Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Vision of Glory
Scripture: Daniel 10:1 21
Code: 27-27

And as we come to the tenth chapter, I've entitled it, "The Glorious Vision--The Glorious Vision" We could subtitle it, "The Heavenly Visitors." These 21 verses in this particular chapter are rich and full, loaded with truth.

I had the opportunity this week to read about a dozen or so commentaries, as I normally do--commentators out of the past and the present who comment on books of the Bible. And one commentator at the conclusion of his discussion of the tenth chapter of Daniel said, and he was of the opinion that there was nothing in this chapter that had any value for preaching. And I thought, "How in the world he could ever conclude that is beyond me because it has so much tremendous value for preaching."

Let me see if I can get you into the chapter in your thinking. It is the nature of man that he is bound by time and space. We are captives of the natural world. We have no capacity to get out of the natural world. We can't leave. We're locked, confined. If then we are to see and interact with the divine world of the supernatural, it is going to have to come to us because we cannot go to it. God must invade space and time for we can't leave. And that's exactly what happens in this chapter--heaven comes to earth in a shocking, startling series of glorious visions. In fact, in this chapter, Daniel is visited from heaven by some incredible beings who give him the fourth and the last of his great prophetic revelations.

Now in this book of Daniel there are four great prophetic revelations. This is the last of them. And it stretches from chapter 10 through chapter 11 and chapter 12. This final great vision fills up and finishes the book. Chapter 10 introduces the vision. Chapter 11 gives the prophecy. And chapter 12 adds an epilogue. So we've come now to the end of the things to come that are given to the prophet, Daniel.

Now the prophecy that we'll be dealing with in chapters 10 through 12, sweeps over the same period of time as the prophecy did in chapter 8. It stretches from Daniel's day until the Great Tribulation and the return of Christ. It stretches throughout all of the remainder of human history until Christ comes again. However, the prophecy in chapters 10, 11 and 12 gives greater detail about the Tribulation than any other prophecy.

In the previous chapter, chapter 9 of the book of Daniel, Daniel was reading in Jeremiah. And Daniel was very much aware that Jeremiah had prophesied that the captivity of Israel would only last seventy years. And you remember now, Daniel is a prophet in Babylon. He is with the captives who have been taken aware from their land and their land has been destroyed. But Jeremiah said it would only last 70 years, and so as Daniel was reading Jeremiah's prophecy in chapter 9, he came across those two prophecies where Jeremiah says it will only be 70 years and he knew that it had been nearly 70 years since he had been taken captive and so he began to realize that the time must be coming for it all to end. And so, in chapter 9 he began to pray. And he began to fast. And he began to confess his sin. And he began to ask God to fulfill the promise that the 70 years would fill up the chastisement and the people could return to their land. That was his prayer in chapter 9. And you'll remember that the end of the chapter, God gives him a tremendous prophecy in answer to that prayer.

Now, that prayer in chapter 9 and the subsequent answer by God, occurred in the first year of Cyrus, the king. The first year of the king of the Medo-Persian Empire. You'll remember that in that first year, according to Ezra chapter 1 all the way through Ezra chapter 3, Cyrus made a decree and he said all of the people of Israel can now return home. You can all go back. Daniel's prayer was answered directly in the very year in which he prayed that prayer.

But you know what happened? As we come to chapter 10, what's the first statement? "In the third year of Cyrus." Where are we now? Two years later. And you know what? Two years later, a very disheartening and a very discouraging reality has occurred. You want to know what it is? The people didn't go back. They were comfortable. They were sufficiently paganized. They were enmeshed in the society in which they lived. They were prosperous. They were absorbed. They were too involved to care about the Promised Land, too involved to care about the rebuilding of Jerusalem, too involved to care about restoring the temple.

You say, "Didn't any go back?" A few. Ezra tells us 42,000 went back. You say, "Well, that sounds like a lot." Not really. They had flourished in Babylon. There were myriads more than that. That was only a drop in the bucket, just 42,000 went back. There had been many born in captivity, they didn't go back. The few that did go back were led by a man named Zerubbabel and Zerubbabel was in the line of D avid. He had kingly seed. And he couldn't establish again the monarchy, he just couldn't pull it off. He was accompanied by a man named Joshua, not the Joshua of old but Joshua the high priest who was to be their spiritual leader. And when they got back, it took them seven months just to clear the rubble off the temple ground to say nothing of the city. And as they started to try to rebuild the temple, they were opposed and they were harassed and they were mocked and they were scorned and they were hated and finally the work came to a halt altogether.

So, you see, all of Daniel's great anticipation had not been fulfilled. The great dream of his heart was that 70 years after he was taken captive, the whole nation would go back and they'd rebuild the

temple and they'd rebuild the city and they'd rebuild the wall and they'd reconstitute their nation and their worship and everything would be the way it used to be. But it wasn't so. A small number went back and they couldn't pull off anything. They couldn't establish the nation. They couldn't establish the monarchy. They couldn't rebuild the city. They couldn't even get the sanctuary going.

