

Daniel Chapter 10

Insight into the spiritual realm and the battle that rages over the souls of men.

Vision of the Glorious Man

10 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message was true, but the appointed time was long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision. ² In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. ³ I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

⁴ Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that is, the Tigris, ⁵ I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz! ⁶ His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in colour, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.

⁷ And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. ⁸ Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength. ⁹ Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.

Prophecies Concerning Persia and Greece

¹⁰ Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands. ¹¹ And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling.

¹² Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. ¹³ But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. ¹⁴ Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come."

¹⁵ When he had spoken such words to me, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. ¹⁶ And suddenly, one having the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke, saying to him who stood before me, "My lord, because of the vision my sorrows have overwhelmed me, and I have retained no strength. ¹⁷ For how can this servant of my lord talk with you, my lord? As for me, no strength remains in me now, nor is any breath left in me."

¹⁸ Then again, the one having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me. ¹⁹ And he said, "O man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace be to you; be strong, yes, be strong!"

So when he spoke to me I was strengthened, and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."

²⁰ Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come. ²¹ But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince.

Circumstances of the Final Vision

A. Daniel's vision of the mysterious man [10:1–9]

1. Introduction: Daniel's state of heart (1–3)

¹ In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message was true, but the appointed time was long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision. ² In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. ³ I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

Here, we see Daniel fasting and pressing in to God's presence. Keep in mind Daniel at this point is at least eighty-five years old. If there was ever a time a person could say, "I deserve a break," it would have been Daniel. After all, he had been praying three times a day for years. He had been cast into the lions' den. He had interpreted dreams and visions under intense pressure. If ever there was a time to relax, it would be now. But Daniel didn't do this. At this time, he launches into another fast. For three full weeks, he sought the Lord with intensity. His was a partial fast—no pastries, no meat, no wine. Fasting can take on that form, as well. Fasting can be for varied lengths of time and from varied types of food.

v1 In the third year of Cyrus: By this time, the first wave of exiles had returned under the leadership of Ezra (Ezra 1–2).

v1 The message was true, but the appointed time was long: Daniel 10 sets the stage for the spectacular prophecy (**message**) of Daniel 11, which described a time of great persecution and testing for the people of Israel.

Walvoord on **the appointed time was long:** "The implication is that the period in view is a long and strenuous one involving great conflict and trouble for the people of God."

v2 Mourning three full weeks: Some think that Daniel was in mourning because so few Jews had returned with Ezra from exile. Others believe it was because Ezra faced severe opposition in rebuilding the temple.

Most likely, Daniel did not go back with Ezra's group of exiles because he was about 84 years old at this time. Also, Daniel could serve the exiles better from his high position in government than he could with them in Jerusalem.

2. Daniel sees a glorious man on the banks of the Tigris River (4–6)

⁴ Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that is, the Tigris, ⁵ I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz! ⁶ His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms

and feet like burnished bronze in colour, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.

v5 **A certain man clothed in linen:** Commentators divide over the identity of this **certain man**. Some say this is Jesus, noting that the description is remarkably like what John saw in Revelation 1:12–16.

...**A certain man clothed in linen:** Some others think that the **certain man** is an unnamed angel of high rank, especially considering that Jesus would not need the assistance of Michael to overcome a demon, mentioned in Daniel 10:13. Also, Ezekiel saw angelic figures **clothed in linen** (Ezekiel 9:2).

3. Daniel's companions are terrified, yet unseeing (7)

And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

I, Daniel, alone saw the vision: It's pretty obvious that there was something supernatural about this vision. Daniel saw what he saw regarding the glorious man, but his companions could not see it, though they could feel the presence of the angel.

This is like Saul on the road to Damascus, when his companions could hear, but not understand, the same voice from heaven that he heard. These cases remind us that we can be close to the presence and power of God, yet miss the message through lack of spiritual perception.

