

Daniel 10

Brynmawr Family Church Sermon
Stuart Wheatman, Sunday 21st June 2009

Read Dan 10:1-21

Intro-v2- 'Mourning 3 full weeks'

- 3rd yr of Cyrus- Daniel taken into captivity in Babylonia as a youth during the first deportation from Judah. Sees reigns of power go from Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar+Belshazzar) to Media (Darius placed on throne by Cyrus) to Persia (Cyrus). In Cyrus' first year decree for Jews to return & rebuild temple (see Ezra 1:1- Zerubbabel & Josiah high priest take band of Jews back). Many Jews choose to stay in Babylon. After just over 2 years of work to lay the foundation of the temple the work ground to a halt due to discouragement and opposition from the enemy (see Ezra 3:8; 4:1-5) it seemed that God's words had failed (although we know that God later used the prophets Haggai & Zechariah to remotivate the people- Ezra 5:1-2). No wonder Daniel was mourning. It was at this time, still being stuck in Babylon & Persia working for and influencing the Persian rulers that Daniel humbled himself in desperation to seek God's face for breakthrough. From his experience we can learn several lessons.

1. Remain focussed- v2 'Mourning'

- Daniel remained focussed on God's agenda- in Dan 9:2 Daniel understood from Jeremiah's prophecies that the captivity in Babylon was to last for 70 years, so he humbled himself in prayer, fasting and repentance (Dan 9:3). His focus, and God's focus was to see Israel restored fully to the land. There were 2 ways Satan sought to distract Israel from their calling:
 - i) Comfort- Many Jews had given in to apathy and materialism by staying in Babylon for the city life and perks.
 - ii) Trial- The Jews that had followed God's prompting under Zerubbabel and returned had given up due to discouragement and opposition.
- Daniel, however remained focussed on God's agenda and so returns simply to prayer.
- Our focus=to preach the gospel and make disciples. To build strong healthy local Church and grow to plant more Churches. Worship. Discipleship. Fellowship (love one another). Ministry. Evangelism. Prayer. Presence. Mercy.
- In what ways is Satan trying to divert you/me/us off our focus? Through apathy (comfort) /opposition (trial).

2. Persevere-v2 '3 full weeks'

- Daniel was prepared to remain focussed as long as it took to get the job done. He needed answers from the Lord regarding Israel's future- had he heard right or was he deceived? He had to know.
- Are we in it for the long haul? It does not appear that Daniel ever did return from captivity but served God's purposes in a foreign land- are we prepared to serve God anywhere, for any length of time? Are we prepared to persevere until breakthrough?
- Daniel was an old man by this time and things still weren't going right, but he still did not abandon his dreams from God- will we?

3. Be prepared to sacrifice- v3- 'I ate no pleasant food...'

- Daniel was prepared to sacrifice to seek God's face- are we?

- Partial fast for 21 days- No choice food; no meat; no wine; no lotions.
- Partial fasts. Full fasts. Fasting time, sleep (e.g. Jesus before choosing 12, Gethsemane), luxuries (lotion, T.V., guitar, sex- see Paul 1Cor 7:5; Ex 19:15, comfortable clothes- by wearing sackcloth and ashes- Dan 9:3).

4. Seek an Encounter- v5-9 (he sees God)

- The encounter Daniel has must be with Jesus as the description is very similar to what Paul (Acts 9:1-9; Acts 22:6-10- the men saw the light and heard a voice but did not see Jesus or understand the voice) and John (Rev 1:9-19) encountered.
- My dream about Jesus- molten liquid face like human torch.
- An encounter with God will change our life and result in more good than we can imagine- read testimonies of Charles Finney & Evan Roberts.
- Desire an encounter- ask for it. 'Seek and you shall find'

