



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Daniel 10:1-21

Daniel

"The Air War"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Thank you Mark, and good morning. We are back in the Book of Daniel, in chapter 20, which means we're coming to the end of our studies in this great prophecy. In fact, I think we've got two more lessons after this. Chapter 20 is our passage, and I'm going to read the entire chapter, all 21 verses. I won't be dealing with each aspect in detail, so I want to read it all and bear it all in mind as I expound the text. But we'll begin with verse 1 of chapter 10.

"In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar; and the message was true and one of great conflict, but he understood the message and had an understanding of the vision. In those days, I, Daniel, had been mourning for three weeks. I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all until the entire three weeks were completed. On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I was by the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris, I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen, whose waist was girded with a belt of pure gold of Uphaz. His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult. Now I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, while the men who were with me did not see the vision; nevertheless, a great dread fell on them, and they ran away to hide themselves. So I was left

alone and saw this great vision; yet no strength was left in me, for my natural color turned to a deathly pallor, and I retained no strength. But I heard the sound of his words; and as soon as I heard the sound of his words, I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.

"Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. He said to me, 'O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you.' And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. Then he said to me, 'Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future.' When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. And behold, one who resembled a human being was touching my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke and said to him who was standing before me, 'O my lord, as a result of the vision anguish has come upon me, and I have retained no strength. For how can such a servant of my lord talk with such as my lord? As for me, there remains just now no strength in me, nor has any breath been left in me.'

"Then this one with human appearance touched me again and strengthened me. He said, 'O man of high esteem, do not be afraid. Peace be with you; take courage and be courageous!' Now as soon as he spoke to me, I received strength and said, 'My lord speak, for you have strengthened me.' Then he said, 'Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to the fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come.

However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince.' "

May the Lord bless this reading of His Word. Let's bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we give you thanks for this time together and this opportunity we have to be with your people on this Lord's day. It's a great privilege and a great blessing, and a blessing to open your Word and read it as we have, and consider the meaning of the text. And yet, Father, we need a teacher. We need a divine teacher to guide us in these things, and we pray for that. We have that in the Holy Spirit.

You've blessed us with new lives in Christ. You've blessed us with new hearts. You've removed the heart of stone and replaced it with a heart of flesh, a living heart. We have a new mind, we have the faculties of this new creation that you've created through regeneration, but we need a teacher. And we need more than a human teacher, we need a divine teacher, and we have that in the Spirit of God.

And so we pray that you would, as Paul prayed for the Ephesians, open the eyes of our heart that we might understand what we've read and how it applies to us individually. There's some interesting things in this passage, Lord. Some that really seem in many ways to defy, and certainly do defy, the modern understanding of the world and the universe in which we live. And yet, what we're reminded of is we live in a spiritual world as well as a material world. And we do not understand it all, and we certainly don't see it or experience it so much, tangibly, in our lives. But this is the reality of things.

And so, Lord, help us to understand this and how it applies to us, and how we're to live in this world. We know how we're to live in this world. We're to live in complete dependence upon you, and so, Lord, may you teach us that. One thing we also learn is that you're absolutely sufficient for this world and our life in it and our walk with

you in it. You are absolutely sufficient, you are all powerful, and we can rest in you and in your guidance.

And so, Lord, teach us these things, build us up in the faith, encourage, bless us. Bless us not only spiritually but materially. We pray for those that have physical needs, which includes all of us, Lord. We are dependent upon you for everything. Every breath of life, we're dependent upon you for that.

We're dependent upon you for our daily bread. We're instructed by the Lord Jesus to pray for that. So, Lord, we pray for what seem the mundane things of life, but the important things of life. We pray for those that are sick. We pray that you give them healing.

This time of the year, it seems, when many are coming down with illness, and we pray that you would give those who are sick quick recovery, and those who are healthy, may they maintain their health. Bless those who are facing particularly difficult issues physically: surgery, major treatments. Father, give them effectiveness, and give encouragement to those who are undergoing such treatment. And bless us in a variety of ways, Lord.

The unemployed, give them employment; the discouraged, give them encouragement. And bless all of us with the joy that we should have if we realize that this world is not our home, that we have a glorious kingdom before us. This is what Daniel is going to be told. It's what he has been instructed in the past, what will come in the vision that he will receive.

