

Daniel 10:1-11:1**Daniel's Vision of a Man**

10 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel (who was called Belteshazzar). Its message was true, and it concerned a great war. The understanding of the message came to him in a vision.

² At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. ³ I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over.

⁴ On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, ⁵ I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. ⁶ His body was like topaz, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.

⁷ I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; those who were with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. ⁸ So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale, and I was helpless. ⁹ Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground.

¹⁰ A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. ¹¹ He said, "Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you." And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling.

¹² Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. ¹³ But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. ¹⁴ Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."

¹⁵ While he was saying this to me, I bowed with my face toward the ground and was speechless. ¹⁶ Then one who looked like a man touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and began to speak. I said to the one standing before me, "I am overcome with anguish because of the vision, my lord, and I feel very weak. ¹⁷ How

can I, your servant, talk with you, my lord? My strength is gone, and I can hardly breathe.”

¹⁸ Again the one who looked like a man touched me and gave me strength. ¹⁹ “Do not be afraid, you who are highly esteemed,” he said. “Peace! Be strong now; be strong.”

When he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, “Speak, my lord, since you have given me strength.”

²⁰ So he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come; ²¹ but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince. ¹¹ ¹ And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I took my stand to support and protect him.)

Ephesians 6:10-21

The Armor of God

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. ¹² 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. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Sermon: “The Reality of Spiritual Forces”

Please have your Bibles opened up at **Daniel chapter 10** – we’ll be looking at the whole chapter. And we’ll also look briefly at Ephesians 6.

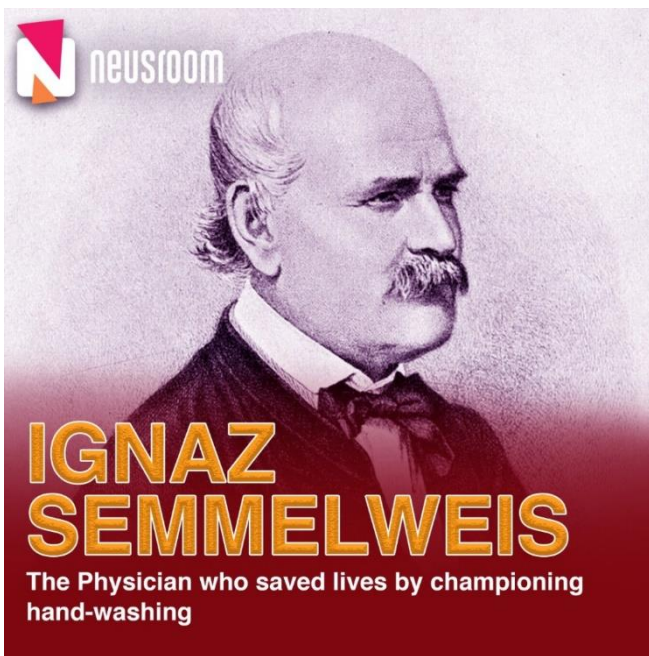
There is an **outline** if you would like to take some notes!

Let me **pray** first...

Intro

Let me tell you about a Hungarian doctor and physician called **Ignaz Semmelweis** – 1818-1865

[Slide-Ignaz Semmelweis]



He observed that doctors, in his hospital in Vienna, who conducted autopsies in the mortuary and then came to the maternity ward to deliver babies – were carrying infections from the dead bodies to the babies – and there was a really high mortality rate for babies who were dying from these infections.

His simple solution was for the doctors to **wash their hands!**

Despite his best efforts Semmelweis observations conflicted with the scientific and medical thinking of the day and so his idea was rejected by the medical profession. At the time, Semmelweis could not offer any theoretical explanation for his findings of reduced mortality rate if hand-washing were used – and some doctors were offended at the suggestion that they should wash their hands and they mocked him for the idea! Sadly, Semmelweis suffered a nervous breakdown and was committed to an asylum by his colleagues. In the asylum, he was beaten by the guards and died 14 days later.

His findings only earned widespread acceptance years after his death, when Louis Pasteur confirmed the **germ theory** and the existence of **microorganisms**, giving Semmelweis' observations a theoretical explanation.

You see, no one could see the germs – so they didn't believe they existed.

Today we'd say those other doctors were so ignorant – wouldn't we?

But even today – if you ask doctors what's the number one problem with infections – they will tell you that people aren't taking the **full-course of antibiotics** – because as soon as patients feel well, they stop taking them. And that's because they don't feel the microorganisms and don't see them – and yet they are still waging war in their bodies.

