

August 12, 2018

He Fights For Us

Daniel 10

The book that makes your children afraid of Jesus

As I was thinking about this week's message I started reflecting on how children's books depict Jesus. Most of the ones that I have seen focus *only* on Jesus as the lamb of God. He is gentle, meek, compassionate, long-suffering, full of grace and truth and abounding in steadfast love. All true. All good. All necessary. But incomplete. Where are chapters in these children's books where Jesus is being pictured as dreadful and terrible warrior? You know, those chapters, where small children say "Daddy, I'm afraid, can we skip this chapter tonight?" Imagine marketing such a book. "Parents: this is the book that will make your children afraid of Jesus." That book probably would not sell very well. But this is tragic. We need to hear both truths. We need to hear that Jesus is as gentle as a lamb and terrible as a lion.

The vision that terrified Daniel the most

This is what we see in Daniel 10. The second half of this book has given Daniel nightmares. In **Daniel 8:27** we read "And I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for some days...I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it." He has seen terrifying things for God's people. He saw the vision of the the four kingdoms that are likened unto ferocious beasts—a lion, a bear, a leopard, and the final one the defies description in **ch. 7**. He was given a brief picture of the terrible reign of Antiochus Epiphanies in **ch. 8**. Looking ahead to **ch. 11**, he's going to see a blood bath of human carnage and devastation that would make anyone lose heart. What is the answer to all of this bad news? Ch. 10. Here in chapter 10 the most terrible vision of the whole book is given to him. What Daniel sees in Ch.10 is more frightening than the fiery furnace of Ch. 3; more terrifying than the lion's den of Ch. 4; more horrifying than even the anti-Christ

in Ch. 7. What is this terrible vision that he sees? The pre-incarnate Christ. How strangely delightful. The most terrifying Being in the book of Daniel is the Son of God. And this is a grace to Daniel, and a grace to us. Why? Because Daniel needed to know, Israel needed to know, we need to know that as terrifying as our enemies were, as terrifying as our future might be, Jesus is infinitely more terrible.

Perhaps you are not used to that word—terrible—describing Jesus Christ. That's because words often change meaning over time. Terrible now means bad. But in Old English terrible meant "frightful; formidable; dreadful."¹ It wasn't a negative word *per se*, rather it was a word that invoked solemn awe. Listen to how the old King James described God as terrible.

Deuteronomy 7:21 Thou shalt not be affrighted at them: for the LORD thy God *is* among you, a mighty God and *terrible*.

Jeremiah 20:11 But the LORD is with me as a mighty *terrible* one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed;

Psalms 99:3 Let them praise thy great and *terrible* name; for it is holy.

You see what Daniel sees here in Ch.10 is that Jesus is more terrifying and more terrible than any enemy he could ever face. And this Jesus greatly loved Daniel. And if you have been united to Jesus Christ by the new birth, He greatly loves you. Therefore you have no need to fear "though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea," The LORD of Hosts is with you. This is not your Sunday School Jesus. This Jesus is a dread warrior. As Moses told the children of Israel in **Exodus 14:13-14** "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD...The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent."

¹ Webster's 1828 Dictionary

The Big Idea...

There is no greater terror than Jesus Christ, but do not fear for you are greatly loved, therefore He fights for you

- ☆ He Fights For Our Fear
- ☆ He Fights For Our Fellowship
- ☆ He Fights For Our Freedom

I. He Fights For Our Fear

What happened in Cyrus' first year?

The first thing that we need to see is that ch.10-12 is one seamless vision. As Matthew Henry summarizes "In this chapter we have things introductory to the [vision]², in the eleventh chapter particular predictions, and ch. xii the conclusion of it."³ Alright then, let's look at v.1 "In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar. And the word was true, and it was a great conflict. And he understood the word and had understanding of the vision."

It is significant that this is the *third year* of Cyrus who was the Persian King. It was first year, that Cyrus released the Jews. Please turn to **Ezra 1:1-3** (four books to the left of the Psalms).