4. Daniel's reaction to the sight of the man (8–9)

⁸Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength. ⁹Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.

v8 **No strength remained in me:** As godly as Daniel was, he was undone by this vision of the glorious man. Daniel's experience shows us that even the holiest of men fall short before God and even before His closest servants.

v8 **My vigor was turned to frailty:** Wood says of this word **frailty**, "The word suggests a death-like paleness, combined with a grotesque wrenching of facial features." Like "death warmed up."

Other people in the Scriptures had similar experiences. It's good to look at Isaiah's experience in:

Isaiah 6:1-7

¹ In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. ² Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one cried to another and said:

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
The whole earth is full of His glory!"

⁴ And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

⁵ So I said:

“Woe is me, for I am undone!
Because 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.”

⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. ⁷ And he touched my mouth with it, and said:

“Behold, this has touched your lips;
Your iniquity is taken away,
And your sin purged.”

Think about why Isaiah felt so fearful, small and overwhelmed — he was in the presence of holiness and purity — perfection. Whether it be an angel or Jesus, when we are exposed to pure righteousness and holiness, our “filthy rags” righteousness is revealed for what is really is. Only then do we see our real need — the need to be forgiven and cleansed, to have somebody pay the penalty for our sins. The altar represents the place of sacrifice - a picture of the payment of our sins that Jesus accomplished when He died on the cross.

Why didn't Isaiah recognise this before? After all, he has just spent 5 chapters proclaiming judgement against various nations. It's because of the deceitfulness of our hearts, our sinful nature:

Jeremiah 17:9-10

⁹ **“The human heart is the most deceitful of all things,
and desperately wicked.
Who really knows how bad it is?**

¹⁰ But I, the Lord, search all hearts
and examine secret motives.
I give all people their due rewards,
according to what their actions deserve.”

Because of this deception, also called pride, where we make ourselves out to be better or more righteous than we really are, we don't see our need for salvation.

Here is an illustration to help us understand this. Story of the sheep against the green grass and then against the snow... Imagine you are driving along a road in New Zealand... sheep look white against the green grass, but dirty against the snow. Moral... We look good when we compare ourselves with others, but not so good when compared to perfection.

Imagine the horror of the unsaved when they finally stand in the presence of the Holy God at the Great White throne judgement, and for the first time in their existence, they finally see how wretched they are — all pride and pretence is gone, burned away by the sheer beauty and holiness of God — and sin and their sinful condition is seen in all it's ugliness and depravity.

On the other hand, imagine the relief and appreciation that we Christians will experience when we stand before the Bema seat (judgement of rewards) as we realise what we have been saved from.

But right now in this life, we can meditate on the following scriptures to help us more fully understand and therefore better appreciate God and love Him more for all He has already done for us:

Titus 3:3-7 NLT

³ Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled and became slaves to many lusts and pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy, and we hated each other.

⁴ **But—When God our Saviour revealed his kindness and love, ⁵ he saved us,** not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. ⁶ He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Saviour. ⁷ Because of his grace he made us right in his sight and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life. ⁸ This is a trustworthy saying, and I want you to **insist on these teachings so that all who trust in God will devote themselves to doing good.** These teachings are good and beneficial for everyone.

Ephesians 2:1-10

¹ Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. ² You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God.

³ All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else.

⁴ **But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, ⁵ that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead.** (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) ⁶ For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus.

⁷ **So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.**

⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. ¹⁰ For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, **so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.**

This is a repeated theme in the Scriptures, especially the epistles.

Love and appreciation for God's goodness towards us causes us to *want* to repent and obey. It's not I *got* to, it's I *get* to.

Here's how it works. Usually, in the first half of the Epistle or letter, God shows us how much He's done for us before He shows us how He expects us to live. This causes us to serve God with an attitude of love and appreciation. It changes our attitude from, "I have to do this because God said so," to, "I want to obey because God freed me from the old life of slavery to sin — I'm so thankful that I would do anything for Him." There is nothing I wouldn't give up for Him, because there is nothing that he didn't give up for me — He gave it all, including His very life.

In other words, the more I understand how much God loves me, as demonstrated by what Jesus did for me on the cross, the more I will love and appreciate Him in return. Think about the following verses:

Romans 5:8 - But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

1 John 4:19 - We love Him because He first loved us.

Is this just a new testament thing, or was love the motive God was looking for in the OT as well?