At that same time, in the first year of Darius, a third monumental thing happened. Daniel retired. And he was one of the presidents of the Empire. He had been a president through the Babylonian period. And now even into the Medo-Persian period he kept his place of tremendous power. And in this particular situation, it was time for him to retire. He was approximately 85 years old. And so, he left the presidency, according to chapter I verse 21, he was only in the government until the first year of Cyrus.

You say, "Why didn't he go back? I mean, if the 42,000 went back and it was that big of a deal to him, why didn't he go back?" I'll tell you why I think he didn't go back, and it isn't why the commentators say. They say he didn't go back cause he was too old. I don't believe that. I think he didn't go back because he was too disappointed. In other words, I think that he saw himself as having the responsibility to motivate the remaining Jews to go back, so he couldn't leave because he wasn't satisfied. He had a passion to see his sinful people forsake Babylon and return to their country.

Surely he would have longed to go himself, back to the land he loved, but he was utterly unselfish and he was far too burdened for his needy people to worry about his own desires. And so what he does is what he always does. What does Daniel always do in the midst of a crisis? Pray ... always. And as chapter 10 opens, that's exactly what we find him doing again. He stays to deal with his people and here he faces the dilemma of their indifference in his usual way, through prayer. And again, the vision that comes in chapter 11, the revelation that comes in chapter 11, is in divine response to this prayer.

Verse 1, "In the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia, a thing (or a word, better translated) a word was revealed unto Daniel whose name is called Belteshazzar." Just so you know it's the same Daniel, that's the name the Babylonians gave him when he first came, that's a Babylonian name connected with their gods, their deities. They were trying to brainwash Daniel and one of the ways they tried to do that was by giving him a name of one of the Babylonian deities. And just to let you know that it's the same Daniel, we're given again that Babylonian name. Even though you're now into the third year of Cyrus in the Medo-Persian Empire, it's the very same Daniel."And the thing was true, or the word was true that was given to him, but the time appointed was long and he understood the word and had understanding of the vision." Now that basically is an overview of what's going to happen in the following verses:

Daniel received a revelation.

The revelation was true.

He understood very well the revelation.

That's what that's telling us.

Now notice the statement there that the thing or the word was true. You say, "Is that to assume that other things in the Bible are not true?" Of course not. But listen, the character of this revelation is so startling and so astounding and so humanly unbelievable that the affirmation that this is true is made to assure the reader not to be thrown off by the astounding nature of the prophecy--it is really true. We do that when we have a conversation. We want to tell somebody something they won't believe, we say, "Now I want you to know that this is the honest-to-goodness truth." And that's essentially what we have right here.

Notice the phrase in verse 1, "And the time appointed was long." Now that is a phrase given in the King James. If you have a New American Standard, it probably says something like this: "And it involves a great warfare," or "It involves a great conflict," or something like that. And the reason you have a discrepancy there is that it is a very difficult Hebrew phrase with some very obscure words. A nd the best rendering, the very best rendering, I believe, is to read it ... just forget what it says in the KJV and read it this way: "Whose name was called Belteshazzar and the word was true and involved a great warfare." It involved a great warfare ... I think that fits the context, I think it best fits the Hebrew phrase tsavahgadolwhich is used here, and I think that's the essence of what is being said and I think they've rendered it properly in the New American Standard.

Now you find there the word for "conflict," or the word for "warfare."

That's obviously there. And that word is used to speak of an army. It is used to speak of a the host of angels. And sometimes it is used to speak of an actual warfare. So you have armies of men, armies of angels and actual warfare, all three referred to by that same word. And I believe that the context best argues for the use of "warfare" or "conflict," as you will see as we move through the tenth chapter. You'll see how the confl ... the context points to the use of the word "conflict."

So, Daniel is saying, "Look, this revelation is true and it involves a great warfare or conflict." And as you shall see, it is indeed a great warfare and conflict. In fact, before you're done with this prophecy, you're going to see warfare all the way from the demons in space to men on earth and everywhere in between. This is a prophecy about conflict, warfare, all the way from holy angels and demons in space to Russia and Israel on the earth, all the way from Daniel's time to our time, stretches the conflict.

Now the previous vision had left Daniel pretty well upset and confused. If you go to the end of chapter 8, "And I Daniel fainted and was sick certain days, afterwards I rose up and did the king's business and I was astonished at the vision but none understood it." So the last particular vision that he had in chapter 8, left him totally confused. But in this case, he says I understood it and I had understanding of the vision. He got the message in this case. I hope you will, too. And may I add that you and I have the benefit of the indwelling Holy Spirit to instruct us as to its truths.