It's like if we don't feel it, don't see and it doesn't appeal to our five senses then it doesn't exist [we had a similar problem with covid deniers during the covid pandemic - didn't we?]

The same thing can be said of the spiritual world.

There's a spiritual world and spiritual forces at work and yet we can't see them with our five senses – and yet they are real – and if we continue to go by the 'seeing is believing' philosophy – it becomes very spiritually damaging and dangerous for us – just like failing to take all the antibiotics becomes physically damaging and dangerous!

In Daniel chapter 10 – Daniel opens our eyes to another world – to a **spiritual world** – that is very real and very present

Context (Daniel 10:1-3)

First - let's get the context of where we're up to.

[Slide-Context]

At age 15 – Daniel was taken captive from Jerusalem and taken into exile in Babylon along with many other people from Judah in Israel.

Daniel grew up and served in the King's court as a wise man and adviser to the King – he endured many trials and eventually became like a PM of Babylon. During his life - God gave Daniel some amazing visions of the future as we saw last week.

It's now 70 years since Daniel was exiled to Babylon and he's now in his 80s

Some of his fellow Israelites/Jews have begun to return to Judah under the edict of King Cyrus [Ezra 1-2] – to rebuild the temple and the city of Jerusalem.

We pick up the story in verse 1

[Slide-Context]

It's the 3rd year of King Cyrus – about 536BC

Daniel is given a revelation and understanding of a vision containing a true message that concerns a great war!

And we see in vv2-3 – that Daniel mourned for three weeks and was on a restricted diet – with no aftershave or deodorant. His behaviour and demeanour had to match how he was feeling.

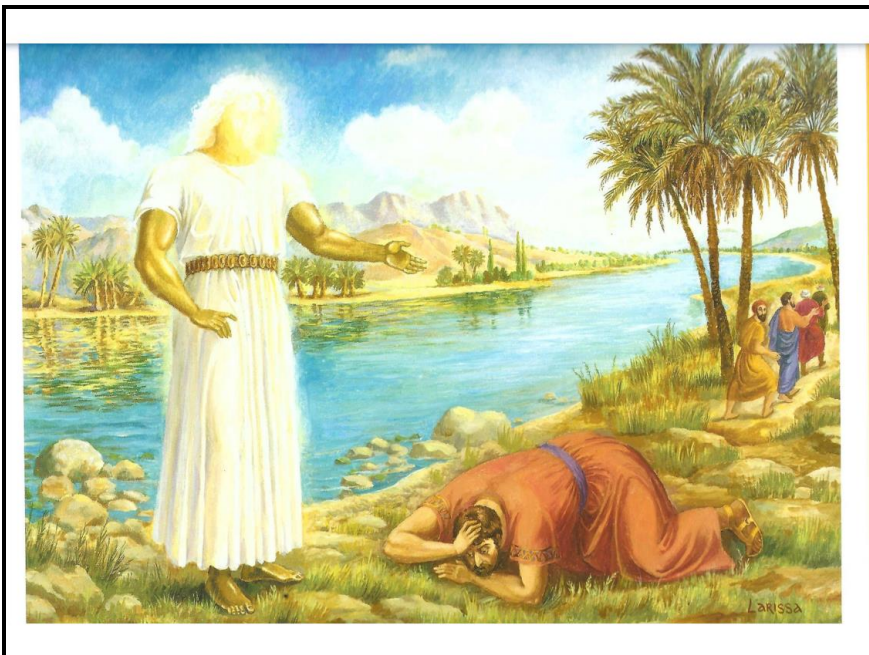
Why this 3-week mourning, fasting and prayer?

Daniel was still coming to terms with the vision from last week [9:24-27] and he was concerned for his people who had already returned to Jerusalem and facing severe opposition as they rebuilt Jerusalem (Ezra 4) – and we see from v12 that Daniel had set his mind to gain understanding of the vision and so he humbled himself before God in fasting and prayer

After 3 weeks of doing this – he saw a vision – vv4-11

Vision of a man (Daniel 10:4-11)

[Slide-Vision]



Daniel was standing on the bank of the Tigris river when he saw a man dressed in linen, with a belt of fine gold and a body like topaz and a face like lightning and eyes like flaming torches and arms/legs gleaming like burnished bronze – with a voice that sounded like a multitude.

Some people think this man is Jesus [as the description of Jesus in Revelation 1:12-16 is similar to this] – but in v13 we find out the archangel Michael helps this man – if this man were Jesus, He doesn't need help – so the man Daniel saw is more likely to be an unnamed angelic figure.

