

## **“Be Not Afraid, Daniel”**

**Daniel 10:10-14**

**July 27, 2025**

I have to admit it was kind of jarring for me to come back from a week of vacation and be faced with the Biblical text for today which I had chosen months ago. It is so different from my context from which I had just come, a resort at the ocean. So I have to think that it is kind of jarring for you to come into this church from the world and your lives and hear this text.

We live in a world that is fast paced, with 24-hour news cycles, and people and issues that challenge us in many ways. My world is focused on this church and my retirement, so if you're retired, you know all the paperwork involved in such a transition, not the least of which is for medical insurance. You also know what it is to leave a “company” or “business” and transition to the next leader. It involves both packing up an office and preparing an office and staff. My world has also recently focused on grief, for we had to put down our 15-year-old dog Tawny.

The Biblical text for today doesn't seem to relate to us or me at all. First of all, it is so long ago. It is set in the third year of the reign of King Cyrus of Persia, probably 537 BC.<sup>1</sup> The text tells of something quite foreign to us. It is a vision of a man named Daniel. Visions are not often common in our worlds.

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<sup>1</sup> Bible.org

Second, the vision is a seemingly unbelievable encounter between Daniel and what seems like an angel. We have to open our minds to understand what it says. Yet in that encounter, we hear these familiar words, “Do not fear.” The angel tells Daniel that he has come because of Daniel’s prayers. And the angel has come to lift the veil so that Daniel is given a picture of what is really going on in his world and what is to come. There is, to put it bluntly, a **spiritual conflict** occurring.

Hearing of spiritual conflicts, spiritual warfare, may make us think of wild-eyed preachers speaking of things we aren’t really used to. We may want to move ahead to passages in the New Testament where there are stories we understand and are used to. But we must stay in this text and hear it.

Despite the initial jarring we feel at hearing the text, I wonder if we can actually relate at least to these last two points. We are not to fear, and way beyond what we know, there IS a spiritual conflict going on in our world.

How so? Well, let’s begin with the “do not fear” command. Look closely here. Daniel is visibly afraid when he encounters the heavenly figure. Has this figure come for judgment or punishment? And is the figure not simply an angel, but the pre-incarnate Christ? People of Daniel’s day were taught to fear if God appeared to them. Or, is the first

figure Christ, and then the second figure an angel? Are there two people here?

Further, God's people, and Daniel, are in exile from their land for their disobedience. Also, the people have spent a generation in exile, and many don't really want to go back to their land. They have moved on with their lives, and perhaps with their faith.

Before we even read this text, earlier in chapter 10, we see that Daniel is in mourning. As one commentator notes,

*Daniel's vision was preceded by three weeks of mourning during which time he did not enjoy the fine foods were available to him. Over what was Daniel mourning? We are not given the answer. Perhaps he was mourning over Israel's sin or over the difficulties the Jews who had returned to Jerusalem were having. It could have been the new temple would not have the same glory as the old or the enemies of the Jews were hindering the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple. In the final analysis, we only know that Daniel was mourning and that he had set his heart to gain understanding. Daniel's vision was a belated answer to his prayer.*

With regard to the second point we might be able to relate to, I can only assess what I see going on in the world as a **spiritual conflict**. As Paul writes to the Ephesians,

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places. Therefore, take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.*

What then, are we to do in this situation, where we might be afraid, depressed, or feel out of control? Like Daniel, and as Paul says, we are to pray. There is real power in prayer. Remember what the angel says to Daniel. The angel says:

*Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and humble yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words.*

Daniel is given this vision because of his ongoing conversation with God. “Your words” are important to God.

Preacher David Platt<sup>2</sup> writes this about our words in prayer as well:

*So when you pray, realize you are participating in spiritual warfare. Spiritual warfare is not just kind of wild, crazy things that happen here or there, like spiritual warfare is happening every single day, really every moment in our minds, in our hearts, and prayer is the spiritual weapon in this warfare. So we pray [that] God helps us to realize the spiritual warfare that's happening all around us right now. Right now in our own minds, our own desires, our own lives, our own words, our own actions, our own families, and our own workplaces, there is spiritual warfare happening all around us. [We ask always that God will] help us to be aware that there's so much more than what we see physically, [to]help us particularly in the West with our rationalistic minds that almost discount the spiritual.*

When the angel says, “do not fear,” he also means that while things might look bad now, God has the ultimate victory. Gods got this! Pastor Timothy Shrimpton<sup>3</sup> writes

*But when God started speaking to Daniel he didn't say, “I'm going to be real with you. Things look bad. I'm not sure how this is going to go.” No, none of that at all! How did he start the conversation? “Do not be*

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<sup>2</sup> David Platt, “Spiritual Warfare: Daniel 10:13.”

<sup>3</sup> Timothy Shrimpton, “Sermon: Do Not Be Afraid.”

*afraid, Daniel.” The immediate term looks dicey, but there is no question about the ultimate outcome of what is going to happen....*

*God’s victory is not in doubt. But his victory does not mean that things will always be wonderful in our lives. In fact, just the contrary. We are in the midst of a battle. A spiritual war wages on around us and, at times, even within us..., While we are in this world, challenges to gospel ministry, challenges to the Word going forward will come. Those challenges, those attacks, will be vicious and frequent. That, however, does not mean that God has abandoned us or that he is not in control.*

*As we face these challenges today as a congregation, what is the message that God has for us? As we struggle with fear over the things that plague our families, our friends, even our own bodies, what does God say to us? The same thing he said to Daniel, “Do not be afraid.” No matter what it looks like, no matter what it feels like, we will not lose. His Word will not return to him ineffectively. He continues to send his angels to protect us from the attacks of the forces of evil. And the end result will be eternal victory for us with our Living Savior.*

*Satan has lost the war, he’s going to spit and fight in this final battle to try to get something, anything for his trouble. But you, my brothers and sisters, are safe. You will not be harmed at all by him and you need not fear. As we strive to share this gospel, this good news, with those around us, we will face trouble and hardship. But the Lord will work all things*

*for our eternal good and nothing can stop his will from being done.  
Thank God for his protection!*

The angel also says to Daniel, even before he says, “do not fear,”  
“Daniel, you are greatly beloved.” I wonder, do we hear God’s love of us? Do we believe it? Do we trust in it, even when it seems all is lost, or all is pointless?

I was a bit jarred coming to this text on Monday morning. It is a text that can shake us. I have never been afraid of death; I know where I am going. But sometimes I fear whether God really loves me because I ask the question all of us struggle with at times; if God really loves us, why must we---me and others---go through all the challenges life brings us?

I don’t have the answer to that question. But I believe in God, and I trust in Him, and I seek to live in his way. I have moments where his love is confirmed to me, and I hold fast to those moments. I pray you will as well, even as you continue to struggle with your questions.

Do not fear.

There is a spiritual conflict going on.

You are beloved by God.

Amen.