Psalm 116:1-19 NLT

¹ I love the Lord because he hears my voice
and my prayer for mercy.

² Because he bends down to listen,
I will pray as long as I have breath!

³ Death wrapped its ropes around me;
the terrors of the grave overtook me.
I saw only trouble and sorrow.

⁴ Then I called on the name of the Lord:
“Please, Lord, save me!”

⁵ **How kind the Lord is! How good he is!
So merciful, this God of ours!**

⁶ **The Lord protects those of childlike faith;
I was facing death, and he saved me.**

⁷ Let my soul be at rest again,
for the Lord has been good to me.

⁸ He has saved me from death,
my eyes from tears,
my feet from stumbling.

⁹ **And so I walk in the Lord’s presence
as I live here on earth!**

¹⁰ **I believed in you**, so I said,
“I am deeply troubled, Lord.”

¹¹ In my anxiety I cried out to you,
“These people are all liars!”

****12 What can I offer the Lord
for all he has done for me?**

¹³ **I will lift up the cup of salvation
and praise the Lord’s name for saving me.**

¹⁴ I will keep my promises to the Lord
in the presence of all his people.

¹⁵ The Lord cares deeply
when his loved ones die.

¹⁶ **O Lord, I am your servant;
yes, I am your servant, born into your household;
you have freed me from my chains.**

¹⁷ I will offer you a sacrifice of thanksgiving
and call on the name of the Lord.

¹⁸ I will fulfill my vows to the Lord
in the presence of all his people—

¹⁹ in the house of the Lord
in the heart of Jerusalem.

Praise the Lord!

Look at v 12: ¹² What can I offer the Lord for all he has done for me?

We can't repay, so don't even try. But the proper, logical, thankful response is to want to give back. Think about someone who saved you from certain death by drowning. You can never pay them back because you owe them your life. But instead, your response is to be thankful, and what you are willing to do for them indicates how thankful you are to them.

Story - All that I am and all that I have I give to You - 14 yr old boy stood on/in offering plate (Jim Boswell).

Acts of complete surrender (of dying to self) are the anticipated response to discipleship or following Jesus.

Romans 12:1 AMP - I appeal to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your **reasonable (rational, logical, intelligent)** service and spiritual worship.

Someone said, "We should all be on fire. If not, we are cold."

Now, how does what Jesus has done for us affect the way we treat each other?

1 John 4:9-11

⁹ God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. ¹⁰ This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

¹¹ Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other.

It doesn't get any clearer than this. The barometer which reveals how much we truly understand the magnitude of what Jesus has done for us and therefore how much He loves us is revealed by how much we love Him (our devotional life - prayer and bible reading), and the way we treat others (do we love them sacrificially or not?)

The understanding I'm talking about here is not head knowledge. You can know exactly what Jesus did, but still have a hard heart. In fact, many people hear the gospel, but refuse it.

It's only as we respond by faith and by faith spend time in God's presence that the Holy Spirit reveals to us who God is and His heart towards us. It's all about faith or trust. That's why faith, hope and love all go together.

A good prayer to pray is: "Lord, please reveal to me how much You love me. Please help me to appreciate You." Then prayerfully read and meditate on some of the many scriptures that describe what God has done for us. We have already read some of them today.

B. The message to Daniel [10:10–20]

1. The certain man introduces himself to Daniel (10–11)

¹⁰ Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands. ¹¹ And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling.

a. **A hand touched me:** As Daniel was laid out in weakness by this experience, he was strengthened by the touch of **a hand**. Jesus was also helped by angels in his temptation and weakness. This gentle encouragement and strengthening is one of the roles that angels have.

b. **O Daniel, man greatly beloved:** This was the second time Daniel was called **greatly beloved** (Daniel 9:23 previous to this). Each time it was in relation to Daniel's being favoured with a great and significant revelation of the future. We talked previously about how God will only reveal Himself to those who seek Him. What a beautiful message it is that God loves me. What could be more comforting?