5. Understand the Battle-v10-21

- From verse 10 it appears an angel (v16- 'one like a son of man'- i.e. someone like a person) has been sent to him (v11 'I have now been sent to you'); in contrast to the awesome vision of God he has just had.
- From these verses it is clear that angels bring revelation, protect the people of God and fight to see God's purposes come to pass.
- V12-13 Daniel's words were heard on the first day but it took 21 days for the answer to come due to spiritual battle in the heavenlies. We know that our struggle is not against flesh and blood (see Eph 6:10-13) so we should not be surprised when we see some opposition to what God has called us to do. We should not allow this to distract us from doing the job God has called us to do- this is what it means to put on the full armour of God- to be in the war, fighting the good fight and to stand our ground not giving any ground or foothold to the evil one. Don't give up the fight when it gets tough- God is with us.
- Satan wants territory- just as he did with the land of Israel. Prince of Persia (v13) and later the Prince of Greece (v20). These are demons controlling a whole empire through manipulating the physical kings and rulers and propagating dogmas to whole people groups (Persia was the empire at the time, under Cyrus, but Greece was to come in the future under Alexander's conquests). These demonic principalities seek to snuff out the purposes of God and destroy the people of God, claiming their territory and inheritance but God will have His way and will use our prayers and actions to see His will come to pass. What Satan means for harm God will turn around for good (like Balaam's curse)- especially when we groan out to the Lord as Daniel did (Romans 8:26-28); even demons cannot separate us from God's love (Dan 10:11- 'O Daniel, man greatly beloved'; Rom 8:38-39)!
- We need to realise we are seated with Christ and take authority over the works of the evil one and also pray to God with a believing heart, and persist as Daniel did for 21 days. Sometimes we need to repent where we have let Satan take the ground- in Dan 9 Daniel repented on behalf of himself and his people.

6. Get ready for the download

- Daniel describes the message as having a 'long appointed time' (10:1, NKJV) and the angel refers to it as happening to God's people in the 'latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come' (10:14). This was so reassuring to Daniel, who just wanted to know if God's people were going to make it through the present crisis, but God sees the bigger picture and brings messages not only for then, but also way on into Israel's rich future. God sees how we fit into the big picture and will use us in powerful ways to affect future generations like blessed patriarchs and matriarchs in

- a family tree- like Abraham and Sarah- we are people of destiny.
- God will give us far more than we give to Him. 21 days of consecration to God resulted in such a great revelation of world history. Dr Bruce Wilkinson (Walk Thru Bible) says 'Chapter 11 alone contains over 100 specific prophecies of historical events that literally came true! It is no wonder that some critics attempt to place Daniel 200 years later in order to understand the miraculous nature of his prophecies!' (Daily Walk Bible NLT pg 968).
- As we truly dedicate ourselves to seeking God's face and purposes despite all distractions we too will have an overflow, more than we can hold, pressed down and shaken- in the measure we give to God we will receive back but multiplied -Lk 6:38 (e.g. the loaves and fish that someone was prepared to give God).

Conclusion

- Daniel was a man focussed on God's purposes and willing to seek Him for them to come to pass. As we remain steadfast in what God has called us to do and also follow Daniel's lead in seeking God's face, we too will receive an abundance from God's treasure rooms in Heaven and not only see His purposes come to pass in our generation, but see the baton passed on to many generations in the future.

Prayer- For God's purposes to come to pass+ surrender to His will

Charles Finney receives the power of the Holy Spirit

Just before evening the thought took possession of my mind, that as soon as I was left alone in the new office, I would try to pray again — that I was not going to abandon the subject of religion and give it up, at any rate; and therefore, although I no longer had any concern about my soul, still I would continue to pray.

By evening we got the books and furniture adjusted; and I made up, in an open fireplace, a good fire, hoping to spend the evening alone. Just at dark Squire W——, seeing that everything was adjusted, bade me goodnight and went home. I had accompanied him to the door; and as I closed the door and turned around, my heart seemed to be liquid within me. All my feelings seemed to rise and flow out; and the utterance of my heart was, "I want to pour my whole soul out to God." The rising of my soul was so great that I rushed into the room behind the front office, to pray.

There was no fire, and no light, in the room; nevertheless it appeared to me as if it were perfectly light. As I went in and shut the door after me, it seemed as if I met the Lord Jesus Christ face to face. It did not occur to me that it was wholly a mental state. On the contrary it seemed to me that I saw him as I would see any other man. He said nothing, but looked at me in such a manner as to break me right down at his feet. I have always since regarded this as a most remarkable state of mind; for it seemed that he stood before me, and I fell down at his feet and poured out my soul to him. I wept aloud like a child, and made such confessions as I could with my choked utterance.