In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: [2] "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. [3] Whoever is among you of all his people, may

² original "prophecy"

³ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1960), pg. 1100

his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem.

God had fulfilled His great promise of bringing the Jews back to Jerusalem. The Babylonian captivity is over. So then why do we find Daniel so upset? Look at **v.2-3** “In those days I, Daniel, was *mourning* for three weeks. [3] I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks.” First note, that Daniel had *not* returned to Jerusalem with his countrymen, **v.4** says that he “...was standing on the bank of the great river (that is, the Tigris).” He remained serving under the new king, with his old Babylonian name—Beltshazzar (v.1). Why? The Scripture doesn’t provide us with a specific answer. Perhaps he was too old to make the journey. He was over ninety years old. But I agree with Sinclair Ferguson here who says “What [the Jewish] leaders needed most [those who returned to build] was someone who would engage in the hidden but strategic work of *prayer* for the defense and advance of the kingdom of God.”⁴ God sent some men and women to build and He left some to pray. But I don’t believe that it was Daniel’s physical location that made him so sorrowful.

What happened in Cyrus’ third year?

You see, in Cyrus’ third year something happened in Jerusalem that stopped the building of God’s temple. These are the events of **Ezra 4**. Enemies of God’s people had written to Cyrus’ son Cambyses⁵ whom Cyrus had act as his regent as he traveled abroad, and they spread lies that the Jews were enemies of the king and that if they were allowed to rebuild they would rebel against him. And so a letter was sent out from Cyrus’ son, whom several commentators think

⁴ Sinclair Ferguson, *The Preacher’s Commentary, OT Vol. 21: Daniel*, (Nashville, TN.,: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1988), pg. 191

⁵ This is the testimony of both John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries Vol. XIII*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 234 and Sinclair Ferguson, *The Preacher’s Commentary, OT Vol. 21: Daniel*, (Nashville, TN.,: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1988), pg. 191

is same person named Artaxerses in Ezra 4.⁶ In **Ezra 4:21** we read in his letter “...make a decree that these men be made to cease, and that this city be not rebuilt, until a decree is made by me.” Daniel hears that news. The construction of the temple has stopped. God’s people are being maligned and tormented by their enemies in Jerusalem. The church once again seems like its on the brink of ruin. Things should be getting better, but they are getting worse. What is become of God’s promises? So Daniel mourns over his people. He mourns over God’s name not being established once again in Jerusalem. He doesn’t eat or bathe for three weeks. And he sets his heart to prayer.

Daniel’s heart for the church

Dear congregation, let that soak in. Daniel’s affections didn’t rise and fall with his bank account or with his job or with his iPhone or what people said about him on Twitter or any number of superficial things. His heart rose and fell as the church on earth rose and fell. He wasn’t even in Jerusalem, but his heart ached like it was. Oh to have a heart like this! Oh to sacrifice like this! Oh to pray like this! “God, to hell with my meals and my personal hygiene, I plead with You to protect Your church. God comfort Your persecuted church in North Korea. Wake Your sleeping church in Canada. Strengthen Your weak church in England. Provide for your suffering church in Somalia. Discipline Your wayward church in America. Bring to life your dead church in Mexico. Rise up against the enemies of Your church in Africa. God do whatever it takes. These are Your People. For Your name’s sake—ACT!” Do you see? Daniel’s greatest concern on the earth was for the church. Oh may God give us hearts like this.

The vision of the terrifying man

This prayer, this fasting, this mourning lasted three weeks, until God answered. Picking up in **v.4** we read “On the twenty-fourth day of the first

⁶ “By Artaxerxes here is probably meant the son of Cyrus, called Cambyses by heathen writers.” Source: <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/ezra/4-7.htm> accessed August 11, 2018

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.”

