

## **“DANIEL’S VISION OF A MAN, II.”**

**Rev. Robert T. Woodyard**

**First Christian Reformed Church**

**May 7, 2017, 6:00PM**

**Scripture Texts: Daniel 10:1-12**

### **Prayer:**

Holy Father, as we come to your Holy Word, grant us divine assistance and wisdom that this not be an exercise in gaining knowledge, but of gaining wisdom and making progress in holiness, and all of this for your glory and our benefit. Amen.

### **Introduction and Summary of Daniel 10:1-3.**

After a month break we return to chapter 10, the last major section of the book of Daniel. Chapters 10-12 are the final vision of Daniel. Chapter 10 is one long introduction to the vision that comes in chapter 11 and concludes in chapter 12.

### **The setting for Daniel’s last vision, vss. 1-3**

Verse one gives the context for all that follows to the end of Daniel. This final vision takes place in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia who defeated and overthrew Babylon around 539 BC.

In my last sermon I focused on the power of prayer and fasting and that our God is a prayer hearing and prayer answering God. As soon as Daniel started praying God started answering.

*“I have come because of your words”* (Daniel 10:12).

What motivated Daniel to pray and fast?

*First*, he sought understanding. Scripture says if any lacks wisdom, let him ask of God. Daniel earnestly wants to know what is coming for him and his people.

*Second*, in the third year of Cyrus’ rule, word has been coming back to Daniel by this time of the great trials and suffering his people are experiencing back in Jerusalem.

So Daniel was praying and fasting for himself and for his people. That’s a good start on a prayer list.

The church desperately needs Daniels, now more than ever. People doing the hidden, little noticed, work of strategic praying, praying for the laborers, for the church and her leaders and the proclaiming of God’s Word.

## **Daniel's Vision of a man, vss. 4-6.**

**Daniel 10:4-6** 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.

On January 24, 536 BC Daniel was standing on the banks of the Tigris River in modern day Iraq with a group of men when he received a stunning, breathtaking vision. The kind of vision that shakes you to the core. Like Paul's vision of the third heavens in II Corinthians 12.

The splendor and beauty is beyond description. He searches for words that can't adequately capture the power, glory and beauty.

Girded with gold, a body like beryl, his face like lightening and his eyes like burning torches, arms and legs like burnished bronze, a voice like a great multitude.

*Who or what is this great vision?*

*Some say it was the archangel Gabriel* from the previous visions. But he is not named here as he was before. And Daniel was not afraid of him as he is of the person in this vision. This vision is nothing like all his previous ones.

*Some say it is another unnamed angel*, or maybe Michael who is spoken of in verse 13. There are angels with this kind of appearance. Cherubim in Ezekiel 1 and angels in Revelation 10.

Ezekiel 1 describes living creatures with flashes of fire, sparkling like burnished bronze, their appearance like the gleaming of beryl.

**Ezekiel 1:13** As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches moving to and fro among the living creatures. And the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning.

**Revelation 10:1** Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire.

*Others say it is a pre-incarnate manifestation of Christ*, like who appeared in the furnace in chapter three and in the lion's den in chapter six. This seems reasonable especially giving the close parallels of this vision to the vision of Christ in Ezekiel 1 and to John in Revelation 1.

**Revelation 1:12-16** Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. 14 The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, 15 his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. 16 ... and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

His linen clothing speaks of a priestly office, as such things were worn by the High Priest. Lightening frequently accompanied the appearances of the Lord. Remember Moses on Mt. Sinai.

Also Daniel calls him “my Lord” three times (16, 17, 19).

Finally, Daniel is left weakened, without strength, emptied of himself, speechless and overwhelmed. So much about this vision seems supernatural, otherworldly, divine. Is this divine or angelic?

Whoever he is, this vision is meant to make an impression on Daniel, giving him a clear sense of the power and greatness and glory of God and God’s absolute sufficiency for all that is in the future.

Think of how many times in Scripture the veil is pulled back and God’s people are given a glimpse of heaven or His eternal glory.

Moses and the glory of God, Exodus 33

Elisha and the army of God, II Kings 6:16.

Job and his encounter with God and His questions, Job 38ff.

Isaiah and his vision of God, Isaiah 6.

Incarnation and the heavenly hosts, Luke 2.

Mt. of Transfiguration and Jesus in all His divine glory, Luke 9.

At different times and in different ways God makes His holiness and glory more manifest. God’s holiness reminds us that God is nothing like us, He is completely and wholly other.

