



# STANDING STRONG IN TRYING TIMES

The Book of Daniel

## The Invisible War

### Key idea:

There is an invisible war between God's angelic forces and the forces of Satan which is related to and affects the visible rise and fall of human kingdoms and the plight of God's people, but God's Sovereign Plan will be accomplished in the end!

### Key text:

Daniel 10-11 (Daniel 10:1-11:4)

In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel (who was called Belshazzar). Its message was true and it concerned a great war. The understanding of the message came to him in a vision. <sup>2</sup> At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. <sup>3</sup> I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over. <sup>4</sup> On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, <sup>5</sup> I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist. <sup>6</sup> His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude. <sup>7</sup> I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; the men with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. <sup>8</sup> So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. <sup>9</sup> Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground. <sup>10</sup> A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. <sup>11</sup> He said, "Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you." And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling. <sup>12</sup> Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that 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 them. <sup>13</sup> But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. <sup>14</sup> Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come." <sup>15</sup> While he was saying this to me, I bowed with my face toward the ground and was speechless. <sup>16</sup> Then one who looked like a man touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and began to speak. I said to the one standing before me, "I am overcome with anguish because of the vision, my lord, and I am helpless. <sup>17</sup> How can I, your servant, talk with you, my lord? My strength is gone and I can hardly breathe." <sup>18</sup> Again the one who looked like a man touched me

and gave me strength. <sup>19</sup> “Do not be afraid, O man highly esteemed,” he said. “Peace! Be strong now; be strong.” When he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, “Speak, my lord, since you have given me strength.” <sup>20</sup> So he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come; <sup>21</sup> but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince. <sup>11:1</sup> And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I took my stand to support and protect him.) <sup>2</sup> “Now then, I tell you the truth: Three more kings will appear in Persia, and then a fourth, who will be far richer than all the others. When he has gained power by his wealth, he will stir up everyone against the kingdom of Greece. <sup>3</sup> Then a mighty king will appear, who will rule with great power and do as he pleases. <sup>4</sup> After he has appeared, his empire will be broken up and parceled out toward the four winds of heaven. It will not go to his descendants, nor will it have the power he exercised, because his empire will be uprooted and given to others.

### **Key points:**

1. Daniel 10-12 comprises the report of Daniel’s final vision.
2. Daniel 11 gives greater detail on the same kingdoms covered in the visions in Daniel 2, 7, and 8, with special emphasis on the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdoms, and especially Antiochus Epiphanes.
3. Daniel 10 gives a fresh perspective focused on the invisible spiritual war that lies behind the events of chapter 11. This spiritual war includes both the activity surrounding Daniel’s prayer and also the events detailed in Daniel 11.
4. The New Testament gives further information on the invisible spiritual warfare and the proper response of Christians to this warfare.

### **Questions for discussion/application:**

1. What part of Sunday's teaching stood out most to me? Why?
2. Why does Daniel 11 give further information on the kingdoms revealed in Daniel 2, 7, and 8? Why does it give so much attention to the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdoms, and especially to Antiochus Epiphanes (the ‘little horn’ or Daniel 8)?
3. What prompted Daniel to give himself to three weeks of intense prayer, seeking God, and partial fasting? What does this tell me about Daniel’s deepest concerns? How does it relate to the key themes and message of the book?

4. Do I think the person described in Daniel 10:5-9 is Christ, or do I think it is an angel? What points to this being Christ? What points to this being an angel?
5. How does Daniel respond to the vision? What physical and emotional effects does it have on Daniel? How is this similar to the effects on the Apostle Paul in Acts 9? What does this tell me about receiving a true vision of God or an angel?
6. Why does God reveal to Daniel the spiritual, invisible war that has been happening and will continue to happen in the future? Why is it important for Daniel (and me) to know about this war?
7. How does Daniel 10 relate to Revelation 12:7-11? What similarities do I see between the passages? What differences do I see? What is the relationship between Daniel and Revelation in general? What allusions to Daniel can I think of in the book of Revelation? How does this help me understand and interpret Daniel and Revelation?
8. Can I think of examples of Christian who seem to downplay or deny the existence of the invisible, spiritual war revealed in Daniel 10? Can I think of examples of Christians who overemphasize this warfare or who claim to have detailed knowledge of how such spiritual forces are working in current events? Which do I think is the greater danger for the American church today?
9. What is the danger of Christians who claim to have “insider knowledge” as to the current state of the invisible war and how it related to current political events?
10. Do I think I am more tempted to downplay the invisible spiritual war, or to over-focus on it? How can I grow more balanced in this area?
11. Who will I call or see to encourage this week?

#### **For Further Study:**

[Spiritual Warfare](#) (Series - July-September, 2017)

[Stand - Our Warfare With the Enemy](#) (September 22, 2019)

[Fullness In Christ](#) (May 6, 2012)

[Angels, Demons, and Satan](#) (Systematic Theology Class, Chapter 19 and 20)

[God's Eternal Plan](#) (March 4, 2007)

#### **Preview of next week: Standing Strong Until the End (Daniel 12)**