2. The angel explains his coming to Daniel, and the opposition he faced on the way (12–14)

¹² Then he said to me, “Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. ¹³ But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. ¹⁴ Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision *refers to many days yet to come.*”

v12. **From the first day ... your words were heard:** God responded to Daniel's prayer the very moment he made his request known. Daniel had been in great and serious prayer for *three full weeks* (Daniel 10:2).

v12. **I have come because of your words:** We can't pass this over lightly. *An angel was dispatched because of Daniel's prayer.* This is another of many reminders in the Book of Daniel that prayer matters. Prayer doesn't just change us, but it also puts God's plan into action. How awesome it is to be a part of God's work. If I don't pray, then God will have to find someone else, and myself, my family and my church will miss out on the blessings that could have been.

v13. **The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me:** Who is this?

Since this **prince** was able to oppose the angelic messenger to Daniel, we know this was more than a man. This **prince** was some kind of angelic being, and we know he was an evil angelic being because he opposed the word of God coming to Daniel and stood against the angelic messenger.

The word **prince** has the idea of a ruler or authority. This fits in well with the New Testament idea that angelic ranks are organised and have a hierarchy

Ephesians 6:12-13 - ¹² For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore, put on every piece of God's armour so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.

Today we are a part of the same battle. Our enemy is much stronger than us, but much weaker than God, and our main weapon against the enemy is prayer and the word of God. James gives us a simple instruction on how to defeat Satan:

James 4:7 - So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

What was Daniel's attitude during his prayer? He was mourning, or humble.

Matthew 5:3 NLT - God blesses those who are poor and realise their need for him,

for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

Matthew 5:3 NKJV - Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

One last thought concerning demonic entities:

On three occasions, Jesus referred to Satan as *the prince of this world* (John 12:31, 14:30, and 16:11). Jesus has won the battle but Has not yet come back to claim the victory. Until He does, the fight continues. Always remember though, that Satan and his hordes have been defeated, so as Christians we can always choose to share Christ's victory over the forces of darkness if we choose to abide in Christ.

d. **Withstood me twenty-one days:** Since the angel was dispatched immediately and Daniel's period of prayer and self-denial was 21 days (the *three full weeks* of Daniel 10:2), we see that the answer to the prayer was delayed by **the prince of the kingdom of Persia**.

Quote from Guzik: The correlation between Daniel's time of self-denial and prayer and the duration of the battle between the angels and the **prince of the kingdom of Persia** establishes a link between Daniel's prayer and the angelic victory. Since the angelic victory came on the 21st day, we can surmise that if Daniel would have stopped praying on the 20th day, the answer may not have come.

It's so important that we be persistent in our prayers.

e. **Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me:** In other passages **Michael** is associated with the battle between good angels and evil angels (Revelation 12, Jude 9), especially in regard to Israel.

f. **Now I have come:** God allowed this kind of conflict because He had a purpose in allowing it. He certainly *could have* blasted away in a moment any demonic opposition. God's plan probably was to use the time of delay to develop Daniel as a man of persistent prayer. God was strengthening Daniel's faith.

Quote from Guzik: Daniel's success makes us reflect on our failures. How much angelic or divine assistance or insight has never been realised, or greatly delayed, because of a lack of persistence in prayer?

g. **What will happen to your people in the latter days:** The vision of Daniel 11 and 12 was focused on the **latter days**, though it also relates to the closer time of Antiochus Epiphanes who was a part of the Grecian empire.

3. Daniel is strengthened in his weakness (15–19)

¹⁵ When he had spoken such words to me, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. ¹⁶ And suddenly, one having the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke, saying to him who stood before me, "My lord, because of the vision my sorrows have overwhelmed me, and I have retained no strength. ¹⁷ For how can this servant of my lord talk with you, my lord? As for me, no strength remains in me now, nor is any breath left in me."

¹⁸ Then again, the one having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me. ¹⁹ And he said, "O man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace be to you; be strong, yes, be strong!"