Daniel was the only one to see the vision – his mates didn't because they were all terrified and shot through (v7)

The vision was frightening for Daniel - vv7-9 – and he went pale and weak and fell into a deep sleep.

The “angelic man” has to get Daniel on his feet to make sure he takes in the message of this vision

[Slide-Two points]

And I want to make - **two points** from this vision that Daniel sees:

1. **Heavenly battles have equivalent earthly battles**
2. **Prayer is a lot more crucial than we think**

Heavenly battles have equivalent earthly battles

[Slide -1st point]

1st point – **heavenly battles have equivalent earthly battles**

The “angelic man” tells Daniel – not to be afraid (v12) – and that he’s come because of Daniel’s prayer – but was delayed (v13) because the Prince of Persia resisted him 21 days – and like Michael one of the chief princes came to help the “angelic man”

Michael is the archangel Michael (mentioned in Jude 1:9 and Revelation 12:7) and so this ‘Prince’ of Persia must also be an angelic power like Daniel’s ‘angelic man’ messenger and Michael the archangel, and yet this prince of Persia must be an evil angelic power because he opposes them.

This ‘Prince’ seems to be the demonic power that has Persia as his responsibility and control, a powerful evil spirit assigned to work through the nation of Persia to bring harm to God’s people.

And it seems from verse 1 of chapter 11 that Michael is specifically the protecting angel for Israel!

So, what we have here is evil spiritual forces in action behind the scenes controlling what’s going on with nations like Persia and Greece (mentioned later in v20) – who are trying to harm God’s people.

And at the same time God has His angelic forces fighting against these evil angelic forces.

Some people can be skeptical about this spiritual stuff!

Some people only accept what their 5 senses tell them!

But there’s plenty of things that exist that we can’t ordinarily experience with our 5 senses – gravity, magnetic fields, atoms, time, thoughts and microorganisms as we already mentioned. But we see the power and effect of those things.

Here in v13 – there's a spiritual battle going on between God's angels and the evil angels controlling Persia. God's angels are fighting on behalf of God's people.

This spiritual battle has been going on for 21 days whilst Daniel has been battling away on Earth - praying for God's people.

heavenly battles have equivalent earthly battles

You see, we are in the middle of spiritual warfare

It's been going on since the Garden of Eden

When Adam and Eve were deceived by the serpent (aka the Devil)

God said this to the serpent in Genesis 3:15

And I will put enmity

between you and the woman,

and between your offspring and hers;

he will crush your head,

and you will strike his heel."

God's saying there's going to be an ongoing battle between the offspring of the woman and the offspring of the serpent – an ongoing battle between Jesus Christ and the Devil

Then in Revelation 12

We see that battle continuing

Michael and his angels are making war against the dragon – who is described in 12:9 - as the serpent, called the devil or Satan.

There is a spiritual battle going on and it's real!

All the world is in the middle of a great spiritual conflict.

The point of Daniel's vision is that there are unseen evil powers that influence and control the kingdoms and governments of this world in order to inflict harm and havoc on the people of God. There is what we see on the surface and then there is this whole unseen arena; an invisible war going on behind the scenes ("seens").

[Slide-2nd point]

2nd point – **prayer is a lot more crucial than we think**

During this 21-day spiritual battle between the evil angelic prince of Persia versus the angelic man messenger with archangel Michael's help – Daniel is praying. And what we are meant to see is - it's through Daniel's prayers that the battles in the spiritual world are won – there's a connection between the prayers of Daniel and the battle going on – and as v12 says – the angelic man has come in response to Daniel's prayer – to show him what will happen to God's people.

Praying is entering the spiritual battle – Daniel doesn't know what's going on in the spiritual world when he starts praying – He's just praying for the people of God – he finds out after 21 days about this spiritual battle with the angelic man and archangel Michael versus and the prince of Persia

It's a picture of what happens when God's people pray

We might be in our bedroom praying – and yet in the spiritual world there's massive warfare going on

It's a bit like taking the antibiotic – and inside our body – there's a war between the forces of the antibiotic and the forces of the bacteria infection – even though we can't feel anything or see anything

If we realise that when we pray – there's a whole spiritual realm going on – it gives us great confidence in our prayers – and helps us understand the importance and power of prayer

Our primary weapon against the evil forces of the spiritual world is prayer

The Apostle James tells us in James 1:6 – *the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective*

But remember we are only righteous (right with God and approved by God) because of Jesus – so our prayers must be in Jesus' name.

Our earthly prayers enter the spiritual realm.