Now the commentators that I have are almost evenly split on who this mysterious man is, some say it’s just an angel, others that this is the pre-incarnate Christ. I believe this is a vision of the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ for two main reasons. First, because Daniel calls this man “my Lord” three times (**vv. 16, 17, 19**).⁷ Secondly, because this is almost an exact description of Jesus Christ in **Revelation 1:12–18**. Please turn there with me.

In **Revelation 1:13** the Apostle John saw “one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe.” This parallels “the man clothed in linen” that Daniel saw in **v.5**.

Both John (**Rev. 1:13**) and Daniel (**v.5**) said this man wore a golden belt around his waist.

Both John (**Rev. 1:16**) and Daniel (**v.6**) said his face was too bright to look at.⁸

Both John (**Rev. 1:14**) and Daniel (**v.6**) said his eyes like flaming torches.

Both John (**Rev. 1:15**) and Daniel (**v.6**) said his legs⁹ were like burnished bronze.

⁷ Sinclair Ferguson, *The Preacher’s Commentary, OT Vol. 21: Daniel*, (Nashville, TN.: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1988), pg. 194

⁸ John said “his face was like the sun shining in full strength”; Daniel said “his face like the appearance of lighting”

⁹ Daniel includes his arms

Both John (**Rev. 1:15**) and Daniel (**v.6**) said that the sound of his voice was like the sound of multitudes or the roar of many waters.

And John heard this man speak, **Revelation 1:17-18** “Fear not, I am the first and the last, [18] and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.” Now who is that? Jesus Christ.¹⁰

The most frightening image in the book of Daniel

So what happened when Daniel saw Christ? Many of us perhaps would expect that Daniel would just run to Him and embrace Him. After all, Jesus is the meek and mild Lamb of God. But that’s not what happened. In **v.7** we see that the men who had been with him, though they themselves didn’t even see the vision, they felt the presence of the Lion of Judah, and they became mortified and fled like a gazelle from it’s hunter.¹¹ In fact the whole chapter is sprinkled with the devastation of seeing Christ.

v.8 “no strength was left in me. My radiant appearance was *fearfully* changed, and I retained no strength.”

v.9 “as I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face”

v.10 “behold, a hand touched me and set me *trembling* on my hands and knees”

v.11 “when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up *trembling*.”

v.15 “I turned my face toward the ground and was mute.”

v.16 “O my lord, by reason of the vision *pains* have come upon me, and I retain no strength.

v.17 “How can my lord's servant talk with my lord? For now no strength remains in me, and no breath is left in me.”

¹⁰ The parallels are delightful. Both men fell down like dead men. In both accounts, Christ said “Fear not.” In both accounts, Christ laid his hand upon his sons.

¹¹ You can see a NT parallel in Acts 9:1-9

By sheer emphasis alone, this is the most frightening vision in the book of Daniel. Jesus is the most terrible sight in this book. Nothing made Daniel more afraid. The question is, how is this fear an answer to Daniel's prayer?

Do not fear them, fear Me

Well children, imagine that in the middle of the night, it's pitch black, and suddenly you hear a loud crash inside your house. Instantly you realize someone a robber, a murderer has broken into your house. You hear footsteps. Heavy footsteps. Your heart skips a beat because you realize that he is walking down the hallway to your room. Your heart is beating so loud, your neighbors can hear it. And then doorknob starts to turn. You've never been more terrified in your life. What do you want at that moment? You want your dad to storm out of his room and show himself terrible. You know that your daddy is kind and gentle and loving, but at that moment you need a lion. You need your dad to show himself terribly violent and rescue you.

Beloved that is what is happening in this last extended vision in Daniel 10-11. Alexander the Great, Antiochus Epiphanies, and the Anti-Christ are all walking down the hallway to devour God's people. And Jesus shows up and says "do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (**Matthew 10:28**). 'Do not fear them, fear Me. Daniel, I see the enemies of my people. You see them. They frighten you. Now look at Me. I'm far more terrible than them.' Beloved, what are you facing in your life right now? Cancer? Divorce? Addiction? Persecution? Confusion? Suicide? Depression? Anxiety? Those problems are scary as hell. But there is one who is infinitely more terrible than they. His eyes are like flames of fire. His name is Jesus. Fear Him.¹² That's our **first point**: Jesus fights for our fear.

