

THREE REASONS WHY WE MUST RELY UPON CHRIST

10 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, something was revealed to Daniel (who was called Belteshazzar). This thing was true and it concerned a great warfare. He understood this thing; indeed, he had understanding of the vision. ²At that time, I, Daniel, had been mourning for three full weeks. ³I ate no choice food; I tasted neither meat nor wine; and I did not anoint myself [with lotion] at all until three full weeks were completed. ⁴Then on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, ⁵I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen; his waist was wrapped with pure gold from Uphaz. ⁶His body was like chrysolite, his face was like the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and his feet were like polished brass, and the sound of his speech was like the sound of a multitude. ⁷I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; the men who were with me did not see the vision, but such great terror fell upon them that they fled to hide themselves. ⁸So I was left alone, and I saw this great vision; no strength was left in me, my face turned deathly pale and I became faint. ⁹Yet I heard the sound of his words, and when I heard the sound of his words I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face toward the ground.

¹⁰Then a hand touched me and set me on my knees and on the palms of my hands. ¹¹He said to me, O Daniel, you who are greatly loved, consider the words I am about to speak to you and stand upright; for I have now been sent to you. When he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. ¹²Then he said to me, Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. ¹³But the prince of the kingdom of Persia stood against me for twenty-one days. But Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, so I remained there with the kings of Persia. ¹⁴Now I have come to inform you what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to those future days. ¹⁵When he spoke these things to me, I set my face toward the ground and was speechless. ¹⁶Then one who looked like a man touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke to the one who stood before me. [I said,] O my Lord, because of the vision, I am overcome with anguish and I am faint. ¹⁷How can the servant of my Lord speak with my Lord?—for immediately there remained no strength in me, neither was there any breath left in me. ¹⁸Then again the one who had the appearance of a man touched me and he strengthened me. ¹⁹He said to me, O man, you who are greatly loved, do not be afraid. Peace be with you. Be strong; yes, be strong. And when he spoke to me I was strengthened, and I said, Let my Lord speak, for you have strengthened me. ²⁰Then he said, Do you know why I have come to you? Immediately I must return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I emerge [from that conflict], the prince of Greece will come—²¹but [first] I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth—[and] there is no one who stands with me against these, except Michael, your prince. **11** In the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to confirm and strengthen him. (Dan. 10:1-11:1)

Introduction

Pastor Mark Howard of the Good Shepherd Community Church and Mr. Tom Harris, the headmaster of the Christian school in Deacons' Corner, found themselves in the law office of Attorney Wayne Corrigan, they were seeking his legal help. The two explained to Mr. Corrigan that a lawsuit had been filed against Tom and the Christian school.

A little ten-year-old girl who had just recently started attending the school had proven to be a seriously disruptive problem. In the classroom she was a discipline problem, on the playground she sought to teach the other children occult practices, and she even gave evidence of being demon-possessed. The Christian school officials had been forced to take disciplinary action against the girl, including corporeal punishment, which was in accordance with their beliefs and was clearly specified in the parent/student manual. But now they found themselves the defendants in a lawsuit brought against the headmaster and the school by the irate mother of the little girl. The lawsuit was being prosecuted by the local chapter of the A.C.L.U.; it was well financed, and it threatened the very existence of this little Christian school. Poor Mr. Corrigan, the attorney, knew he was greatly overmatched in such a case and wondered half aloud, "Why are such things happening to these descent, God-fearing people and their school?" A few pages later the veil that conceals the spiritual realm from the physical is drawn back: hordes of demons are swarming all around like vile, stinging bees. The intensity of the onslaught is shocking.

The preceding account—presented in slightly adapted form—is one writer's conception of the very real spiritual conflict in which we find ourselves engaged (*Piercing the Dark*, Frank E. Peretti, pp.67-80). The following is the testimony of a missionary couple reporting on their service for Christ in South America:

As we are back in the United States for Home Ministry Assignment it is a time to reflect on the ministry in Chile over the last four years. In many ways we are conscious that we have been in a battle. The very day we arrived in Chile four years ago our car caught fire on the way home from the airport. We have struggled with family sickness, we have had to discipline two seminary students who were members of one of our churches, and we have seen the enemy try to divide our churches and discourage us. Nevertheless, we have seen the LORD's goodness, His care, and His blessing.