And it's our hope as well. We have a kingdom to come, and every believer in Jesus Christ has a secure place there. That should encourage us in any time of the year in any difficulty we face. So, Lord, encourage us and build us up in the faith. Bless our time together now, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

[Message] There is an old Cornish prayer that pleads, "From the ghoulies and ghosties and long-legged beasties, and things that go bump in the night, Good Lord deliver us!" Well, if that was ever a serious prayer, it's amusing to us now. We all know that ghoulies and

ghosties, scary things don't exist. They're the monsters that exist in the minds of children. They always want their parents to look under the bed to make sure nothing's there and everything's all right.

I can remember those days. I remember nights looking at the closet door and knowing that there was something in there besides my shoes [*laughter*], and once I went to sleep it was coming out. Never did. I guess most every child goes through that phase in his or her life and soon grows out of it. But is it childish to believe that something is out there, that there is more to this world than meets the eye, that there is and are unseen powers that have an influence"

I was in a Bible study in college, and we were discussing a passage in the Gospel of Mark, a passage where Jesus cast out an evil spirit. And the leader asked, "What was this? What happened?" So I spoke up. I answered, "Oh, it was a demon and He cast it out."

And about that time I no sooner say that, then the person sitting to my right looked at me and said, "Demons. Demons." He was shocked that anyone in the summer of 1969 still believed in demons. We'd just walked on the moon. We understand the world.

We understand the laws of nature. We understand how things worked. And I'm a college student talking about demons. Modernity doesn't have a place for that. It doesn't have a place for the supernatural, but Christianity does.

It doesn't deny science, it doesn't teach superstition, and things that go bump in the night have natural explanations. But the Bible does teach the supernatural. And it is very clear from both the Old and New Testaments that there is something out there, something powerful and something dangerous. There are angelic forces. There are good ones and there are bad ones, from Genesis chapter 3 through Revelation chapter 20, we read of them.

We read of the devil who is Satan and who once was Lucifer, the Angel of Light. Three times Jesus referred to him as the prince of this world. Paul called him the prince of the power of the air. In Ephesians 2:2, Paul says that he "is now working in the sons of

disobedience." Paul goes on, in that same book in chapter 6, to speak about the workings of the devil and how he's dealing with men and working in this world, and speaks of his whole army. And he has a whole regiment of servants and those enlisted in his schemes, the rulers and forces of darkness in the heavenly places.

That's not the only place. They're in the Book of Job, like that famous scene where Satan comes before the Lord one day. And when asked where he had come from, he said that he had been "roaming about on the earth." He's here, he's there, he moves through the spaces between. Hamlet had a word for moderns today that is thoroughly biblical, when he said to Horatio, "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of your philosophy."

Well, if you believe the Bible, you have to believe that. And we learn a lot more about that from Daniel chapter 10. The Bible doesn't reveal a lot about the angelic realm, but Daniel 10 is one of the most important passages on it. In it, the Lutheran commentator, H.C. Leupold wrote, "We get a rare glimpse behind the scene of world history. There are spiritual forces at work that are far in excess of what men who disregard the revelation would suppose. They struggle behind the struggles that are written on the pages of history."

I think that's very true. And I think that's the main lesson that we're going to learn in this passage that we have read and we are studying. Daniel chapter 10 not only lifts the curtain on world events. It introduces the last part of the book. The remaining three chapters of Daniel really are to be understood as a unit. They all go together.

They contain the last of the four visions given to Daniel. And the vision that's given to him here is the longest of the four. The vision itself is given in chapter 11, and it reveals the history of Israel from the Persian period to the coming of God's kingdom. These chapters concern much more than what we have read so far. Many details we'll get into next week, which we haven't covered.

And we won't deal with it in detail because it's a lot of ancient Greek history. But also, much of what we have covered, we will cover

in chapter 11, is what has been revealed already, revelation that has been given in the previous chapters. But this vision will concern mainly the Greek Empire and the coming of the antichrist. That's chapter 11. That's where the vision occurs.

So chapter 10 has been described as the preface to that vision, while chapter 12, the postscript to it. Well, the first verse in this preface of chapter 10, in it Daniel tells us the subject of the vision. He says it was of a "great conflict." If some of you are reading the New International Version, that translation is it concerns "a great war." And then he explains how this vision came to him.