¹² "God...does not terrify his sons, as if our disquiet was with him an object of delight, but solely because it is profitable for us; for unless our carnal feelings were utterly subdued, we should never be fit to receive improvement." John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries Vol. XIII*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 245

II. He Fights For Our Fellowship

Gospel Progression: fear then comfort

Please look with me at v.10-11 And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. [11] And he said to me, “O Daniel, man greatly loved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you.” This experience of Daniel is par for the course when it comes to encounters with the Living God. Listen to how Jonathan Edwards puts it:

“If we consider those extraordinary manifestations which God made of himself to saints of old, we shall find that he commonly first manifested himself in a way which was *terrible*, and then by those things that were *comfortable*. So it was with Abraham; first, *a horror of great darkness fell upon him*, and then God revealed himself to him in sweet promises, (**Gen. 15:12-13**)¹³...So it was with Elijah; first, there is a stormy wind, and earthquake, and devouring fire, and then a still, small, sweet voice (**1 Kings 19**). So it was with Daniel; he first saw Christ’s countenance as lightning, that terrified him, and caused him to faint away; and then he is strengthened and refreshed with such comfortable words as these, “O Daniel, a man greatly beloved,” (**Daniel 10**)”¹⁴

You are the beloved of God

Now when Christ spoke these words: “O Daniel, man greatly loved”, it begs for explanation. Because human beings love very differently than how Christ loves. No doubt if you have been around long enough you will have had relationships where the other person has said to you “I love you” but now you no longer have relationship with them, or worse yet, they have become an enemy to you. But God’s great love towards Daniel—representative of all who have been born again—is not so. God is immutable, which means He cannot change. He

¹³ So it was with Moses at mount Sinai; first, God appeared to him in all the terrors of his dreadful majesty, so that Moses said, *I exceedingly fear and quake*; (**Heb. 12:21**) and then he made all his goodness to pass before him, and proclaimed his name, *The Lord God gracious and merciful*, (**Exodus 34:6**)

¹⁴ Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Vol. 1*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2009), pg. 252

cannot love you and then fall out of love with you. **Malachi 3:6** “For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.”

Furthermore, we see that human love not only can end, but all human love has a beginning point. You began to love your parents. You began to love your children. You began to love your spouse. But God’s great love towards His elect is not so. He never began to love us. **Jeremiah 31:3** “I have loved you with an everlasting love;” As long as God has been God, as long as God the Father has loved Jesus Christ, He has loved you.

Lastly I want to point out that human love can grow. We grow in our love towards one another. The Christian can love more today than he or she did yesterday. A thousand ages from now we will love immeasurably more than we do now. But God’s great love towards us is vastly different. God can’t grow in His love towards us because His love is infinite. Infinite can not be improved upon. Jesus tells us what this looks like in **John 17:23** when He says that the Father loves us even as He loves Jesus.

That’s what is packed in that phrase “greatly loved.” It is a love that the Apostle Paul says “surpasses knowledge” (**Ephesians 3:19**). Dear congregation that is what I mean when I call you *beloved*, not point to my love for you—though I do love you very much. But rather I call you beloved **because you are God’s beloved**. That is the most important thing anyone could ever know about you. That you are greatly loved of God. ¹⁵

¹⁵ Even when everything in your life seems to be screaming the opposite. In **Isaiah 49:14-16**, we see this interplay between the discouraged church and her faithful God. In **v.14** we read “But Zion said, “The Lord has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me.” And then the pre-incarnate Christ responds in **v.15-16** “Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. [16] Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me.” Shockingly Jesus wants to be with us. This same Jesus who appeared to Daniel as the most terrible being in the universe says in **John 14:1-3** “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me...I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.”