For example, if a missionary can't get a visa to go to a foreign country – on Earth it's an administrative battle with government red tape – but in the spiritual world it's a spiritual battle – the devil's evil forces influencing the government of that foreign country – the devil doesn't want the missionary to go and tell people about Jesus.

If a parent really wants their teenager to believe in Jesus – but their teenager is being influenced by other teenagers at school – who are trying to get them into drugs or sleeping around or binge drinking. On Earth it's a battle between the parent and the teenager – but in the Spiritual world it's a spiritual battle – the devil's evil forces influencing the other teenagers to lead their friend astray – the devil wants the teenager to go off the rails – disobey the parents – and cave in to peer pressure!

And it's the same with our 2030 Bible vision – the devil doesn't want that happening either – so on Earth there will be obstacles – and in the spiritual world – there's corresponding warfare – evil princes against the Prince of Peace Jesus
Now it's not just me saying there's a spiritual battle going on

In our NT passage from Ephesians 6:10-20 [[Please turn there now](#)] – verse 12 – the Apostle Paul says: *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.*

Paul's writing from prison in Rome – and he's saying to people of Ephesus – don't think our battle is simply with the Roman government – no it's with the evil spiritual forces behind the Roman government

Paul says - the way we win the battle is through prayer using the **Armour of God**

[Slide-Armour]



The **Belt of Truth** (v14) – Jesus always told the truth. He came into this world to testify the truth. And everyone on the side of truth listens to Him (John 18:37) – the truth is our friend

The **Breastplate of Righteousness** (v14) – This is not our own earned righteousness, not a feeling of righteousness, but a righteousness received by faith in Jesus. It gives us a general sense of confidence, an awareness of our standing and position as a Christian.

Feet fitted with the readiness which comes from the **Gospel of peace** (v15) – our feet are standing firm and ready – because they have the foundation of the Gospel of Jesus which brings peace. Our feet should be ready to carry the Gospel to the world – how beautiful are the feet of those who bring the Good News (Isaiah 52:7)

The **Shield of Faith** with which we can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one (v16) – the shield is not a small round one – but a full body shield protecting the whole body. Thoughts, feelings, imaginations, fears, and lies — all of these can be hurled at us by the devil as fiery darts. Our Faith shield turns them back.

The **Helmet of Salvation** (v17) – the helmet protects our head. Where do our negative thoughts and doubts appear? In our heads! The helmet of salvation protects us against discouragement, against the desire to give up, giving us hope not only in knowing that we are saved, but that we will be saved for Heaven. It is the assurance that God will triumph. One of the devil's most effective weapons against us is discouragement. When we are properly equipped with the helmet of salvation, it's hard to stay discouraged.

The **Sword of the Spirit** which is **the Word of God** (v18) - The idea is that the *Spirit provides a sword* for us, and that *sword is the word of God*. Think of a soldier or a gladiator in training, practicing sword thrusts and moves and positions. In the same way we must practice our sword thrusts from God's Word. The great example of this was Jesus combating the temptation of Satan in the wilderness using God's Word!

To win the spiritual battle we need to **pray with God's armour on**! Don't leave the armour in the wardrobe!

The battle has to be won in the spiritual realm before it's won on this Earth. For example, if the people handing out bibles to our local community are going to have success and overcome - the rejections, the objections, the apathy and the disinterest – then the spiritual battle has to be won first – and **that involves ALL of us praying with God's armour on**.

Prayer works with God's sovereignty – and God has given us the gift of prayer as the vehicle to achieve His purposes. So, God calls us to engage in this spiritual warfare by being people of prayer.

Conclusion (Matthew 7:7)

[Slide-Matthew 7:7]

Remember Jesus said in Matthew 7:7: ***Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you***

And the tense of these verbs here are – keep on asking, keep on seeking and keep on knocking – and not giving up.

Daniel didn't stop praying until the angelic man turned up!

Prayer is a lot more crucial than we think

Let's pray...

Heavenly Father, thank you that you have given us the gift of prayer and given us your armour to protect us from the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm. Help us to be mindful of the importance and power of prayer and help us to remember to put your armour on each day as we continue to fight the good fight, in Jesus Name. Amen.

Benediction

As we conclude our time together, let us carry with us the words of Ephesians 6:10:

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power."

May we be filled with His strength as we face the challenges ahead. Like Daniel, may we know that our prayers are heard, and that God's presence surrounds us.

Go forth in faith, fully armed with the Armour of God, standing firm against all that opposes the work He has called us to. May His peace, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Amen.