"It was "in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia," which was the year 536 BC. Daniel at this time was an old man. He was coming to the end of his life. He was probably 85 years old. He wrote that, "In those days," he "had been mourning for three entire weeks."

Now, we're not told why he was mourning. We're not told what the burden was that he was bearing. But we know this. Daniel was a man of God, and as a man of God he was always concerned about his people and he was always in prayer for their spiritual welfare. And that was no doubt the case here.

He was concerned about events, he was concerned about his people. And when you put all of the history of that time together, very likely this was about that group of exiles who had returned from Babylon to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest. And we know from the Book of Ezra that when they returned, they met opposition. They faced difficulties. The Samaritans had impeded the work that they were to do of rebuilding the temple and were causing frustration to the work of God.

Well, that very likely was the burden that Daniel was bearing, that he was praying about and that he prayed about for three weeks. Now, after praying for that period of time, his answer came and it came in another vision. He was by the bank of the Tigris River, some distance from Babylon, when he says in verse 5, "I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen, whose

waist was girded with a belt of pure gold of Uphaz. His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult."

Well, who is this person, unusual person? Commentators are divided over him. He's obviously a heavenly person. But the similarity of this vision with what is given elsewhere, what's given in Revelation 1:12-15, gives us reason to believe that this is the Lord Himself. In fact, there's much about the response to this vision with those men who are with Daniel, that is very similar to the response of the men who were with Paul when Paul had a vision of Christ on the Damascus Road.

I think that's who this is. I think this is a revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, a preincarnate revelation of Him. And it fits well with the events because this is the climactic experience of Daniel's life. He's at the end of his life, the end of a faithful life, a faithful ministry, when he's about to be given a panorama of world history. And that great vision that occupies chapter 11 is introduced here with an appearance of Jesus Christ.

The appearance is not literal. It's symbolical. It had a literal vision and a literal appearance of the Lord, but the Lord appears in symbolic appearance to express things like His holiness and power and the flashing flames of His face and eyes, the strength of His arms and feet, the authority that's in His voice. This is the one who governs history. And so it's an appropriate vision to introduce the vision that will explain the flow of history that is to come.

This one is certainly adequate to bring it all to pass. He's the Lord, He is God, and He will bring the great conflict, the great war to a victorious conclusion for Israel and all of God's people. He'll bring a great kingdom to this world. Well, that assurance is certainly given implicitly in this vision that Daniel is given of this great person, the Lord Jesus Christ. But it was to Daniel really too much for him to

deal with, just as later it would be for John when he has that same vision in Revelation chapter 1.

His strength him and he collapsed, fell to the ground. Now, I think there's a lesson in that. I think that tells us something. That's the response of the creature before the Creator. We can only stand before Him by His grace.

Man is frail; man is just dust. We're made from dust, we return to dust. That's what we're made of. He is completely different from us. God is holy, and the weight of His glory, the weight of His holiness would crush us if we allowed it to. And we see the natural response of a creature to the Creator, of one to his God. He collapses.

And we can only stand before God by His grace. And Daniel received grace here. All of this is about God's grace for this man. Daniel recovers when an angel touches him, probably the Angel Gabriel. The angel of this passage isn't named for us, but Gabriel is the angel that Daniel has been conversing with in the previous chapters.

We assume that it's Gabriel again who appears to Daniel, and he touches Daniel. Daniel recovers, and then Daniel writes of an amazing conversation that followed. He stood Daniel on his feet and told him not to be afraid. God had heard his prayer and had sent Gabriel with the message that answered his prayer. And that answer would come in a vision that he would give to him, a vision in chapter 11 of a great war.

And he explains, in verse 14, that if something hadn't happened, he would have arrived even sooner. Verse 13: 'But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future.' " Well, who is this prince of Persia. Obviously it's not a human prince fighting with an angel.

This is another angel. This is a spirit. This is a powerful being, a powerful spirit being, a powerful angel, able to resist Gabriel for three weeks, and able to resist until Gabriel received help from the Archangel Michael when he intervened. He's called the prince of Persia because Persia was the province of his special activity and influence. But with Michael's help Gabriel was able to overcome this powerful spirit demon.