So when he spoke to me I was strengthened, and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."

a. **I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless:** Daniel started on the ground (Daniel 10:9), then stood up (Daniel 10:11), and now was back on his **face** again.

b. **Because of the vision my sorrows have overwhelmed me:** The ancient Hebrew word translated **sorrows** has the thought of twisting or writhing pain. It is used in several places in the Old Testament for labor pains in childbirth. Daniel was so severely affected by this vision that he could barely breathe, much less understand the in's and out's of the prophecy about to be given.

c. **One having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me:** Again, an angel strengthened Daniel.

4. The angel introduces his message to Daniel (10:20–11:1)

²⁰ Then he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come. ²¹ But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince.

11 “Also in the first year of Darius the Mede, I, even I, stood up to confirm and strengthen him.)

I must return to fight with the prince of Persia: Daniel was about to receive the answer to his prayer, but the battle was not over for his heavenly messenger. First he must battle **the prince of Persia**, then **the prince of Greece** because Greece would be the next world empire. God watched out for Israel, working behind the scenes in the spiritual realm, just like He does for us.

This should invigorate us in our prayer lives. The battle for souls is taking place over thousands of years and won't finish until the second coming of Jesus, the consummation of all things. Let's get our eyes off ourselves and realise what is really going on behind the scenes — the battle for the very souls of man. Let's get our spiritual gloves on and get into the ring by prayer. Let's sharpen our sword and learn how to use it properly.

Hebrews 5:11-14 - ¹¹ There is much more we would like to say about this, but it is difficult to explain, especially since you are spiritually dull and don't seem to listen. ¹² You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food. ¹³ For someone who lives on milk is still an infant and doesn't know how to do what is right. ¹⁴ Solid food is for those who are mature, **who through training have the skill to recognise the difference between right and wrong.**

“The battle isn't over,” the angel says. “I'm here to share with you, Daniel, but now I have to go back because the battle goes on.” The war is never over, fellow saints. It continues in the heavenly arena. Therefore, like Gabriel, like Daniel, we cannot afford to kick back, to take it easy. Why? I would like to give you three reasons...

First reason: Because of our country. Daniel loved his country. The first year Cyrus became king, he told the Jews in captivity to go home, to rebuild their city and temple. But, as Ezra records, only about 49,000 people—a handful—went back. The rest were comfortable in Babylon. They wondered why they should go back and rebuild the temple when they could kick back and be comfortable in Babylon. Oh, initially it was hard there, but as the years went on, Babylon began to feel like home. And, seeing the people comfortable in carnality or worldliness broke Daniel's heart.

I wonder what the Lord sees in Australian Christianity. “Why should I worry about going to prayer meeting Sunday morning or the weekly bible study?” we ask. “Why should I worry about fasting like I used to?” Daniel loved his country and yet he saw so few who were interested in restoring the nation. So, as an eighty-five-year-old man, he said, “I’ll fast and pray on behalf of these people who have grown so comfortable.”

Remember, the Lord didn’t say, “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and vote, I will heal their land.” Nor did He say, “If My people will humble themselves and petition, I will heal their land.” He said, “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and *pray*, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14, italics added). If you’re a true patriot, be a prayer warrior. There’s a battle raging and it must be fought in prayer constantly. Remember to pray for our leaders.

Second reason: We can’t afford to kick back because of our families. Demons never let up—and they will go after our kids if they see they are vulnerable. Job, the most righteous man on the face of the earth in his day, rose early each morning and offered sacrifice on behalf of each of his kids. He knew his kids were being pressured, so he would rise daily, sacrifice, and intercede. Job knew God. He understood spiritual reality. And he knew he couldn’t afford to cruise, to kick back and relax.

Satan is a roaring lion. Therefore, if you love your kids, parents, you can’t kick back, pray occasionally, and be uncommitted to church. Your kids will be eaten up. You’re a priest in the home, Dad. You’re a covering, Mom. Don’t take it easy or your kids will pay the price.

Third reason: Finally, if you kick back, you are asking for real trouble personally because in so doing, you make yourself an easy target.