Now, we're going to look at several points, we're going to move pretty fast. So hang on to your Bible. We're going to see six points as we flow through this chapter: mourning toward heaven, manifestation of heaven, mastery by heaven, messenger from heaven, mischief in heaven and message from heaven. All of these elements tell us that heaven is come to earth.

First of all, mourning toward heaven ... mourning--in the sense of weeping--toward heaven, verse 2. "In those days, I Daniel," and that's a phrase he uses five times, that I Daniel, so that you know that this is truly his testimony, "was mourning three," and literally it says in the Hebrew, "three weeks of days," to distinguish from the weeks of years in chapter 9. "For three weeks, I was mourning."

Now, when was this? "In the third year of Cyrus." But we know more than that. We know what day it was. Look at verse 4. "In the four and twentieth day of the first month." The twenty-fourth of the first month would be the twenty-fourth of Nisan. Now, he began ... if he was mourning on the twenty fourth of Nisan, and that's the day he received the angelic visitation, and if held been mourning for three weeks, 21 days, he started then on the third of Nisan, right? Three from twenty four equals twenty one ... it's a lot simpler than the 70 weeks, isn't it? So he had been mourning since the third of Nisan. What is particularly interesting about that is that Passover always fell on the fourteenth of Nisan. So he is mourning all through the Passover time and the seven days of feast of unleavened bread. That was a very special season, a season of some celebration, a season of some activity, but all through that most important season of the Jewish calendar, Daniel is wrapped in mourning, praying, fasting to the end of the feast of unleavened bread on Nisan 21 and three days after that. And yet, all of this three weeks, heaven is silent. The sky is like brass. No response. And Daniel's not used to that kind of treatment because back in chapter 9 he prayed and the angel came and you know what the angel said? H e got there before he was done praying, remember that? On the same day? And he says when you began to prepare to pray, God dispatched the answer. So, Daniel was used to relatively fast service. Certainly not 21 days without any answer. But that was the case.

Verse 3, "I ate no pleasant bread." And by the way, that little phrase means "bread of delight," or "food of delight." In other words, he didn't eat the delicacies, the really good stuff, the really special stuff, the fancy food. That was one form of fasting, by the way. Fasting in the Bible was not always eating nothing, very often it was restraining from delicacies and fancy foods and just eating the staple stuff to keep alive. It was refraining from the banquets and the festivals and the times of special

indulgence in food. But beyond that, he not only ate no bread of delight, " ... neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth." And that's sort of like meat and potatoes, I mean, I didn't even eat the routine stuff--wine and meat. N either the delicacies nor the normal things. "Neither did I anoint myself at all. "

You say, "I didn't know they had aftershave in those days." W ell, they didn't. And that's not what he's talking about. They used to use a fragrant oil on their bodies and they applied it to their skin for several reasons. One was to protect the skin from the strength of the sun, another was to keep the skin soft, and another was to add a fragrance to the body because they did not have all of the deodorants and whatever else that we have today and so they would anoint themselves. And it became a symbol of joy.

When you went out and wanted to grace a social scene, when you wanted to mingle among people, you put on that oil. It was a sign of social interaction. It was a symbol and a sign of joy.Proverbs 27:9 makes that clear. It's also told us in 2 Samuel 12 that during times of mourning, the anointing was not done. You didn't want social interaction. You didn't want a manifest symbol of joy. You were living in a moment of sorrow.

And so, he eats nothing and he puts nothing on himself. Now keep in mind, people, that for an 85-year-old man, a 21-day fast is relatively significant. Now these acts in themselves, and I don't want you to miss the point, do not solicit God's favor. If you don't eat for 21 days, that's not necessarily going to make God do anything for you that He wouldn't otherwise do. However, if you are so tuned into God and so burdened and your heart is so pure and so right that you don't eat for 21 days, God will bless you for your heart attitude, not for your abstinence from food. That's just the manifestation of a preoccupied concerned heart.

Now why was he doing this? I mean, the guy seems to be sort of overplaying the role. You got the decree of Cyrus two years ago. Forty-two thousand, six hundred people went back. Here you are two years later and for 21 days you don't eat and you weep and you mourn all this time. What is the problem?

And the problem is simple. They didn't go back. Only a small remnant went back. And the ones that went back were totally unsuccessful. You see, Daniel didn't realize what you and I now know that the 70 years of desolation was not begun at the time of Daniel's captivity because Jerusalem wasn't destroyed until 586 B.C., nearly 20 years later. So the 70 years didn't really begin till 20 years later. So that the decree of Cyrus was only a preliminary one. It's always fascinated me that there were three deportations: 605 and then one in 590 something, and then one in 586. And there were also four decrees. So that God began to send them back in shifts as they'd come in shifts. But the fullness of 70 years decreed on the desolation of Jerusalem couldn't begin until it was desolated in 586, so Daniel didn't really realize it but it wasn't quite time yet for all of that to be completed and

everybody to go back. But anyway, he's praying. And in his selflessness, he longs for his people and their place.