Now, the purpose of the battle isn't given. But it's likely that it's in connection with Daniel's prayer for the Jews in Judah and the struggle that they were having with the Samaritans. Gabriel and Michael were able to thwart the power of the prince and to gain the position of influence over Cyrus the King so that he would effect a favorable outcome for the people, the Jews in Judah. Still, think of this. A three-week battle.

Does that suggest that the powers of darkness are almost a match for the angels of light? Was it a battle that Gabriel could have lost? He struggled for three weeks. That's quite a long battle, quite a long wrestling match. Well, of course, the answer to that is no. Satan and his minions are clearly powerful.

They are far more powerful than either any of us are. But they are limited, and the one whom they oppose, the Lord God, is not. He is unlimited, He is omnipotent, He is all powerful. No one and nothing can thwart the Lord's will or His purpose. We see that all through the Book of Daniel, don't we?

One of the great themes, and I've stressed this over and over again, but one of the great themes that you receive – and if I didn't stress it, if you're paying attention to the book – is the absolute sovereignty of God. He's Lord of history. He is the Almighty. But He allows certain things to happen and conflicts to arise that fit with His plan. And ultimately, though we may not understand them and they may be mysterious to us, but ultimately they contribute to the fulfillment of His purpose.

From the time Daniel began praying and Gabriel arrived, three weeks elapsed. The delay was divinely permitted so that the answer would arrive at the precise time God determined. Now, it doesn't say that, and that's my inference from the text. But knowing that God's sovereign and no one can frustrate His plan, even those apparent frustrations are part of His plan to bring about the answer at the right time. And the answer came in God's time, the right time, three weeks after Daniel began his prayer.

It must have been frustrating for Daniel. He doesn't know these things. He doesn't know God's plan. All of that's hidden from us, as it was to him. And so you can imagine that he began to pray that first day and prays earnestly, and doesn't get an answer, and prays the next day and prays through that first week, and begins to wonder, "Why is there no answer coming to my prayer.

"I'm in great conflict over this. I'm very concerned for my people back in Jerusalem." And he prays another week, and he prays another week. And he must have been frustrated by that. But it tells us something.

We don't know that he was frustrated. But what it does tell is what he did is what we must do, and that is continuing praying. God doesn't answer prayers immediately. This is an example of that. Don't be surprised if you enter into prayer over an issue that's a great burden to you, and rightly so, and don't get the answer you want when you want it.

What do you do? Well, you do what Daniel did. You keep praying. That's the kind of prayer God wants to cultivate within us. That's the kind of prayer life He's teaching us through these very delays; teaches us what's called importunate prayer: earnest, diligent, continuous prayer.

See that, too, is God's purpose. He doesn't delay answers because He doesn't have the answer or because some angel is frustrating Him. He uses the opposition of angels, He uses all kinds of things to bring about His perfect will. And often God allows

believers to wait for His answer in order to stretch their faith, in order to teach them spiritual commitment, in order to cause them to continue before God, continue on their knees to strengthen them, ultimately, spiritually. That's how He does it.

But the answer always comes. It's not always the answer we want. But it's the right answer and it comes at the best time. How do I know that? Well, I know that because I know the Lord, and I know what kind of God we serve.

And I know that by faith. I trust Him to what He says and who He is. Well, having finally arrived, Gabriel explains, in verse 14, that he had come to Daniel to reveal to him what would happen to Israel in the latter days, at the end of history. That is the main subject of these final chapters. And in the last verses of the chapter, Daniel records how the angel strengthened him to receive the revelation.

He then tells him, in verse 21, that he will tell Daniel 'what is inscribed in the writing of truth.' The writing of truth; that's a way of describing God's plan for Israel and, in fact, His plan for the world. The writing of truth. That is the plan of the ages. That's what that term means.

The German commentator, C.F. Keil, wrote, "It is the book in which God **has** designated beforehand, according to truth, the history of the world as it shall certainly be unfolded." In other words, God is the author of history, and he has already written the story. He hasn't written it only because He's omniscient and He knows what will happen before it occurs, as though He's the great leader of history and He's already read the book. Not at all. He is the author of history.

