

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide
SB 05.05.2024

THE UNSEEN REALM - DANIEL 10:1-21

PART 1: Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

Pastor Daniel tells us "The Bible describes an invisible spiritual universe that overlays our physical universe, yet many people in the world today remain ignorant of it. According to Scripture, this spiritual universe is every bit as real as the one you and I occupy, even if it remains invisible to our physical eyes. What's more, the Bible says there's a cosmic battle taking place right now in that realm and that you and I have a say in how that battle unfolds. You don't have to believe me about this stuff. Many people don't. Some of these people are very smart and highly educated, yet I'm afraid their ignorance in this area is costing them dearly just like it cost those doctors who denied the existence of germs. The story we're going to look at today in Daniel 10 pulls back the curtain on this invisible spiritual universe that surrounds us in a powerful way and provides us with insight into what is going on in the Spirit Realm. ". Let's get into our lesson...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What struck you most from Pastor Daniel's sermon?
2. Have you ever been totally overwhelmed by an encounter with God?
3. Have you ever truly been desperate to understand more about God and what He was doing? How did you approach God in this time?

In times of uncertainty and trial, we often find ourselves desperate to understand what God is up to—what His plans are and how the happenings of our lives fit into the "big picture." Yet many times, that desperation leads us to throw more of a spiritual temper tantrum than it leads us to fervently seek the Lord. We serve a gracious and personal God who desires for us to seek Him. He desires to open our eyes to see and our ears to hear. He has spoken through His Word and He continues to speak to His children, but we must seek and listen. The life of Daniel is one of the most beautiful pictures of faithful persistence in seeking the face of God.

PART 2: Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ DANIEL 10:1-3

1. What does Daniel's posture in these verses tell us about the message that is to follow?
2. Why was Daniel mourning with fasting and praying?

The last three chapters of Daniel form a unit—chapter 10 giving a preface to the vision, chapter 11 describing the contents of the vision, and chapter 12 offering final instructions for Daniel. By the third year of Cyrus's reign, he had already given the edict for the Israelites to return to Jerusalem, though Daniel—and others—stayed behind. Daniel had been in captivity for about 70 years by this point—now a man in his mid-eighties—and was still faithfully serving and seeking his God. Daniel was found in a posture of humility—ready to listen, ready to receive whatever God might have to give him. The word which Daniel was to relay was about a great conflict, and he made clear that he understood the message and its meaning.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ DANIEL 10:4-9.

1. Why do you think Daniel described the messenger in such vivid detail?
2. What happened to Daniel upon this encounter?
3. What does this tell you about the reality of the Spiritual Battle and the spiritual realm?

Being the first month (the month of Nisan), Daniel would have been mourning around the time of Passover and during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This was a season in which the Jewish people specifically remembered and reflected upon God's delivering them from Egypt. The nature of the time likely set Daniel's mind toward his people, also recently released from captivity. Standing on the banks of the Tigris River, Daniel was met by a heavenly messenger. After describing the majesty of his messenger's appearance—one of human likeness—Daniel noted that he was left alone because his companions could not bear the encounter. Alone, drained of all his strength and vigor, Daniel fell on his face at the sound of the messenger's words. Before any details of the message were conveyed, Daniel was already at the end of himself. While this may not have been a pleasant experience, it certainly was a holy one.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ DANIEL 10:10-14.

1. What do we understand about the effectiveness of prayer in these verses?
2. What do we learn about supernatural beings through Daniel's encounter?

At a single touch, Daniel was revived from unconsciousness. Trembling on hands and knees, and then at the instruction of his messenger—most likely the angel Gabriel, Daniel was strengthened enough to stand to his feet. It is clear that Daniel was favored by God (as evidenced here and throughout the book), and that his humility, prayer life, and desire to understand had allowed him to receive this heavenly vision of what is to come. Daniel's prayers had been heard. Not only had they been heard, but also they would elicit a direct response. Having come to speak directly to God's servant, Daniel, the angel explained what had prevented him from coming sooner. Here we are given a brief, but rare glimpse into the workings of God's heavenly beings. For twenty-one days, the angel was prohibited from getting to Daniel because of the actions of the "prince of the kingdom of Persia," who was likely a formidable supernatural presence, but ultimately no match for the angel Michael. Though much is unknown to us about angels and supernatural forces at work, a few things remain. Angels are real, God uses and instructs angels in order to carry out His will and aid His people, and spiritual warfare is a reality that believers cannot ignore. Ultimately, nothing would thwart God's message being given to Daniel concerning what was to come for Israel.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ DANIEL 10:15-21

1. What can we infer about Daniel's continual lack of strength in this situation?
2. What do these verses tell us about God's protection of Israel?

Daniel was physically undone. He was rendered speechless after the messenger's first words. He could not fathom how he could find the strength and ability to talk with the heavenly being that stood before him. Once again, he was drained of any strength he previously had. Just as before, the angel's touch—and now his words of encouragement—revived Daniel and strengthened him once again. The angel wanted to make sure that Daniel was ready to hear what was to come, according to the "book of truth," God's ultimate plan for His people, Israel. The angel Gabriel seemingly was to return to fight against the prince of Persia until the rising of the prince of Greece. Gabriel would explain in more detail in the following chapter, but at this point Daniel knew that God would not leave Israel defenseless but would provide both Gabriel and Michael—especially appointed to protect Israel—to contend on her behalf. Most scholars agree that Daniel 11:1 should be included with the preceding chapter. The angel concluded his initial words with the confirmation that he had previously aided the angel Michael in the first year of Darius the Mede (Cyrus).

PART 3: Applying God's Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

Like the Israelites, we must learn how to shed our identity as slaves and walk in new freedom. This is a process that takes time. As one commentator observed, 'It may have only taken one night for God to get the Hebrews out of Egypt, but it took Him forty years to get Egypt out of them.' It often works the same way for us. The only way any of this is possible is through the shed blood of Jesus. I love the way that old hymn puts it, 'What can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Oh, precious is the flow, that makes me white as snow, no other fount I know. Nothing but the blood of Jesus.'

1. What principles of prayer are reinforced in this chapter? Seeing the results of prayer in Daniel's life, what lessons/truth should we take away from this chapter and apply to our lives?
2. What are ways that you can better seek God in your daily life and posture yourself to hear what He has to say?
3. How can we be more effective in the spiritual battle we all face?

PRAYER: Pray that you might reflect the heart of Daniel in your daily life, constantly and fervently seeking Him. Pray that you would be diligent in daily obedience. Pray for those whose lives and struggles burden your heart. Pray that we will all take seriously the reality of spiritual battle we are in and put on the full armor of God.

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. 6:12)