that the angel was prevented from leaving the area ruled by the human king of the Persian Empire. Yet the Hebrew word translated “king” is plural, and the concept of the angel’s being “detained with” the earthly kings of Persia seems untenable. In the context of angelic warfare, these “kings” likely were spiritual rulers who attempted to control Persia.

Regardless of the exact meaning of this last clause, the point of the verse is clear. Gabriel had been on his way from heaven with a message for Daniel but had been prevented by the prince of Persia. Michael had helped him to have victory over this foe, and Gabriel was then able to continue his journey. Jeffery seems correct in stating that the conflict probably was not an attempt to prevent the angel from bringing the message to Daniel (though this was the result), for the conflict was resumed after the revelation was delivered (cf. 10:20), but rather this warfare involved “something apart from the message.”

Michael is introduced in this verse and is also mentioned in Dan 10:21; 12:1; Jude 9; and Rev 12:7 in Scripture. In Jude 9 he is called the “archangel,” which means “first (chief) angel.” Michael has been assigned by God as Israel’s prince (cf. 10:21); he is “great” in power and protects the Jewish people (cf. 12:1). The implications of these statements are clear. Israel has a mighty angelic supporter in the heavenly realm. Therefore, regardless of Israel’s political, military, and economic weaknesses, its existence is assured because no earthly power can resist their great prince.

Who was this “prince of the Persian kingdom” who resisted Gabriel for three weeks? (1) He must have been an angel since no human prince could have withstood Gabriel. Moreover, Israel’s “prince” was the angel Michael (10:21), and it is reasonable to suppose that in the same context the “prince” of Persia was also an angel. (2) Since this prince opposed God’s angel, he may safely be assumed to have been an evil angel, that is, a demon. Leupold remarks: “Bad angels, called demons in the New Testament, are, without a doubt, referred to here.”³¹ (3) He is called the “prince of the Persian

kingdom," so Persia must have been his special area of activity. Therefore this demon was either a powerful angel assigned to Persia by Satan or possibly he was Satan himself. Persia ruled the world in that day, and Satan would surely have concentrated his personal efforts in this most influential area. If the demon was Satan, it would explain why Michael, one of God's most powerful angels, was needed to fight against him. The angelic warfare continued, for v. 20 reveals that the good angel would return to fight against this demon. Young suggests that it was this evil angel who "influenced the kings of Persia to support the Samaritans against Israel."

From this passage several important facts are evident concerning angels: (1) angels are real; (2) there are good and evil angels; (3) angels can influence the affairs of human beings. Particularly this passage teaches that angels inspire human governments and their leaders. Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who was described in chap. 8 (also chap. 11), was certainly encouraged by demonic forces in his attempts to eradicate the Jewish religion. Antichrist, depicted in chaps. 7; 9; and 11 of this book, also will be satanically inspired (cf. 2 Thess 2:9; Rev 13:2). In Daniel's day Persia ruled the earth. Satan would naturally have attempted to influence the decisions made by the Persian government because policies made there would affect the world. Today Satan continues his attempts to sway earthly powers, and he focuses his attention on nations of the world with the most influence. (4) There is an invisible, spiritual warfare being waged that involves angels and believers. The apostle Paul said, "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" (Eph 6:12). This warfare is an ongoing struggle (cf. v. 20). (5) God's angels act on behalf of the saints. Here they are instrumental in delivering to Daniel a message from God. Believers probably would be surprised to learn of the many acts performed for them (e.g., protection) by the Lord's angels.

Daniel's experience should not be interpreted to signify that God is weak or that demonic forces have power to thwart the will of God. The Book of Daniel teaches throughout its pages the absolute sovereignty of the Almighty, and God could easily have ensured the delivery of the message to Daniel in a moment. Archer rightly comments: "While God can, of course, override the united resistance of all the forces of hell if he chooses to do so, he accords to demons certain limited powers of obstruction and rebellion somewhat like those he allows humans. In both cases the exercise of free will in opposition to the Lord of heaven is permitted by him when he sees fit. But as Job 1:12 and 2:6 indicate, the malignity of Satan is never allowed to go beyond the due limit set by God." Believers should take comfort in these

words, "The one who is in you [God] is greater than the one who is in the world [the devil]" (1 John 4:4).

In this instance, within the omniscient wisdom of God and the divine plan of God, the delay was permitted. Reasons for this delay are not outlined in the text, but it may be assumed that God allowed three weeks to pass in order to perform some work in Daniel's spiritual life or for some other unknown purpose. Many times God permits believers to wait for their prayer answers in order to teach them valuable lessons, for example, spiritual commitment, patience, faith. There are also times when God fully intends to respond affirmatively to a request but in his wisdom delays because he knows that the proper time has not yet come.

10:14 The angel now declared the purpose for his visit. Daniel's prayer had been for insight concerning the future of his people, the Jews, and God was granting him knowledge about these matters.

"In the future" is a translation of the Hebrew "in the latter days." Normally the phrase describes events that will occur just prior to and including the coming of the kingdom of God upon the earth. The climax of the historical preview provided by the angel is the future kingdom of God. During the course of this preview, the persons of Antiochus IV and Antichrist receive particular attention.

10:15–17 Evidently Daniel was still frightened or overcome with emotion, for while the angel was speaking to him, he "bowed" his face "toward the ground and was speechless." Gabriel "touched" his lips and enabled him to speak. In this context "my lord" ('ădōnî) has roughly the force of the English "sir." "I am helpless" is literally "I have not retained strength." Evidently Daniel's pains and lack of strength were due to fright and emotional distress. He asked the angel how he as a mortal man ("your servant") could dare speak to a heavenly

10:18–19 Once more the angel touched Daniel and gave him strength. The prophet was admonished a second time not to be afraid and was again designated as one "highly esteemed" (cf. 9:23; 10:11) by the Lord. "Peace" was a common greeting wishing well-being and blessing upon the recipient. Rather, Hartman probably is correct in seeing the idea here as, "You are safe." The angel was thereby assuring Daniel that he did not need to fear because his concern was for the prophet's well-being ("peace"). Twice (for emphasis) the angel told Daniel to "be strong" (cf. Josh 1:9). As the angel spoke these words of encouragement, Daniel's vigor returned. Then Daniel told the angel to speak because the "strength" he had been given enabled him to listen.

RELATED DISCUSSION TOPICS

CLOSING PRAYER

My God: I am grateful to have found You and kept You in the forefront of my being. Bless us continually with Your grace and mercy. They represent bountiful blessings for all of us. Amen.