I must have continued in this state for a good while; but my mind was too much absorbed with the interview to recollect anything that I said. But I know, as soon as my mind became calm, I returned to the front office, and found that the fire that I had made of large wood was nearly burned out. But as I turned and was about to take a seat by the fire, I received a mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost. Without any expectation of it, without ever having the thought in my mind that there was any such thing for me, without any recollection that I had ever heard the thing mentioned by any person in the world, the Holy Spirit descended upon me in a manner that seemed to go through me, body and soul.

I could feel the impression, like a wave of electricity, going through and through me. Indeed it seemed to come in waves and waves of liquid love for I could not express it in any other way. It seemed like the very breath of God. I can recollect distinctly that it seemed to fan me, like immense wings. No words can express the wonderful love that was shed abroad in my heart. I wept aloud with joy and love; and I do not know but I should say, I literally bellowed out the unutterable gushings of my heart. These waves came over me, and over me, and over me, one after the other, until I recollect I cried out, "I shall die if these waves continue to pass over me." I said, "Lord, I cannot bear any more;" yet I had no fear of death.

How long I continued in this state I do not know. But it was late in the evening when a member of my choir came to see me. He was a member of the church. He found me in this state of loud weeping, and said, "Mr. Finney, what ails you?" I could make him no answer for some time. He then said, "Are you in pain?" I gathered myself up as best I could, and replied, "No, but so happy that I cannot live."

He left the office, and in a few minutes returned with one of the elders of the church, whose shop was nearly across the way from our office. This elder was a very serious man; and in my presence had been very watchful, and I had scarcely ever seen him laugh. He asked me how I felt, and I began to tell him. Instead of saying anything, he fell into a most spasmodic laughter. It seemed as if it was impossible for him to keep from laughing from the very bottom of his heart.

Charles Finney, Autobiography, Chapter 2. Conversion to Christ

Finney's further testimony to the continuing power of the Spirit

"I was powerfully converted on the morning of the 10th of October, 1821," writes Chas. G. Finney. "In the evening of the same day I received overwhelming baptisms of the Holy Ghost, that went through me, as it seemed to me, body and soul. I immediately found myself endued with such power from on high that a few words dropped here and there to individuals were the means of their immediate conversion. My words seemed to fasten like barbed arrows in the souls of men. They cut like a sword. They broke the heart like a hammer. Multitudes can attest to this. Oftentimes a word dropped without my remembering it would fasten conviction, and often result in almost immediate conversion. Sometimes I would find myself, in a great measure, empty of this power. I would go and visit, and find that I made no saving impression. I would exhort and pray, with the same result. I would then set apart a day for private fasting and prayer, fearing that this power had departed from me, and would inquire anxiously after the reason of this apparent emptiness. After humbling myself, and crying out for help, the power would return upon me with all its freshness. This has been the experience of my life.

"This power is a great marvel. I have many times seen people unable to endure the Word. The most simple and ordinary statements would cut men off their seats like a sword, would take away their strength, and render them almost helpless as dead men. Several times it has been true in my experience that I could not raise my voice, or say anything in prayer or exhortation, except in the mildest manner, without overcoming them. This power seems sometimes to pervade the atmosphere of the one who is highly charged with it. Many times great numbers of persons in a community will be clothed with this power when the very atmosphere of the whole place seems to be charged with the life of God. Strangers coming into it, and passing through the place will be instantly smitten with conviction of sin and in many instances converted to Christ. When Christians humble themselves and consecrate their all afresh to Christ, and ask for

this power, they will often receive such a baptism that they will be instrumental in converting more souls in one day than in all their lifetime before. While Christians remain humble enough to retain this power, the work of conversion will go on, till whole communities and regions of country are converted to Christ. The same is true of the ministry."

Charles Finney, Tract, Words of Life – Extra Edition, Nov. 1921

Evan Robert's Experience of God

"For thirteen years I had prayed for the Spirit, and this is the way I was led to pray. William Davies, the deacon, said one night in the society:-

"Remember to be faithful. What if the Spirit descended and you absent? Remember Thomas! What a loss he had!"