Deuteronomy 25:17, 18 - “Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, ¹⁸ how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you *were* tired and weary; and he did not fear God.”

The Amalekites attacked God’s people constantly as they journeyed through the wilderness. Who did the Amalekites pick off? Not the people in the front, but those in the back, those who lagged behind and were “cool” about spiritual things. You might not care about your country. You might not have a family. But if you have a kick-back kind of Christianity, you’ll get picked off personally. The front lines aren’t where the casualties are. It’s when you start dropping back in your intensity, when you start giving up in your ministry that you are in danger of being devoured.

“If God is so good and so powerful, why doesn’t He just wipe out the demons that attack us?” you ask. He will eventually, but they are actually serving a purpose presently. Think of it this way: If I see someone at the gym working hard lifting weights and take them from him, I am actually doing him a disservice. It is the lifting that gives the strength. And that’s the purpose the enemy is fulfilling. Yes, he causes things to get heavy. But the Lord uses him as a weight to strengthen us, to teach us how to press in and be strong. Our Father knows we’ll need strength and stamina, experience and endurance for what’s ahead, so He allows us to struggle. Always remember that He’ll never give us more than we can handle and that there will always be a way out (1 Corinthians 10:13), but He will allow us to struggle in order to gain spiritual stamina or endurance. Do you remember what Peter said:

1 Peter 1:6-7 - ⁶ So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. ⁷ These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honour on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.

Therefore, embrace the struggle and keep going. Become a Daniel. Even when you're eighty-five years old, keep with your devotional life, your spiritual discipline, your studying, and prayer. Don't forsake assembling with other believers (Hebrews 10:25). Don't become a Babylonian, caught up in your business, hobbies, or house. Instead, say, "I will continue on because there's too much at stake."

b. No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince: Michael seemed to be an angelic guardian of Israel, battling against the demonic representative of Persia or any other who opposed God's people. On earth, Israel seemed lowly and weak; but in the heavens, Israel had the mightiest representative of all.

The same is true for us. We may seem small and weak, both individually and as a church, but we don't fight this battle alone. We are like the foot soldiers on the battle field. When we see trouble coming we radio for help and the air cover roars in overhead and obliterates our enemies. As Christians we have incredible spiritual resources. There is no excuse for us to lose any battle. The only time I lose is when I choose not to fight. When my focus changes from Christ to myself, when my sinful nature is on the throne of my heart instead of Jesus, then the battle is lost. Remember what James said: Submit to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you. The first step to winning is losing, losing my own life, my own desires, meaning that I must die to self — this is what it means to "submit to God."

We can either place our feet on the neck of the roaring lion, sharing in Christ's victory over that roaring lion, the devil, who is our great enemy, who prowls about looking for someone to devour (1 Pet 5:8), or we will be devoured by this roaring lion.

Who do you think our great enemy wants to devour? Us. Christians. He can't take away our salvation, but he can rob us of our reward and our joy by causing us to neglect our relationship with God. Not only that, but he wants to reduce our families and churches into disaster zones by causing us to fight against each other. True, genuine unity is so sweet, but it is only experienced as a fruit of the Spirit, and fruit only comes as we abide in Christ. Unity in the church and/or family cannot be manufactured.

Listen, if our family is a disaster zone, if everyone is fighting, and harmony and intimacy are distant memories, then fix the root cause, don't focus on the symptoms. Get back to your first love, get back to abiding in the Vine, get back to feeding on Jesus, get on your knees, get into the word and get into fellowship. Be honest about your spiritual condition. Our pride will keep us separated from God.

I'll finish with a quote from Jon Courson which summarises the chapter:

There are demons at work, gang. We are not wrestling against people, against flesh and blood. It's not your boss's personality, your husband's insensitivity, or your wife's inadequacies that are irritating you. Rather, there are demons in place that are causing all kinds of irritations, improper evaluations, and very real frustrations and temptations. If you're wrestling against people, you're fighting the wrong battle. It's the demons you need to war against, not flesh and blood.