So, we see mourning toward heaven. Now let me tell you something. That kind of heart attitude and that kind of spirit gets a response from God. And that's what we find in the second point, manifestation of heaven--verse 4. This is incredible. Manifestation of heaven. All of a sudden, here comes heaven. "And in the four and twentieth day of the first month," that's Nisan 24, "as I was by the side of the great river which is Hiddekel." And by the way, Hiddekel is an old form for the word diglia**,** which is the current modern Arabic name for the Tigris River. It comes from Hidigliawhich is the ancient name used by the Babylonians and Hiddekel simply means "The Tigris." There were two great rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris, and the Tigris would be 60-plus miles east and he was way out there by the Tigris. It doesn't tell us why. We don't know why. We don't know whether he was officially there or unofficially. We know held retired from his presidency. He may have been there trying to stir up some of the Jews to go back to the land. We don't know what he was doing there. But nonetheless, that's where he was.

Verse 5, "Then I lifted up mine eyes and looked and behold," and that's an exclamation term, "a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with the fine gold of Uphaz. His body also was like the beryl, and his face like the appearance of lightning and his eyes like lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet in color like to polished bronze, and the voice of his words like the voice of many waters."

Now that's a pretty shocking thing to see. I mean, you've been praying and fasting for three weeks and you're standing out there in the middle of nowhere, along side the Tigris River and all of a sudden a creature like this appears. In the form of a man, clothed in linen, girded with gold,his body was like beryl, b-e-r-y-1, it says in the Authorized, his face like the lightning, his eyes like lamps of fire, his arms and feet like polished bronze, and his voice, like the rumbling of the ocean--this, friends, is a heavenly visitor. It's taken three weeks, but he's gotten a visitor.

And some suggest this is Gabriel. And some suggest it's Michael. And some suggest it's some other unnamed angel of equal rank. But the vision is best seen not as any angel at all, now watch this, but as God Himself. And I'm convinced that this is none other than God, and listen, in the form of the preincarnate uncreated second member of the trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a preincarnation appearance of Christ. It's what we call a Christophany, a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ.

You say, "Well, why do you parallel this with Christ?" Look at Revelation chapter 1. Revelation chapter 1, verse 12, John says, "And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me, being turned, I saw seven golden lamp stands. In the midst of the seven lamp stands was one like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment to the foot, girded about the breast with golden girdle. His head and His hair were white like wool as white as snow and His eyes were like a flame of fire and His feet burned like

fine bronze as if they burned in a furnace and His voice was like the sound of many waters." See a parallel there? Almost identical except for the addition of the hair. The almost exact parallel.

And who is the one who appears to John in Revelation I? *It's* "I am the Alpha and the Omega," who's that? Christ. You have almost an identical description here. John saw Christ in Post-resurrection glory- Daniel saw Christ in preincarnation glory. Jesus Christ was not created when He was born. He existed eternally. And so, we see its exact parallels, in these descriptions.By the way, it is not unusual to have Christ appear in this form in the Old Testament or in a similar form. There is a phrase used in the Old Testament 50 different times. It is the phrase "the angel of the Lord." Have you read that phrase? Most commonly, the angel of the Lord refers to Jehovah God in the second person coming into time and space, a preincarnate appearance of the uncreated Christ. And you can read it all through Genesis, particularly the sixteenth chapter. You can see in Exodus chapter 3, you can see in Joshua chapter 5, you can see in Judges chapter 6 and Judges chapter 13, you can see it in Zechariah chapter 1, in Zechariah chapter 3 and many, many other places the appearance of this angel of the Lord who is best understood most often as Jehovah, the second person of the trinity appearing in time and space.

And there's another interesting thought on this, and that is this, that whenever the angel of the Lord appears, the things that He does are most interestingly parallel to the things that Christ does on behalf of His church. The angel of the Lord in the Old Testament was the ultimate protector of Israel. And Christ is the protector of His church. The angel of the Lord came revealing truth. He came commissioning Moses. He came commissioning Gideon. He came commissioning Samson. He came delivering His people. He came, as Psalm 34 says, protecting His people, "He encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them." He came interceding for His people. He came as an advocate in Zechariah 3. He came with Abraham, confirming the covenant. He came with Hagar Offering comfort. A 11 of these are parallel to what Christ does in His ministry to the church. And I really believe what you have here is God coming down to Daniel in the form of a preincarnate, uncreated Christ.