He knows what will happen because He has already written it. And He's written it because He is all powerful and He has decreed it. He knows what's going to happen in the future because He's decreed what will happen in the future. That's why He knows what will happen in the future. The grand scheme of history has already been written out.

Not only the grand scheme of history but your personal history has already been written out. That's not determinism, that's predestination. And that's what God clearly reveals in the Word of God. I'll give you one example. David wrote in that great Psalm, Psalm 139: "In Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them."

What's he saying? David is saying, "You not only know all things, you've ordained all things. That's how you know all things. And every day of my life was already written down in your book, already ordained before I was ever born." Now, that's not a reason for discouragement or confusion.

Look, we serve God. God is God. As Luther said, "Let God be God." He is who He is. He rules history, He governs everything.

This is His world, we're His creatures. He ordains things. That's what David said, and that should give us great encouragement. Our God is in complete control. He's in complete control of all of history.

He's in complete control of your personal history. And He is a good God, a loving God who has a perfect plan for your life. He's going to work it out perfectly. Trust Him, rest in Him. And rest in Him for the fulfillment of His prophecies. He will bring them to pass.

If you have doubts, look at the vision of Him here in this book in verses 5 and 6. He is a great and powerful God. Well, that scheme of history in this final unit of the book is the great subject of these chapters, and chapter 10 is the introduction to that. And so this vision of Christ in these early verses of the chapter are quite appropriate because they show that the one who ordained all of this is certainly sufficient to bring it all to pass. That's the main subject here.

But the minor subject is this angelic host, this spiritual warfare that we see. That's what we want to spend the rest of our time on. In verse 20, Gabriel tells Daniel that he must "return to fight" with "the prince of Persia," because "the prince of Greece is about to come," another demonic power. So while prophecy is the subject, we learn

something about angels and demons. Not a lot; we don't learn a lot, but we learn something.

When you consider that the Bible is 66 books, that's a lot. That's a big book. There are big books within it and small books within it, but there are lots of chapters and lots of verses. Sixty-six books of the Bible, you realize that, really, in light of all of that, in comparison with all of that, what we learn about the devil, what is said about Satan and the angelic legions is really not very much compared to the fullness of the revelation that God gives. And I think that's because the Lord doesn't want us to focus on that because men would become enamored and fascinated with darkness, and we don't need to fix our minds on those things.

We need to fix our minds on what's good, not what's sinister. But the Bible reveals something. And it reveals enough to alert us to the reality of it, to the reality of that hidden world, that invisible war that's going on, and to be warned of it. And here in Daniel 10, we have a glimpse into this spiritual conflict that is going on behind the scenes of human events. A war is happening.

It's in the air above us, in the air around us. We don't see it, we don't hear it, we don't smell it. But it is happening in heavenly places, it is happening in earthly places. It's happening in governments where men in high places are being influenced. That's the revelation of Daniel chapter 10.

Another passage that sheds some light on all of this and then the spiritual warfare that's described here, is 1 Kings chapter 22, which records the death of King Ahab. King Ahab, you'll remember, was the king of the northern kingdom of Israel, and he was planning to go to battle against the kingdom of Syria. And he had before him 400 of his favorite prophets. They were all false prophets, and all of them told Ahab what he wanted to hear. That's why he liked these prophets.

They said just what he wanted them to say. They told him that his decision and his desire was the right thing. "Yes, go to battle against Syria. You'll be victorious." They all said that.

But there was one prophet there who was not among this group, who was separate, who was the one true prophet, Micaiah. And he prophesied against the battle. He said the very thing that Ahab didn't want to hear. He told the king how he had been given a vision of heaven. He had seen the throne of God and he'd seen the angelic host around it.

And he heard God asking the angels how Ahab might be lured into battle at Ramoth-gilead where he would meet his death. There were a number of ideas given. "And then he heard one spirit say, 'I will entice him.'" And the Lord asked how he would do that. He answered, 'I will go out and be a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all the prophets.' And the Lord God answered that spirit and He said, 'Go and do so.'

And Micaiah told Ahab, 'The Lord has put a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all these, your prophets, and the Lord has proclaimed disaster against you.' " King Ahab did not like to hear that. He didn't like that answer. He responded by not believing what Micaiah said.