The demonstration of Christ's love

That's the first thing Christ tells Daniel after he sees his frightening majesty. And then Christ gives him a demonstration of his love in the verses that follow. Look at **v.12-14** "Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. [13] The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, [14] and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come." Three demonstrations of Christ's love here.

1. "I hear your prayers"

First, Jesus is a prayer hearing God. He says in **v.12** "your **words** have been heard, and I have come *because* of your **words**." That word *because* "I have come *because* of your words." *Because* you prayed, I came. Joyce Baldwin in her commentary says this "I have come because of your words implies that this visitation would not have occurred apart from Daniel's specific prayer."¹⁶ Daniel humbled himself, and prayed according to God's will, and then Christ showed up. That same confidence belongs no less to us as New Testament saints. **James 4:8** "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you."

2. "I fight your battles"

Secondly, we see the demonstration of Christ's love in the reason He gives for His delayed response **v.13**: "The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days." What's being alluded to is the very real spiritual warfare that is happening all around us. Paul was not kidding when he said in **Ephesians 6:12** "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present

¹⁶ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction & Commentary*, (Downers Grove, IL.,: Inter-Varsity Press, 1978), pg. 181

darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”¹⁷ You see this explains the events of Ezra 4 that I alluded to earlier. Why was their opposition to the rebuilding of Jerusalem? Why were evil forces opposing the church? Because the Prince of Persia, a demon or many demons was exerting his hateful and malevolent influence on the powers that be.¹⁸ And Christ was delayed in his answering Daniel’s prayers because He was actively warring against these demons. This doesn’t mean that these demons were more powerful than He, any more than the existence of evil today proves that Christ is not all powerful. As Jonathan told his armor bearer in **1 Samuel 14:6** “nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few.” As the WCF says in 5.5 “God, in His ordinary providence, maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at His pleasure.” Christ waged war against the Prince of Persia for three weeks *because* that’s what He decided to do.

3. “I have given you a Word”

Thirdly, Christ demonstrates his love to Daniel in v.14 when He says I came “to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days.” We’ll look at this angel Michael (v.13) in the next section. For now, just consider that Christ loves us by giving us His Word. From Daniel’s perspective, everything that Christ is about to tell him in chapters 11-12 are all future. v.1

¹⁷ As Charles Stanley has said “It doesn’t matter whether you want to be in a spiritual battle—you are in one. The battle is between good and evil, and you are the prize.”

¹⁸ The problem with saying things like this in our materialistic naturalistic culture is that modern man doesn’t believe in the spiritual realm. C.S. Lewis speaks very lucidly on this in his book *The Screwtape Letters*. Here’s what the senior demon Screwtape said to his nephew Wormwood about how to convince men that they don’t exist:

“I do not think you will have much difficulty...The fact that ‘devils’ are predominantly comic figures in the modern imagination will help you. If any faint suspicion of your existence begins to rise in his mind, suggest to him a picture of something in red tights, and persuade him that since he cannot believe in that (it is an old text-book method of confusing them) he therefore cannot believe in you.”

[C.S. Lewis, *The Complete C.S. Lewis Signature Classics*, (New York, NY.: HarperOne, 2002), pg. 139] Oh how a fictional account speak so much truth. If you don’t believe in demons and their hurtful influence on man, you are already deceived. There is a great spiritual battle that is happening all around us that is more real than any war with bombs and bullets. Bombs and bullets exist because of this other battle.

tells us that this will be “a great conflict” but that this “word was true.” Beloved God’s Word is true—every Word of it. It is the only thing in this world that you can rest your body soul and spirit upon. **Isaiah 40:8** “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.”

That’s our **second point**: that Christ is fighting for our fellowship. If you are in Christ, like Daniel, you greatly loved. And Christ demonstrates this love by hearing your prayers, by fighting the demons that wage war against you, and by giving you a sure and certain Word.