Now, since Christ is the Commander-in-Chief of all of the invisible angelic army and since He has all authority, it is fitting that He should appear in this particular place because of the nature of this prophecy. This prophecy is going to show you the angelic conflict and warfare that stretched from Daniel's time until finally the angelic battle of Revelation 12 where Michael and the holy angels defeat the demons and their forces. But all of this period in between now and the Tribulation, in between Daniel and the Tribulation, is a period of angelic warfare. Also, that has gone on since the fall of the angels behind ... or before even the creation of man.

And so, at a time when Daniel is going to see the tremendous angelic warfare, it is fitting that he have a vision of the Commander-in Chief. And I believe that's exactly what God gave him.Look with me at this vision, for a moment. First of all, He was clothed in linen. Fine white linen is the garment of the

priests. Frequently, also, in the Old Testament such as Ezekiel 9 and 10, heavenly visitors appear in fine white linen. In Mark 16, the angels that appear at the tomb of Christ are clothed in fine white linen. Again and again you see this associated with heaven, associated with those who represent God. And fine white linen is a symbol of God's holiness ... holiness--the first and foremost attribute of God.

Secondly, it says that His loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz. Now we have no idea what Uphaz is. We don't know where that is or what it is. But the idea is that there is a belt that is overlaid with fine gold. I really believe that speaks of God's sovereignty, of His sovereignty, beautiful, brilliant, shining gold, the richest, the wealthiest, the purest metal, the sovereignty of God.

Then you have the beryl, a transparent flashing jewel. That sometimes can be translated crystallite, it has to do ... in some cases they've even translated it topaz. I'm not too sure exactly what topaz or where that comes from. But the idea seems to be a transparent flashing jewel which would be reflective of God's glory.

So, you have the holiness of God, the sovereignty of God, the glory of God. Gold is the gold of a sovereign, a king. And the brilliant transparent flashing diamond jewel speaks of glory.

Then it says His face was like the appearance of lightning. And I believe this is power and omnipotence. Revelation says He has the face like the sun. The brilliant light that's manifest in His face speaks of His omnipotence and His power. And then it says His eyes are like lamps of fire searching out, discovering reality. This is omnisciences penetrating knowledge. He knows everything.

His feet like polished bronze. And that is to stamp out judgment ... judgment, that attribute of God, the wrath of God.

And when He speaks, His voice is like the roar of many waters.

What did Daniel see? He saw God. He saw the holiness of God represented the sovereignty of God, the glory of God, the power of God, the omniscience of God, the judgment of God.

Now by the way, do you remember this is the third Christophany that he's had. This is the third time the second member of the Trinity has appeared to him. You remember the first time? Where was it? In teh fiery furnace. Do you remember the second time in chapter 7 when he had a vision of the throne and on the throne was the Ancient of Days and there came one like unto the Son of Man? Three times, not unlike the apostle Paul who lived after Christ, and God gave him three visions of the glorified Christ as well.

Now this vision must have been the source of sweet hope for the old prophet. His heart had been so heavy. And all of a sudden God arrived on the scene to give him a first-hand visit.

Now that leads to a third point, what I call mastery by heaven. Any time heaven invades earth like this, we will be mastered by that invasion. We will be overawed. And that's what happened to Daniel verse 7: "And I Daniel alone saw the appearance," it wasn't really a vision in the sense of a dream, it really was there, it was real, a man clothed in linen. It isn't in a dream or a vision, the man was there. We find that out because of the way He interacts later on with the other visitors.

And he says, "The men that were with me saw not the vision," but watch this, "a great quaking fell upon them so that they fled to hide themselves. Now I don't know who these people are, it doesn't tell us whether they're unbelieving Jews or a bunch of pagans. I don't know who they were. But what amazes me is they never even saw the vision but they knew something was going on and they got out of there and they began quaking. They started to shake. And they fled to hide. From what? From something they couldn't see, but believe me, wherever you have the presence of God, there is the power of His presence that is more than sinners can bear. It's a very understandable reaction in the face of the majestic holiness of God.

You remember, even a good man like Job, when he saw God said, "I have heard of You with the hearing of mine ear but now I have seen Thee with mine eye and I abhor myself in dust and ashes." You remember Isaiah who was a good and godly man but when he saw God he said, "I am unclean, I have unclean lips and I dwell amidst a people of unclean lips." I think of Peter when he saw the power of Jesus displayed, he said: "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man." He wanted Jesus away.

You read it in Revelation chapter 6 when God chose Himself in glory, they scream and cry for the rocks and the mountains to fall on them, to hide them, from His face. You see, whenever the holy confronts the unholy, it is an utterly devastating experience. Even though they didn't know what was going on, when absolute holiness came on the scene they were blown away.

And Daniel was left alone. And he entered a severe trauma. They couldn't even handle what he could handle and he couldn't handle much of the presence of God. Verse 8, "Therefore I was left alone and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption and I retained no strength." He says, "I lost all my strength." My comeliness, that means his appearance, his healthy look, his face, his color turned to a death-like pallor, a grotesque wrenching of his face, pure panic set in, absolute panic. He was so afraid that his strength was zapped in the presence of God. I retained no strength.