He didn't want to believe it, he wouldn't believe it. And so what he did is in anger. He arrested the prophet and threw him in prison. Then he went to battle against Syria and was killed. It was a lying demon in the mouth of false prophets that lured him to his death.

That is one scheme of the devil. He is, as Jesus described him in John 8:44, a liar and "a murderer from the beginning." That's what he does, he lies, he murders, and his influence is among men of great power. His influence is in the Kremlin, it's in Whitehall, it's on Capital Hill, it's everywhere. He stalks the halls of power and he moves among men and women of power, people of power, kings and the rulers of the world.

Well, we see that here with the different princes, the prince of Persia, the prince of Greece. This is their area of influence among the leaders and the people there. But the schemes of the devil are also personal. Not just in the great high halls of government, but he attacks the people of God personally. When he appeared before God

in Job chapter 1, he accused Job before the Lord, challenged the Lord to afflict him. And "You afflict that man and he'll deny you."

And so the Lord gave Job into his hands for a time. He does that. He afflicts God's people. He is the accuser of the saints. In Revelation 12: 9-10, John describes him as "the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world."

He's a liar from the beginning, he's a deceiver. And then he calls him "the accuser of our brethren who accuses them before our God day and night." He is continually at work, reminding God of what unworthy sinners we are. Now, there's an example of that in the Old Testament, in Zachariah chapter 3. The high priest, Joshua, was standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan was there accusing him.

And these are the very people Daniel had been praying about, the people and the circumstances that he had been fasting over, the exiles that had returned to Jerusalem and were being opposed by the Samaritans. And so that passage, that scene in Zachariah 3, gives us another glimpse behind the scene into the spiritual war that was going on at that time. Satan was accusing Joshua the high priest, and he had grounds for his accusation. Joshua was wearing filthy clothes, which were symbolic of his and, in fact, the nation's sins. Satan was pointing to the priest's condition, and he was saying he wasn't fit to minister in the temple.

And the people he represented, they weren't fit to live in the land. He's making his accusations, but the Lord rebukes Satan and stops him from making his accusations. And then the angel standing with Joshua said to those standing by, "Take of his filthy clothes." And in place of them, he was given clean garments, he was given festal robes from his head to his toes. And the Lord said, "See, I have taken your iniquity away from you."

That is a wonderful picture for us as new covenant believers. It gives us a picture of what the Lord has done for each and every one of us who have believed in Him, and what He has done for us at the very

moment of faith, and what is permanent about us. He's justified us. He's paid for all of our sins, He's forgiven us of all of our sins. He's taken them away, He's separated them as far as the east is from the west.

But He hasn't just taken away our sins. He's supplied us with something, he's given us something. He clothed us in His righteousness. He's declared us just and righteous before Him. And that's His answer to Satan's accusations.

He's constantly accusing the saints, but the Lord is pointing to His work on the cross and the righteousness He's given us. Now, Satan afflicts us in other ways though. Satan afflicts us, not only spiritually, but physically as – I have the example of Job as one example of that how his power can be physical. Paul's another example of that. You know the famous prayer that he speaks of in 2 Corinthians 12.

He had this thorn in the flesh. He calls it a messenger of Satan to torment him and keep him from boasting. It was an affliction that came from Satan in some way. We don't know what the affliction was. It was evidently physical because he dealt with a thorn in the flesh.

But God used it in his life to keep Paul from becoming arrogant and boasting about his position. So there's physical affliction that occurs from Satan. That's, I think, unusual. Certainly not all illness is due to the devil if much at all of it is. The air is full of microbes, and they are sufficient reason for sickness.

And those sicknesses are dealt with with medical treatment, medicines, microbes which respond to modern medicine. And I that's how we're to understand much of the ailments that we experience. It's not from Satan, it's just the way it is in a fallen world. But the main area of satanic attack and warfare is the mind, and it's what Paul describes in Ephesians 6, where he gives a – really a hierarchy of demonic beings and their weapons of assault. They are fiery darts.

So the demons are shooting flaming arrows at us. Not arrows that are visible or that touch us physically, but are invisible and are

aimed at our soul. So if they can influence governments, as Daniel chapter 10 suggests, then they can certainly influence individuals. Paul's description here, I take it to mean that they're somehow able to affect our thoughts with thoughts of sorrow or thoughts of doubt or thoughts of guilt. Paul tells us to be careful.