III. He Fights For Our Freedom

The vision pains me

After Christ spoke these words to Daniel, Daniel once again became troubled. He says in **v.15** “I turned my face toward the ground and was mute.” And He says in **v.16** “O my lord, by reason of the vision pains have come upon me, and I retain no strength. How can my lord's servant talk with my lord? For now no strength remains in me, and no breath is left in me.” What Daniel says here is very curious. Look at it again in **v.16** “O my lord, by reason of the vision pains have come upon me,” What vision? Not the vision of Ch.11, Daniel hasn’t been shown it yet. No, he’s talking about the vision of Christ in **v.5-6**. That vision of the terrible Christ, that is left out of children’s books. That vision left Daniel so weak and breathless that he couldn’t even speak. Why? Why was this vision of Christ so painful? Jonathan Edwards provides some help here:

“Let us rationally consider what we profess to believe of the infinite greatness of...Jesus Christ...how reasonable it is to suppose, that if God [were to] withdraw the veil [just a little], to let light into the soul—and give a view of the great things of another world in their transcendent and infinite greatness—that human nature, which is as the grass, a shaking leaf, a weak withering flower, should totter under such a discovery! Such a bubble is too weak to bear a weight so vast. Alas! What is man that he should support himself under a view of the awful wrath or infinite glory and love of Jehovah! No wonder therefore

that it is said, “No man can see me and live;” (**Exodus 21:20**) ...That external glory and majesty of Christ [is what] Daniel saw,”¹⁹

Sentimentalized love and a watered down gospel

This view of a terrible Christ—a Lion-like Christ—is difficult for the modern world to swallow. Because it has neutered God of His holiness and has left a God whose love “has been purged of anything that the culture finds uncomfortable.”²⁰ Which causes D.A. Carson to conclude “The love of God has been sanitized, democratized, and above all sentimentalized.”²¹ The modern world have no category for Daniel seeing a vision of Christ which leaves him in pain. It is simply unintelligible. There is no chapter in our children’s books on Jesus where we would ask our parents “This chapter scares me, can we skip it?”

And this has resulted in a watered down gospel. The overwhelming spirituality of our day is that the only people who need to fear Divine wrath, the only people who should have a heart-distressing sight of the danger of their soul are only the grosser sort of sinners²²—the murderers, the rapists, the pedophiles—the rest of us are in pretty good shape. Daniel was not a murderer or a rapist or a pedophile. He was a prophet of God, like Isaiah before him. And yet both of these men when they came face to face with the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, they came undone. When Isaiah saw the white hot holiness of Christ on the throne in **Isaiah 6**, he said in v.5 “Woe is me! [That’s the theological equivalent of “I am damned”—Woe is me!] For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips... for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!” That’s the pain that Daniel felt. Yes he was a prophet—a praying, fasting, mourning, Scripture-reading, church-instructing, culture-building, God-fearing—prophet. But in himself, he was still an unclean sinner. A sinner who deserved judgment. And he felt it

¹⁹ Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Vol. 1*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2009), pg. 368

²⁰ D.A. Carson, *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God*, (Wheaton, IL.,: Crossway, 2000), pg. 11

²¹ *ibid*

²² Iain Murray, *The Old Evangelicalism*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2005), pg. 3

when he saw Christ. The flaming eyes of Christ saw right through his thinly veiled facade of righteousness.