You know, that's exactly what happened to John the Apostle in Revelation chapter I when he saw the vision he saw. He said, "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as ... what? ... dead." To stand in the presence of the living God is to be in a position of absolute panic because all of a sudden you're exposed, overwhelmed with your sinfulness.

Verse 9, "Yet heard I the voice of His words." Like the roaring of a sea, I'm sure he heard Him saying something. "And when heard the voice of His words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face and my face toward the ground." H e f dinted. He utterly lost consciousness. The Hebrew rendering is, "And my face stayed toward the ground." This is an 85-year-old prophet, flat out with a mouthful of dirt. His nose against the ground. Has no strength. His friends have flown. And he hears the muffled roar of the voice of the Son of God. He was shattered. He was like a dead man. He had seen the glory of God. And heaven had mastered him in just that.

Now I believe this is the last that he ever saw the glorious uncreated Christ. And He disappeared. And then God brought some angels who began to minister to Daniel. By the way, it's not strange, is it? God often travels with a few angels. Read Genesis 18. That's the way He came to Abram. So from the mourning to heaven, we see the manifestation of heaven, the mastery by heaven.

Fourthly, the messenger from heaven. Now all of a sudden, here comes a messenger. "And behold a hand touched me." You see, it's not a vision. It's really there. A hand touched me. And angels can take on the form of man. They have that prerogative. "And it set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands." Literally the Hebrew says the angel shook me on my knees and my hands, or you could translate it, the angel set me on my knees and my hands trembling. The angel reaches down now and touches Daniel and Daniel comes back out of his deadness to a point of consciousness and he's able to get up on his hands and knees. And he is there in a trembling unsteady condition, tottering back and forth, trying to regain enough strength to stand UP.

You know, it just ... as I began to think about this, I began to look at my own life. Do I have such awe of the presence of God? I rush in and out of His presence without a thought for His majesty. I come to worship Him and when I should be having such great overwhelming thoughts that literally drain my strength, I'm indifferent or thinking about the world or some enterprise that has nothing to do with Him.

So this 85-year-old prophet of God, weakened by 21 days without anything to eat, with a mouthful of dirt, gets up on his hands and knees and he shakes all over. Verse 11, "He said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved." I love that. You know, God doesn't make personal appearances to everybody. This was a special man.

There are those in the Bible. David is called a man after God's own heart. Abraham is called a friend of God. John was called the disciple whom Jesus loved. Mary, it says, found favor with God. There

are those people who by their special delight in God and by their consistent obedience, in a very real way become greatly beloved. And the angel tells him, you're greatly beloved. I think he told him that just to take the fear out. This is going to be a good thing, Daniel, not a bad thing. You don't need to fear judgment, you're greatly beloved.

And he gives him two orders. "Understand what I say, and stand up." In other words, get up, Daniel, so you're going to get the message clear. We want you to understand, now get on your feet. Come to full attention. Get your mind alert. And get this message.

"And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood trembling." Daniel gets up and now he's tottering all over the place, trying to stand up. He's seen God, you see, in the glory of the uncreated Christ.

Now comes the angel's message. First he has to clear up a detail. Point five, mischief in heaven. This is fascinating. "Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel." Oh, would that have taken the pressure off, huh? "Don't be afraid, Daniel, you have nothing to fear, for from the first day that you did set your heart to understand and to chasten yourself before your God." And he means by that to fast. You chasten yourself in the fasting and when you really wanted to understand why the people weren't going back and what the plan was and you fasted to understand and you prayed to God, I want you to know, Daniel, from the first day, your words were heard and I am come because of those words. Daniel, don't think God isn't interested, don't think 21 days passed. From the first day, you were heard.

Well, where have you been for three weeks? How far is it from up there to down here? Did you come to Babylon and couldn't find me? Where have you been? Last time you came the same day before I was done with the prayer.

Look at verse 13. "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days." What? A holy angel from the presence of God got hung up in space by who? The prince of the kingdom of Persia? And you were hassled by that creature? "Yes, and, lo, Michael," Michael is super-angel, hero angel, champion angel, "one of the chief princes, came to help me and I remained there with the kings of Persia."

Now listen, people, after a word of consolation in verse 12 saying your prayer was heard, there's a word of explanation about some mischief going on in heaven. What is this? Look at verse 13, the prince of the kingdom of Persia. The ruling kingdom of that time was Persia. Persia had a prince. Listen, but that prince was not a man, that prince was a demon being. His job was to so control and order the affairs of Persia as to work against the people and the plans of God. Now mark it, people. It is an incredible insight. This prince had some very close relationship to Persia. He must have been more than mortal or he couldn't have resisted the coming of a holy angel and wouldn't have had a battle with Michael. He must have been evil because he was trying to stop God from carrying out His

plan and he must have desired there be no future for Israel in redemptive history or he wouldn't have been trying to thwart the plan. And further, verse 20 indicates that he had a continuing relation with the kingdom of Persia cause the angel says, when I'm done with you, Daniel, I've got to go back and fight this guy some more.