Often times we neglect to rely upon Christ, thinking that we are capable of fending for ourselves, but as we study this tenth chapter of Daniel we are made to see the spiritual conflict in which we are engaged and there discover Three Reasons Why We Must Rely upon Christ.

I. You Must Rely upon Christ, Because There is a Spiritual Warfare (Dan.10:13a)

At the outset of this chapter (vs. 2-3), Daniel informs us that he was mourning for three full weeks. Then, at the conclusion of this period of fasting and mourning, Daniel received a mysterious and overwhelming revelation of Christ (vs. 4-6.) Note: It becomes evident that this mysterious figure is Christ when one compares the description given here in Daniel ten with the description of Christ presented in Revelation 1:13-16,

... in the midst of the lamp stands was someone like the Son of man, dressed in a robe that reached down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. (Rev. 1:13)/I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen; his waist was wrapped with pure gold from Uphaz. (Dan. 10:5)

... his eyes were like a flame of fire. (Rev. 1:14)/... his eyes were like flaming torches. (Dan. 10:6)

His feet were like polished bronze, as if it had been refined in a furnace (Rev. 1:15)/... his arms and his feet were like polished bronze (Dan. 10:6)

... his voice was like the sound of rushing waters (Rev. 1:15)/... the sound of his speech was like the sound of a multitude (Dan. 10:6)

His face was like the sun shining in its brilliance. (Rev. 1:16)/... his face was like the appearance of lightning (Dan. 10:6)

Christ informs Daniel that from the first day that he set his heart to understand, his words were heard (vs. 12b), and the LORD has now come to explain these things to Daniel (vs. 12c.) But up to this time the LORD has been opposed by the prince of the kingdom of Persia for twenty-one days (vs. 13a.)

Why was Daniel mourning? What did he desire to know? And what is Christ speaking about when He says, *"The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days"*? We are informed that all this took place in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia (vs. 1.) In the first year of his reign, Cyrus released the Jews from captivity and gave orders for the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem:

In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of Jehovah spoken by Jeremiah, Jehovah moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and put it in writing. ²This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: Jehovah, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. ³Anyone of his people among you—may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of Jehovah, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem. (Ezra 1:1-3)

But when the Jews returned to Jerusalem and began the task of rebuilding the temple, they ran into opposition:

When the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the exiles were building a temple for Jehovah, the God of Israel, ²they came to Zerubbabel and to the heads of the families and said, "Let us help you build because, like you, we seek your God and have been sacrificing to him since the time of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us here." ³But Zerubbabel, Jeshua and the rest of the heads of the families of Israel answered, "You have no part with us in building a temple for our God. We alone will build it for Jehovah, the God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia, commanded us." ⁴Then the peoples around them set out to discourage the people of Judah and make them afraid to go on building. ⁵They hired counselors to work against them and frustrate their plans during the entire reign of Cyrus king of Persia and down to the reign of Darius king of Persia ... ²⁴Thus the work on the house of God in Jerusalem came to a standstill until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia. (Ezra 4:1-5,24)

The adversaries first sought to infiltrate Judah so as to dilute and subvert the worship of God with pagan elements (Ezra 4:1-3.) When they failed in that endeavor, they set themselves in opposition to the work of rebuilding the temple, sending slanderous letters to the Persian kings (Ezra 4:4-5.) They succeeded in bringing the work to a halt until the second year of Darius—a period of approximately fifteen years, from about 535 to 520 B.C. (Ezra 4:24.)

Daniel is stunned by this unexpected adversity; after all, it was the LORD who had moved Cyrus to issue the order for the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 1:1), but now this same Cyrus commands the work to cease. Daniel mourns over this turn of events (Dan. 10:2-3,) and he asks the LORD for an answer to this perplexing situation (Dan. 10:12.)