The flaming eyes of Christ

And the flaming eyes of Christ sees right through you and right through me. What does Jesus see in you in just one 24 hour day? He sees how you are almost entirely consumed with your own concerns and desires, and very little concerned with His. He sees all your idols—all those things that control your dreams, your nightmares, how you spend your money, how you choose your relationships. He sees your secret looks, your internet habits, your drinking habits, your sexual habits. He knows of your envy and bitterness. Your drive toward personal autonomy, your fear of man, your fear of failure. He sees your lack of love for others, your half-hearted singing, praying, reading, serving. He sees how you think of yourself better than others, how you avoid some people and cling to others because of advantages that you think it will bring you either financially or relationally. All your heart idolatries and heart adulteries are “naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account” (**Heb. 4:13**). You’ve given Jesus every reason to turn away from you. That’s the pain Daniel felt. It’s as if Daniel had said to Christ “Please go away. I hurt when you are near because I feel so bad facing you.”²³ Isn’t that how you often feel? “Jesus, I don’t want to come near to you, because I feel so bad?” If that’s not how you feel, I’m not sure you’re looking at the terrible Christ of Daniel 10. So how does Christ respond to this pain? With two answers: the historical answer and the gospel answer.

The historical answer to Daniel’s painful vision

First the historical answer. Look at **v.20-21** “Then he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come. [21] But I

²³ Bryan Chapell, *The Gospel According To Daniel*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: BakerBooks, 2014), pg. 179

will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince.

Note three things here. **First**, He asks Daniel in v.20 “Don’t you know why I’ve come?” This is rhetorical. ‘Daniel—you prayed for help. Do you see *now* that your enemies are nothing compared to me?’²⁴ I’m infinitely more terrible than they. **Secondly**, He tells Daniel that He is returning to fight against the prince of Persia, but the prince of Greece will come. This has already been partially revealed to Daniel in ch. 8, but Christ has more to say of it in Ch. 11.²⁵ **Thirdly**, he tells him in v.21 that “Michael your prince” is the only one who contends with by his side. Twice now, Michael is mentioned (v.13, 21). So what’s going on here? For starters it means that more trials and tribulations are in store for the people of God. Michael the prince of Israel—the counterpart to the Prince of Persia and Greece—will continue to be employed in defending Israel alongside of Christ. Who is this Michael? He is one of the archangels. **Revelation 12:7** tells us that “Michael is the leader of the heavenly hosts that will cast Satan out of heaven for his final demise.”²⁶ But perhaps the biggest question is, why is this angel fighting along side of Christ? Does Christ need Him? No. Just like He doesn’t need us. But there is something precious here. God created angels for the sake of serving us. **Hebrews 1:14** “Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?”²⁷ God created a whole race of beings—angels—in order to further communicate His care for His church. Not only is God fighting for us, but all the angels are as well.

²⁴ “The nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales” (Isaiah 40:15).

²⁵ This future unfolding is “the book of truth” that he mentions in v.21 “the record of history future”—Bryan Chapell, *The Gospel According To Daniel*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: BakerBooks, 2014), pg. 182

²⁶ *ibid*, pg. 183

²⁷ “[God] uses such glorious creatures to preserve such minuscule and insignificant human beings.” Wilhelmus A Brakel, *The Christian’s Reasonable Service, Vol. 1: God, Man, and Christ*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Reformation Heritage Books, 1992), pg. 296

That's the historical answer to Daniel's painful vision. 'Daniel, I'm not against you, I'm for you and so is the whole host of Heaven.'

The gospel answer to Daniel's painful vision

So then what is the gospel's answer to Daniel's painful vision of Jesus? How can Christ be for Him? What is the answer for you when you feel so bad that you don't even want to come into His presence or speak with Him? Look at **v.18-19** "Again one having the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me. [19] And he said, "O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage."

We have seen those words—"Peace be with you" before, haven't we? Jesus spoke these words to His disciples on the day of His resurrection. And these words were not spoken in context of their loyalty and fidelity, they were spoken to men who had forsaken Him and abandoned Him in His most desperate hour. It was Peter, who, three times denied that he even knew Jesus, cussing and calling down curses as he did so. He then wept the most bitter tears ever cried by a saint. These men felt the painful vision of Jesus. And yet, when Jesus comes to them behind their locked doors on the evening of His resurrection, His first words are "Peace be with you" (**John 20:19**).