Now listen to this. Satan has an incredibly clever organization. He has set up a network of demons that are behind all of the activities of human history. There was a demon assigned to Persia. Verse 20 says there's a demon to be assigned to Greece. The Bible says that all the gods of the nations are demons. And I believe without question, throughout all of human history Satan's network of demons have been behind the scenes, endeavoring to do all they can to foil the plan of God.

IIH never forget meeting a young man who came out of the occult who had been involved in the Mark Age (?) Society, which is a very advanced part of the occult. He told me they told him, they told him all about Satan's network, how he operates from space and assigns demons to certain institutions. In fact, he said I know the names of people in the United Nations who are demon-possessed in whom dwell demons who control the working of Satan in that nation. They gave him those names because they were the heroes of the occult that he was involved in. It's a bigger issue, as I said this morning. It isn't Iran and Iraq. It isn't Russia and the United States. If you think that, you're very superficial. Behind that is an incredibly sophisticated demonic supernatural network of beings cared demons who are doing everything they can to thwart the plan of God.

His task, this prince of Persia, was to hinder the will and the working of God in regard to Persia, to do all he could to hold back God's plan. And when Persia passed away, and Greece became the third great world empire, according to verse 20, there would be another demon assigned to be the power in Greece and he would have under him a whole plethora of demons to carry out his bidding.

Listen, the human systems of this world are demonic. That's why Paul says we do not wrestle with flesh and blood. There are demon forces attached to the United States of America, to pull us down and destroy the plan of God. And I'm sure there have been holy angels in the past who have been defending us, I don't know whether they're still defending us or not. But it's a rare glimpse behind the scenes in world history.

And so God had to send Michael who is super-angel. He's mentioned three times in Daniel, two times in the New Testament, five times in all in the Bible. He is called the archangel, which means the first angel His name means "one who is of God." And by the way, in Revelation 12, if you want to read about the most wonderful battle of all, Michael and his hosts in Revelation 12 in the Great Tribulation once and for all destroy all the demonic forces and they win the final battle.

But look what it says in verse 13, even after the struggle, he says, "I remained there with the kings of Persia." He kept his place of dominant influence. In other words, this angel overthrew the prince and

kept a good influence in Persia. The demon lost and so he remained in his place of influence for God with the kings of Persia. And that tells us another thing. Apparently, God has assigned holy angels to nations to carry out His purposes. And this warfare goes on all the time.

Now think about that in terms of America. I wonder what's really going on right now.

So, we see the mourning, the manifestation, the mastery, the messenger, the mischief and finally, the might from heaven. I'm going to go through this very fast. The angel having dealt with that says, "Now listen, I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days, for yet the vision is for many days."

I'm going to give you a vision, not just for now, not just for the 70 years, I'm going to give you a vision that will stretch for many days. And he did mean that, clear to the end of the Tribulation this vision goes. I'm going to give you a vision that will tell you what's going to happen to your people in the latter days, from Daniel to the Antichrist. And the issue here is your people, not the Gentiles but Israel. You wait till you see what happens in chapter 11 when he unfolds the vision.

Well, here's Daniel standing there just tottering around and after he gets that information, verse 15, "When he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground and became dumb." And some commentators feel that the Hebrew means he fell down all over again. He hit the dirt again. He's never heard anything like this in his life. He never knew anything about angelic warfare, not like this. And he's lost his speech. And he falls down all over again. He's flooded with a renewed state of weakness and he lies prostrate on the ground. His mouth is slammed shut, he can't even speak.

Verse 16, and here comes another one, "And behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men," another one who appeared in human form, "touched my lips." You can't have a prophet who can't speak, right? Makes it very difficult. So he touched his lips, "And then I opened my mouth and I spoke and said unto him who stood before me, 0 my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me and I have lost my strength." The angel touches his lips and gives him the power to

speak and he says, doniy, not donay. Donay is deity, doniymeans respect. Oh, I respect you, sir. He says, my pains--the word sorrow means my writhings, or my twistings, my tremblings, are turned upon me. In other words, I'm a wreck. I don't have any strength.

Then verse 17, he says: "How can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord?" How in the world can you give me any revelation? I'm a basket case. "For as for me straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me." Can't even catch his breath. Oh, you say, "This is really hard on an old 85-year-old guy."