What answer does Christ give? And what is Christ speaking about in verse 13a? According to verse 1, what was revealed to Daniel was "*a great warfare.*" In that verse we are informed that Christ was opposed by the prince of the kingdom of Persia for twenty-one days. "*The prince of the kingdom of Persia*" is none other than the devil himself in his capacity as "*the prince of this world*" (Jn. 14:30), and as he exerts an evil control and influence over the kingdoms of this world, note Luke 4:5-6, "*The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶And he said to him, I will give you all this authority and glory, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to whomever I desire.*" Within the scope of God's absolute sovereignty, the devil is permitted to effectively, though only temporarily, oppose the LORD and His purposes. Just as the devil has for twenty-one days hindered the LORD's response to Daniel's prayer; so, likewise, Daniel must understand that it is the devil that is presently hindering the rebuilding of the temple. The devil, operating in the Persian court, has made Cyrus favorably disposed to Israel's adversaries, thus causing the work to be effectively hindered for the present time.

Thus, the first reason why we must rely upon Christ is the fact that there is a **spiritual** warfare:

... our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the powers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of evil in the heavenly realms. (Eph. 6:12)

II. You Must Rely upon Christ, Because Christ is the Victor in This Warfare (Dan. 10:13a)

The LORD declares, *"the prince of the kingdom of Persia stood against me for twenty-one days; but ... ¹⁴now I have come ..."* (vs. 13-14.) The LORD is victorious over the devil and his forces of evil; the LORD has insured that His will shall prevail among the kings of Persia, thereby guaranteeing that the temple and the city of Jerusalem will, indeed, be rebuilt. Note that Ezra 4:24 states, *"the work on the house of God in Jerusalem came to a standstill until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia."*

The LORD declares, *"I remained there with the kings of Persia;"* or, a better rendering, *"I am left* (the verb, יָתַר, in the Hebrew *Niphal* form) *there with the kings of Persia."* In other words, the LORD has dispatched the devil's dominating influence, thus the LORD's purpose shall be accomplished. Note Nehemiah 2:2-8, a passage relating Nehemiah's request of King Artaxerxes and the king's favorable response,

... the king asked me, "Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart." I was very much afraid, ³but I said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my fathers are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?" ⁴The king said to me, "What is it you want?" Then I prayed to the God of heaven, ⁵and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it." ⁶Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, "How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?" It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time. ⁷I also said to him, "If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors who are beyond the [Euphrates] River, so that they will provide me safe-conduct until I arrive in Judah? ⁸And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the king's forest, so that he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel of the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?" And because the gracious hand of my God was upon me, the king granted my requests. (Neh. 2:2-8)

With regard to the name and the role of Michael, two things are being signified. First, by means of this angelic being God reveals His unmatched power—the name "Michael" means, "Who is like God?" Second, the reference to Michael is intended to indicate how the entire host of the heavenly beings are engaged in this awesome spiritual conflict, note Revelation 12:7, *"And there was war in*

heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought back.”

In Daniel 11:1 the LORD reveals how He previously secured victory in the days of Darius the Mede. In order to fulfill His word spoken through Jeremiah (Jer. 25:11-12), the LORD caused the Babylonian Empire to fall and Darius the Mede to be established, thereby preparing the way for the deliverance and restoration of His people, Israel.

As verse 20b indicates, the LORD will continue to engage in spiritual warfare against the devil as the latter will continue to assault the purposes of Christ by employing the powers and the nations of this world. Note that Ezra 4:6-7 indicates that there would be further attempts to halt the work of God in the days of future Persian kings: *“At the beginning of the reign of Xerxes, they lodged an accusation against the people of Judah and Jerusalem. ⁷And in the days of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel and the rest of his associates wrote a letter to Artaxerxes.”* This spiritual conflict between Christ and the devil would reach its height in the days of our Lord’s earthly ministry, with Christ gaining the ultimate victory at the cross of Calvary: *“having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross”* (Col. 2:15.)