What do these four words imply? War. You don't need peace, if you aren't at war. You see, Jesus doesn't come to you and say "Your sins are alright, don't worry about them." He's not the god of Islam who doesn't require sins to be punished. He's not the god of Mormonism or the J.W.'s or Rome who promises that a little hard work can absolve your sins. No this is Jesus of Daniel 10, the Lion of Judah who will one day return to bring judgment on the earth. He is at war with sin. So then, how could Jesus tell Daniel, and his disciples and you "Peace be with you?"

Because, beloved, Jesus exchanged places with you. At the cross, Jesus went into captivity for you, so that you could be freed. At the cross, Jesus had no angel fighting with Him, He was left utterly alone so that you would never be alone again. At the cross, Jesus felt the painful vision of His Father's wrath, so

that you could feel the Father's pleasure. At the cross, it wasn't the Prince of Persia who fought against Jesus, it was His own Father. **Isaiah 53:6** "the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." At the cross, a decree went forth, but it wasn't to stop the construction of the temple, it was to destroy the True Temple of God. That's why Jesus can say to you this morning 'O man greatly loved, O woman greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage.'" Jesus already fought your war, the war you couldn't fight. That's what the cross is.

If you are here this morning and you haven't been born again, you haven't trusted Christ, what are you waiting for? Jesus is not waiting for you to clean up your act before He receives you into His kingdom. You can't clean up your act. Your situation is too desperate. But good news, Jesus only saves desperate people. Trust Him this morning. He has already fought death and conquered it. Isn't that the Savior you want on Your side on the day that you die? Don't you want a Savior who fights for you, who says to you "You are greatly loved?" Don't you want a Savior who has the authority to say "Peace be with you" and mean it? The promise of the Bible is so clear—if you surrender to Christ, if you trust in Him, then you will have peace with God. **Romans 5:1** "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." That's our **third point**: that Christ fights for our freedom.

Application

Our Duty: Humble yourself under the One who fights for you

Christ shows us what He wants from us in this passage. He spoke to Daniel in **v.12** "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words." Daniel humbled himself. Our duty is to humble ourselves. But how do we do that? What does it look like to

be humble? Please turn with me to **1 Peter 5:6-7**. This verse has been such a lifeline for my own heart, because it shows us what true humility is, and I hope it will surprise you. **1 Peter 5:6-7** says “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.”²⁸ What I want you to see is the intimate connection between the beginning of **v.6** and the beginning of **v.7**. The command in **v.6** is “Humble yourselves”—that’s what Christ was pleased in with Daniel. How did Daniel do that? Look at the beginning of **v.7** “casting all your anxieties on him.” **v.6** is the command, **v.7** tells us how to carry out the command. It’s like saying “Clean up your room *by* vacuuming the floor” or “Raise your children up in the Lord *by* regularly teaching them the Scripture.” Here it’s “Humble yourself *by* casting your anxieties on him.”

Humility is casting your anxieties on Christ

Pride is thinking you are strong enough to fight your own battles.

So then how do you cast your anxieties on the Lord? Prayer. That’s what Daniel did. Prayer isn’t for the spiritually elite. It’s for the weak and worn out. Prayer “is a confession that we can do nothing and that God alone can work.”²⁹ Prayer is trusting in the Christ who fights for you. More than that, He cares for you. That’s how the verse ends—“casting all your anxieties on him, *because he cares for you.*” Such a precious truth—Peter is telling us that humility is giving all our worries to God because He cares for us, He fights for us.

If the Christ of Daniel was able to carry His anxieties, is He not able to carry yours beloved? Trust Him. Cry out to Him “Lord take this concern, and that concern, this worry and that worry—I know that you care for me.” And then watch Him act. He told Daniel “I have come because of your prayers.”

²⁸ John Piper, *Future Grace*, (Colorado Springs, CO.: Multnomah Books, Revised Edition 2012), pg. 94

²⁹ Sinclair Ferguson, *The Preacher’s Commentary, OT Vol. 21: Daniel*, (Nashville, TN.: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1988), pg. 200