Verse 18, "Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man and he strengthened me." Now that's a miracle. All of a sudden these angels have the power to put strength right back into a body. "And he said, 0 man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened and said, Let my lord speak for thou hast strengthened me." Got his thing together.

Daniel was given strength by that angel. That's, to me, an incredible scene. To imagine what it would be to stand before the living God. We saw a little of that last week, didn't we? We saw how when the holy enters the presence of the unholy, the unholy wants to find a hole to crawl in, is devastated. And there's Daniel. I don't know if a better lived in his day than that man. But when he was confronted with the living God, he was utterly devastated. I don't care who you are. I don't care how good you think you are. When you stand someday to face the living God, except you be protected by the blood of Jesus Christ through faith in Him, youth be devastated, infinitely beyond this by His very presence.

Well, he said I feel strong now. I'm ready to hear the message. And what a message it must be for all this activity. Then there's a PS in verse 20. "Then he said, Do you know why I came unto thee? Do you know why I'm here?" Now, that's a kind of rhetorical question. Daniel's answer would be, "Well, no I guess I dontt.11 W ell, what the angel's implying is this, "Daniel, you're going to get a whole lot more than you ever asked for**,** friend. You spent 21 days saying, Lord, well what's going to happen to my people? Are they going back? And you fasted and the extent of your desire was to know this picture of right now. I want you to know you're going to get a visitation from heaven that's going to expand you clear beyond this period till the end of the age."

He prayed for the people, and their return and their revival. But God let him in on facts that were far beyond his purview. He found out that demons and angels are carrying on warfare in space. He found out about supernatural battles. He found out what it was to stand in the presence of the uncreated Christ. He found out about the supreme power of the holy angelsespecially Michael. He had met the Commander-in-Chief of the forces. And now when you go back to that thing in verse 1, it kind of makes sense, where it says, "In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a word was revealed to Daniel whose names was called Belteshazzar and the word was true and involved a great conflict."

Listen, sometimes, you know, we ... I just think of this so often ... we dawdle around with petty things. Boy, you know, I tell you, it gets sometimes so disgusting. We piddle around with petty little things while God is trying to let us have glimpses of monumental eternal truth. You know, some Christians, they don't really ever get into their own study of the Bible, they piddle around with churchianity, never ever plumb the depths. The angel said you're going to get a lot more than you asked for, Daniel.

And by the way, verse 20, "And now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia. And when I'm gone forth, lo, the prince of Greece shall come." In other words, I've got to give you this message quick

cause I've got to get back to the battle. I'm fighting the Persians on the behalf of Israel. He's fighting Israel and I've got to make sure I'm there to do my work.

Is that an insight? God actually carries out His will through the angelic conflict. Incredible. And this angel says I've got to hurry and get my message so I can get back to the war. And when I'm done with this Persian deal, Greece is going to come along and I've got to fight that one, too.

P.S. "But I'll show you that which is noted in the Scripture of truth, I'm going to give you the revelation before I go, and it's true, and there's none that holds with me in these things but Michael, your prince." Oh, what a word of comfort. And he says, I'll tell yousomething, between me and Michael, we can handle it. It's all I need is Michael. That's all. I'm up there battling, if I get in trouble, I get hung up for 20 days, Michael... Michael fires out and that settles it. And then he calls him, "Michael, your prince." The prince of the people of God. Oh, he must be an incredible creature! You think there's anything in this chapter worth preaching? I hope. You know what I see in this chapter? Let me run this by you fast...in about 30 seconds, listen. I see insight into God, His holiness, His majesty and His glory. I see insight into the role of Jesus Christ. I see insight into the angels and demons and their warfare. I see insight into the heart and life of a man without equal, Daniel--a man of prayer. I see insight into the stuff that is the core of intercessory prayer, a broken heart, a selfless heart. I see insight into the first response to any crisis, again which is prayer. I see insight into the condescension of God that God should come to man shocks me. Why does He bother? I see insight into the grace of God who can take a frail weak trembling man, touch his mouth and make him speak for God. I Ill tell you, that's one that hits me. Man, I'm so glad that God could take a frail instrument, touch his mouth and let him speak. I see insight into my own inadequacy, and your inadequacy and how God can come at our point of greatest weakness while we lie on the ground as dead men with a mouthful of dirt and He can lift us on our feet and strengthen us to be used for His glory. It's a message of condescension. It's a message of heaven coming to earth and infusing power into men that they may speak for God. What a glorious thing.

That's only the introduction. Two weeks from tonight, we'll get the vision. Let's pray.

Thank You, Father, for our time tonight. We thank You for this great chapter. I just have such a deep love in my heart for Daniel. I admire him so much. He's so much the man I wish I was. In so many ways he exemplifies the principles that all of us should emulate. Help us, Father, to not only see the biblical truth but to see the man and the pattern and example he sets. And we'll give you the glory in Jesus' name. Amen.

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