At God’s sovereign discretion, the devil is permitted to carry out his evil work in this present world and this present age:

The great dragon was hurled down—the ancient serpent called the devil or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him ... ¹²Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short. (Rev. 12:9,12)

Nevertheless, the ultimate victory has been won by our Lord Jesus Christ when He cried out from the cross of Calvary, *“It is finished!”* (Jn. 19:30.) When He returns in power and great glory, the Lord Jesus Christ shall dispatch of the devil and his hordes forever: *“And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night forever and ever”* (Rev. 20:10.)

III. You Must Rely upon Christ, Because No One Else Can Help in This Spiritual Warfare (Dan. 10:21b)

In verse 21b the LORD declares, *“There is no one who stands with me against these [demonic forces], except Michael, your prince.”* By means of this mysterious utterance, and once again employing an angelic being to represent and reveal His own divine attributes and actions, the LORD is declaring that He alone is able to withstand the assaults of the devil and secure the victory. (Bear

in mind that the name “Michael” means, “Who is like God?”) It is not Michael the angel who is strong, as we learn from Jude 9, *“But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”*” On the contrary, in this present revelation given to Daniel Michael is representing Christ who alone is strong. Christ alone is the sure Refuge and Guardian of His people. Michael, representing Christ Himself, is identified as *“your prince”* (i.e.; the Sovereign Protector of God’s people.)

Indeed, the very way the LORD reveals Himself to Daniel on this occasion is intended to emphasize the fact that He is the sovereign Lord who is able to defend His people. The LORD reveals to Daniel a measure of His overwhelming power and majesty (vs. 5-6.) But the fact that this awesome individual is not expressly declared to be the LORD, and His whole identity is shrouded in mystery, and He appears in symbolic human form, serves to indicate that Daniel is receiving merely a veiled revelation of the LORD, not a full encounter with His divine majesty and awesome power. Yet this veiled revelation itself is more than enough to overwhelm Daniel:

So I was left alone, and I saw this great vision; no strength was left in me, my face turned deathly pale and I became faint. ⁹Yet I heard the sound of his words, and when I heard the sound of his words I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face toward the ground ... ¹⁶ ... then I opened my mouth and spoke to the one who stood before me. [I said,] O my Lord, because of the vision, I am overcome with anguish and I am faint. ¹⁷How can the servant of my Lord speak with my Lord?—for immediately there remained no strength in me, neither was there any breath left in me. (Dan. 10:8-9,16b-17)

The LORD precedes to ministers His grace to Daniel. He assures Daniel that he is greatly loved (vs. 11.) He calms Daniel’s fears (vs. 12.) He ministers strength to Daniel (vs. 19.)

We must rely upon Christ in this spiritual warfare, and especially in the hour of trial or temptation, for no one else can help. Christ alone is the One before whom the demons shudder:

And immediately there was a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an unclean spirit. He cried out, ²⁴What do we have to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God. ²⁵And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Keep quiet and come out of him. ²⁶And the unclean spirit, after shaking him violently and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷All the people were astonished, so much so that they questioned among themselves, saying, What is this? [Here is] a new teaching! With authority he even commands the unclean spirits, and they obey him. (Mk. 1:23-27)

Christ alone is the One who has conquered the devil. On His way to the cross of Calvary, our Lord Jesus Christ declared, *“Now has come the judgment of this world; now the prince of this world shall be cast out”* (Jn. 12:31.)

Christ alone is the One who can provide for the care and protection of your soul: *“Jehovah will keep you from all evil; he will keep your soul. ⁸Jehovah will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore”* (Psl. 121:7-8.)

Conclusion

Often times we neglect, or forget, the fact that we are engaged in a great spiritual warfare. It is essential that we be reminded of this fact and be very conscience of it; as the Apostle Peter exhorts us: *“Be [spiritually] sober. Be alert. Your enemy, the devil, like a roaring lion, is prowling around, looking for someone to devour”* (1 Pet. 5:8.) Furthermore, it is essential that we rely upon Christ—upon His strength and His grace—in this spiritual warfare: *“Trust in Jehovah forever, for Jehovah, Jehovah himself, is an everlasting rock”* (Isa. 26:4.)