**Isaiah 55:8-9** For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Even in a veiled or mediated form God’s glory is overwhelming. The sound and sight are too much and Daniel falls to the ground. His companions flee.

This is good for us to consider. Our culture doesn't take God seriously, God is small, God is inconsequential, God is not to be feared. For some He is grandfatherly, or like Santa Claus, or at worst maybe the Wizard of Oz.

It always amazes me when people take God to task for what He has done or when people put God on the witness stand and subject Him to intense questioning and accusations of injustice. How do people not tremble before a Holy God who is free to do whatever pleases Him without owing any explanation to His creatures? Where do people get the idea that God is answerable to them, that God owes them an explanation, that God has to justify His ways with man?

We would do well to meditate on the encounters God's people have with God and reflect on His holiness and His glory. God is not like us. There is an infinite gulf or gap between God and us. God is (*sui generis*) in a class all by Himself, there is nothing or no one else even remotely close.

God is a consuming fire, God is an infinitely great God of gloriously indescribable beauty, unimaginable power and fearful judgment.

He exposes our sinfulness so we will repent. He exposes our weakness so we will depend on Him. He exposes our foolishness so we will call on Him. God reveals He is God so we will treat Him as God and make Him our God.

He has a claim on our lives. He is worthy of our worship and our absolute obedience and of any sacrifice.

Daniel will need this vision for the bigger vision that is coming in chapter 11

### **Impact of vision and responses to it, vs. 7-12.**

Daniel is appropriately undone by this vision. He has seen holy things, things too great for us on earth. When heaven invades earth the appropriate response is fear. That's why every such encounter begins with "fear not" being addressed to the trembling humans.

This encounter leaves Daniel shattered emotionally, physically, spiritually, mentally. He is completely undone and humbled, falling on his face.

Other prophets described similar experiences when they encountered God.

**Isaiah 6:4-5** And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"

**Jeremiah 1:6** "Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth."

**Ezekiel 2:1** He said to me, “Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak with you.”

Only a vision of God could seem to produce such an unsettling result. The vision is so unsettling that even though his friends don't see it, they feel the force of it and flee in terror.

I am reminded of the experience of the men who were with Paul on the Damascus Road, they didn't see anyone but they heard and were speechless.

There are people today who say they have had visits from angels or the Lord Himself. We may not be able to outright deny them, but we can raise questions. Often these encounters are conversations, Jesus or an angel just came to chat.

But was it terrifying, did it leave them trembling, were they totally undone? Were they overwhelmed with a sense of their sinfulness, their unworthiness? Did they respond like Isaiah or Daniel or the shepherds or John or Paul knocked off his horse?

You don't just have a casual conversation with the Lord God Almighty, creator of the universe. Encounters with the living God are both and at the same time terrifying and glorious. One wants to both flee and surrender.

There should be something like PTSD, some visceral, tangible, physical reaction.

Six verses of chapter 10 are devoted to Daniel just being able to stand up again, telling us of his having no strength to stand and no breath left in him. And he hasn't even received the full revelation yet.

There is a reason heaven is veiled and even when heaven breaks in on earth it is veiled.

Do we have any sense of gratitude for these servants of God and what they endured on our behalf to bring God's truth to us? Do we ever think of the physical and emotional toll paid by Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Peter, Paul, and John?

Think of Elijah depressed and despondent in a wilderness ready to die. Think of Ezekiel:

**Ezekiel 3:14-15** The Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness in the heat of my spirit, the hand of the Lord being strong upon me. 15 And I came to the exiles at Tel-abib, who were dwelling by the Chebar canal, and I sat where they were dwelling. And I sat there overwhelmed among them seven days.

I wonder if we would more highly regard and reverence the treasure we have if we knew the price paid to get it to us. The glimpses of glory, the hints of holiness that we have been given came in some cases at great cost. They are grace to us.

If our thoughts about God don't impact us and change us like this vision did these men, then we haven't yet thought deeply enough. But that's not the only effect a vision like this or meditating on a vision like this should have. It should also stir up confidence in the supremacy and power and authority of our God.

Yes we should fear God, but with the fear that compels us to find safety under His wings and in His presence. We escape the fire of His holy wrath by fleeing into the fire of holy love.

As we read through Daniel, and as we are reading through the OT this year be aware of the holiness of God. Tremble at His great judgment on sin and tremble at the mercy of His great salvation. Both are cause for worship.ad