"I said then to myself: 'I will have the Spirit.' And through all weather, and in spite of all difficulties, I went to the meetings. Many times, on seeing other boys with the boats on the tide, I was tempted to turn back and join them. But, no. Then I said to myself: 'Remember your resolve to be faithful,' and on I went. Prayer meeting Monday evening at the chapel; prayer meeting Tuesday evening at Pisgah (Sunday School branch); Church meeting Wednesday evening; Band of Hope Thursday; class Friday evening-to these I went faithfully throughout the years. For ten or eleven years I have prayed for a revival. I could sit up all night to read or talk about revivals. It was the Spirit that moved me to think about a revival.

"One Friday night last spring, when praying by my bedside before retiring, I was taken up to a great expanse – with out time and space. It was communion with God. Before this a far-off God I had. I was frightened that night, but never since. So great was my shivering that I rocked the bed, and my brother, being awakened, took hold of me, thinking I was ill.

"After that experience I was awakened every night a little after one o'clock. This was most strange, for through the years I slept like a rock, and no disturbance in my room would awaken me. From that hour I was taken up into the Divine Fellowship for about four hours. What it was I cannot tell you; except that it was Divine. About five o'clock I was again allowed to sleep on till about nine.

At this time I was again taken up into the same experience as in the earlier hours of the morning until about twelve or one o'clock.

"I got up Sunday. The Rev. Seth Joshua was there. Tuesday evening there was a prayer meeting, and Sydney Evans and others came to see me, and asked if I would go to the meeting. At that moment I felt the Spirit coming upon me, and so irresistible did He come that I rushed to the chapel without my topcoat. The influence began. I was ready to pray - to pray for power to the young women who were there from New Quay, lest the people should wait upon them.....

"The seven o'clock meeting was devoted to asking and answering questions. The Rev. W. W. Lewis conducted. At the close the Rev. Seth Joshua prayed, and said, during his prayer, 'Lord, do this, and this, and this, &c., and bend us.' He did not say, 'O Lord, bend us.' It was the Spirit that put the emphasis for me on 'Bend us.' 'That is what you need,' said the Spirit to me. And as I went out I prayed, 'O Lord, bend me.'....

"It is possible that God is offering me the Spirit, and that I am unprepared to receive Him; that others are ready to receive, but are not offered?' Now my bosom was quite full-tight.

'On the way to the nine o'clock meeting the Rev. Seth Joshua remarked, 'We are going to have a wonderful meeting to-day.' To this I replied, 'I feel myself almost bursting.'.....

"The meeting, having been opened, was handed over to the Spirit. I was conscious that I would have to pray. As one and the other prayed I put the question to the Spirit, 'Shall I pray now?' 'Wait a while,' said He. When others prayed I felt a living force come into my bosom. It held my breath, and my legs shivered, and after every prayer I asked, 'Shall I now?' The living force grew and grew, and I was almost bursting. And instantly someone ended his prayer-my bosom boiling. I would have burst if I had not prayed. What boiled me was that verse, 'God commending His Love.' I fell on my knees with my arms over the seat in front of me, and the tears and perspiration flowed freely. I thought blood was gushing forth. Mrs. Davies, Mona, New Quay, came to wipe my face. On my right was Mag Phillips, and on my left Maud Davies. For about two minutes it was fearful. I cried, 'Bend me! Bend me! Bend us!' Then, 'Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh!' and Mrs Davies said, 'O wonderful Grace!' What bent me was God commending His Love, and I not seeing anything in it to commend. After I was bent a wave of peace came over me, and the audience sang, 'I hear Thy welcome Voice.' And as they sang I thought of the bending at the Judgement Day, and I was filled with compassion for those who would be bent on that day, and I wept.

Henceforth the salvation of souls became the burden of my heart. From that time I was on fire with a desire to go through all Wales, and, if it were possible, I was willing to pay God for allowing me to go.

Evan Roberts, Western Mail, Religious Revival in Wales No. 3. Mr. Roberts Tells The Story Of His Conversion