Paul tells us what to do. He says, "Put on the full armor of God." Put on the helmet, the breastplate, the shield, and equip ourselves with the sharpest sword of all, which is the Word of God. Know it, understand it, know the doctrines of God's Word and know how to apply them to your life in the various circumstances of life. That's how we're to live life.

It's a dangerous world in which we live. There are hostile forces there and subtle forces that we can't see or perceive. But we have the Word of God and we're to follow it, and we're to lean upon it. Man who denies the existence of Satan and demons, who dismisses all of that as a bunch of midlevel mythology, that person's a fool. He rejects the Word of God, and in doing that, he or she is open to deception, open to an enemy that is there and very present, one that Peter tells us is "like a roaring lion."

There are more things in heaven and earth that are dreamt of in our philosophy, and man is grossly limited in his knowledge. We are very limited in our knowledge of the devil and his agents. But enough has been revealed to make us wise about it and to alert us to the absolute necessity of leaning upon the Lord, of walking in obedience to His Word and avoiding the danger. That's how we avoid it. That's how we equip ourselves, through obedience to God's Word.

Something is out there. But God's in control. We should be encouraged by that. We should be strong, we should be stable, we should be reasonable people, rational people. We should be bold and joyful people.

We should not be anxious people. We shouldn't worry about the ghoulies and the ghosties and the things that go bump in the night. Sometimes the things that do go bump in the night should disturb us I

suppose. We need to be wise, we need to take reasonable precautions. We need to lock our doors at night.

But we shouldn't be a fearful people. We shouldn't be a people that allow our imaginations to control our sense of things. Even the real things that are dangerous are not to terrify us. We're to trust in the Lord. God will deliver us. John assures us of that in 1 John 4:4.

He says, "greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." Someone, some thing is in the world he's saying. What's he talking about? He's talking about Satan who prowls about this world, who's walking to and fro in this world, he and his angelic host, his demons. They're here, they're present, they're active. But what John is saying is the Holy Spirit is here as well, and He's not just in the world, he's in you.

Your heart's been sealed with the Holy Spirit, and he's stronger than any attack we can undergo. He delivers. Luther understand that. He understood very well. He stood before human princes, he stood before spiritual princes.

He claimed to have had a few encounters with the devil. On one occasion it's reported that he threw an inkpot at the devil's head when he was being pestered by the devil while he was engaged in his studies. I think he was engaged in the work of translating the New Testament into German. It's probably a legend. It's a very famous legend.

But his hymn was no legend. His hymn is true. *A Mighty Fortress is our God*. And there he has that stanza: "The Prince of Darkness grim/we tremble not for him;/ his rage we can endure,/ for lo, his doom is sure." That's the future, and that is certain.

Paul assures the church of that at the end of Roman. In Romans 16:20, he wrote, "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." It's going to happen. Satan will be crushed under your feet by the power of God. We'll have some hand in that, some part to play in that.

But He's going to bring about ultimate victory. And that day is approaching. The day of victory is approaching, the day of the kingdom is approaching. Are you ready for it? Are you living in light of it?

Are you living triumphantly and joyfully in the midst of this world in which we are? Are you living in light of the fact that He is going to return and bring victory to this world. If you're a believer in Jesus Christ you should be. We all should be. Perhaps you haven't put your faith in Christ.

And if not, we invite you to come to Him, to believe in Him. Christ is the Son of God, very God of very God. Daniel is given a glimpse of Him and His glory and His power by the Tigris River. He's all powerful. He became a man and allowed Himself to be arrested, tried and crucified for us, for us who are sinners.

He has paid the debt for all who believe in Him. So if you're here without Him, look to Him, trust in Him, believe in Him. At that moment, your sins are taken away. At that moment you're clothed in the righteousness of Christ. You have an eternal glorious future ahead of you, and you're in the hand of the Savior forever. May God help you to look to Him and trust in Him. Let's pray.

[Prayer] Father, we give you thanks for our Savior, and we thank you that our lives are hidden with Him on high. Thank you for your grace that was extended to us in Him, for the security that we have in Him now and forever. We thank you for the salvation that we have in your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. In His name we pray. Amen.