

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. 2 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.

Daniel was about 90 years old and had probably retired from public service. He had been in captivity for over 70 years.

Cyrus was the leader of the Persians which overthrew the Babylonian Empire. He decreed that Israel would be able to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, which had been destroyed by the Babylonians.

Daniel is in mourning- Some think that Daniel was in mourning because so few Jews had returned to Jerusalem with Ezra to rebuild the temple.

Others believe it was because Ezra faced severe opposition in rebuilding the temple and the they initially quit under pressure.

This grand saint and prophet was heartbroken by the spiritual apathy and lack of zeal he witnessed with this new generation of Israelites.

In his period of mourning, Daniel “I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks.”

4 On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river (that is, the Tigris) 5 I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. 6 His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude.

Commentators divide over the identity of this certain man described in the first 9 verses. Some say this is Jesus in the first 9 verses and an angelic being beginning with verse 10, noting that the description is remarkably like what John saw in Revelation 1:12-16.

Some say this was supernatural messenger, an angel We know that Ezekiel saw angelic figures clothed in linen (Ezekiel 9:2).

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

This is like the latter instance of Saul on the road to Damascus, when his companions could not hear 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.

8 So I was left alone and saw this great vision, and no strength was left in me. My radiant appearance was fearfully changed, and I retained no strength. 9 Then I heard the sound of his words, and as I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face in deep sleep with my face to the ground.

“The Hebrew here suggests a death-like paleness, combined with a grotesque wrenching of facial features.”

Joshua 5:13-15 Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, “Are you for us or for our adversaries?” He said, “No; rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the Lord.” And Joshua fell on his face to

the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, “What has my lord to say to his servant?” The captain of the Lord’s host said to Joshua, “Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.

10 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.” And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling.

12 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.”

Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me: In other passages Michael is identified as one of Gods prominent angels **Revelation 12:7** Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.

There are two angels mentioned by name in the entire bible Michael and Gabriel. Interestingly, Gabriel appears to the prophet Daniel earlier to explain his visions (Daniel 8:15–26, 9:21–27).

Came to help me: This phrase may be the most compelling reason to think that this supernatural personage is not Jesus. Jesus wouldn’t need Michaels help, Michael would need Jesus’.

From the first day... your words were heard: God responded to Daniel's prayer the very moment he made his request known. Daniel had to actively "wait" on the Lord as His answer arrived.

I have come because of your words: An angel was dispatched because of Daniel's prayer. This is another of many reminders in the Book of Daniel that prayer matters.

The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me: 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 demonic being, and we know he was a demonic 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 organized and have a hierarchy (Ephesians 1:21, Ephesians 6:12, Colossians 1:16, Colossians 2:15). These angelic ranks seem to include both faithful angels and fallen angels.

Eph 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Withstood me twenty-one days: Daniel went into mourning and prayer on the 3rd day of the first month. The angel of the Lord was immediately dispatched and shows up to Daniel on the 24th day of the first month with Daniel's answer to his prayer.

Why? The angel encountered demonic opposition that intended to hinder the prayer of the man of God, and as Daniel persevered in prayer reinforcements arrived and the angel broke through with his answer.

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.

“There may be hindering factors of which a praying Christian knows nothing as he wonders why the answers to his requests are delayed. Nevertheless, he is to keep on praying. It may be that he will not receive an answer because he has given up on the twentieth day when he should have persisted to the twenty-first day.” (Archer)

So what can we apply or learn from this fascinating passage?

God allowed this kind of conflict because He had a purpose in allowing it. God’s plan probably was to use the time of delay to develop Daniel as a man of persistent prayer.

Persistence in prayer is not necessary because God’s reluctance needs to be overcome; rather, it is necessary to train us and produce in us a greater overcoming faith.

There is a degree of victory and power that is accessed by faith that is forged in the fires that test our level of perseverance and call us to greater levels of surrender.

Luke 11:9-10 And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

How much angelic assistance or insight has never been realized, or greatly delayed, because of a lack of persistence in prayer?

He wants us to come with urgency and passion.

2 Cor. 10:4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

Ephesians 6:18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,