

Why Prayer Was Not Answered for Three Weeks

by Denis Lyle

The sermon explores the problem of unanswered prayer and the reasons behind it, highlighting the role of satanic forces and the importance of understanding the plan of God for Israel.

Scripture: Daniel 10:13, Matthew 11:28, Ephesians 6:12, 1 John 5:14, Revelation 12:7

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Prayer Answered"

Description

Denis Lyle delves into the reasons why prayers may not be answered for weeks, exploring the spiritual warfare behind the scenes as depicted in Daniel 10. He highlights the presence of evil angels working through human leaders and the organized nature of evil originating from Satan. The chapter reveals the intense battle between heavenly and evil forces, with Daniel experiencing a divine encounter with a majestic man, possibly a preincarnate appearance of Jesus. The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing God's purity, sovereignty, glory, radiancy, and scrutiny as seen in the vision, urging believers to focus on the Lord amidst dark times.

Transcript

WHY PRAYER WAS NOT ANSWERED FOR THREE WEEKS! Daniel 10:1-21 When Hitler was getting ready to go on a major campaign, he often spent the majority of the night before, according to those around him, communing with the spirit world. He was in touch with his prince, and certainly evil angels were commissioned to direct the affairs of that wicked tyrant. You see, evil is not abstract, it is not lurking out there somewhere, like a cloud. Evil always has an intelligent, conscious source.

There is not evil that does not originate in a personality. There is the evil that is within us, and there is the evil that is personally involved with Satan and his emissaries. He is organised and his troops are everywhere. In the book of Revelation we read "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and the dragon fought and his angels". (Rev 12:7) In (Matt 25:41) the Lord Jesus spoke about "the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels".

My, this is not fiction, Satan does have his angels, and they are very well organised. Indeed this chapter gives us a glimpse of whats behind the headlines, as we see demonic forces that are constantly active, working through leaders of human governments. Now this is a fascinating account. Here is old Daniel, almost ninety years of age. He has just witnessed 50,000 Jews leaving Babylon to return to Jerusalem,

but instead of being joyful he's sad. Daniel is so disappointed that out of all the thousands of Jews in Babylon only 50,000 decide to make the return journey.

He mourns, he prays, and while Daniel was praying on earth, God heard in heaven and dispatched an angel with a special delivery answer. However, between heaven and earth, that angel was accosted by an evil angel, and a battle took place in outer space. After three weeks of warfare, God's angel with the help of Michael, one of the chief princes, shook off the bandit and continued his journey to earth. Now you may be thinking, "that is the most bizarre thing I've ever heard. What science fiction book have you been reading" My, this is not a fictional story, indeed this is why prayer was not answered for three weeks!

Now can you picture old Daniel He's troubled. Some folk like to get outside when they are troubled. Imagine strolling by the river, skipping a stone now and then across the river, and all of a sudden seeing a brilliant figure. Well, here is Daniel mourning and praying by the banks of the river Tigris, when he is startled by: (1) THE INTRODUCTION OF A MAJESTIC MAN " A certain man clothed in linen... "(10:5) But who was this person While some feel he was an angel, Gabriel or Michael, I am inclined to believe that this was a preincarnate appearance of the second person of the Trinity the Lord Jesus... often referred to as a Christophany!

Now I want you to see that for Daniel this was his climatic spiritual experience. You see, at first Daniel interpreted the dreams and visions of others (Ch's 2: 4: 5:) and then he began to receive visions himself (Ch's 7: 8) Then the angel Gabriel came to Daniel's side to give him insight and understanding regarding the future of his nation. (Ch 9) But now finally, the prophet is blessed with a glorious vision of the Son of God Himself! Now in light of the dark days that lay ahead for his people, the Jews it was very fitting that Daniel first have a vision of the Lord to be reminded of His Glory and His Sovereignty over men and the nations.

So we notice here that: (a) THE MAN IS IDENTIFIED: This was the Lord of Glory, the second person of the Godhead. Look at (10:5-6) Now does that remind you of any other vision in Scripture Do you not think that it is very like the first chapter of Revelation Well, its certainly very similar is it not (Rev 1:12-17) John saw the Lord Jesus in His Post Resurrection Glory, Daniel saw the Lord Jesus in His Pre Incarnate Glory. This was the Preincarnate Son of God Himself! My, Daniel "turned his eyes upon Jesus, and looked full in His wonderful face".

What did he see He saw: 1. The Lords PURITY: " A certain man clothed in linen... "(10:5) Now fine while linen was the garment of priests (Exod 28:39-43) it was also the garment of the angels that appeared at the Saviours tomb. (Mk 16:5) Its associated with the representatives of God and seems to symbolise Gods foremost attribute: His holiness! 2. The Lords SOVEREIGNTY: " Whose loins were girded with fine gold... "(10:5) Now although we don't know what "uphaz", signifies Daniel's description indicates a belt overlaid with fine gold.

As a valuable, pure and beautiful metal gold here symbolises the Sovereignty of the Lord Jesus. My, is this not the very key concept of this book "there is a God in heaven... the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever He willeth". (4:25) Does that not thrill your soul To know that while the kingdoms of this earth are passing God's kingdom will abide. Heaven rules! 3. The Lords GLORY: For "His body was like the beryl... "(5:6) A transparent flashing jewel.

Some think it refers to the topaz. As such I think it symbolises the Glory of the Lord Jesus! 4. The Lords RADIANCY: For "His face was like the appearance of lightning... " (10:5) In (Rev 1:16) John describes

Christ's face as being like the sun, the radiancy of my blessed Lord. 5. The Lords SCRUTINY: For the eyes of Christ were "as lamps of fire..." (10:6) Lamps search out and throw light on what they are aimed at, exposing things as they are really are. How solemn to realise that as our Risen Lord walks in the midst of the churches there is nothing that escapes His all-seeing eye, Of the heartaches of those who did go back: Of Israels future sufferings implied in the seventy weeks prophecy.

My, his heart was heavy but Christ Himself appeared to him, and reminded him of His Supremacy over men and the nations. As we look around us this... the outlook may be grim, but the uplook is glorious. Near the entrance to a large hospital in the Eastern United States there stands a white marble statute of Christ. On its base are engraved these words " Come unto me..." (Matt 11:28) One day a cynical man walked around the statue, viewing it disapprovingly from every angle. A small girl stood and watched him for a time and then rushed up to him, "Oh, sir you cannot see Him that way", she said "you must get very close and fall upon your knees and look up."

In these days when good is called evil and evil is called good, have you been looking up In these days when there is little commitment from the people of God have you been looking up My, its when we get our eyes on the Lord... His Sovereignty: His Purity: His Majesty its when we "turn our eyes on Jesus and look full in His wonderful face, then... of His glory and grace". (b) THE MEN ARE TERRIFIED: Look at (10:7) Its (Acts Ch 9) all over again. Do you recall that the men that journeyed with Saul "stood speechless hearing a voice but seeing no man". (Acts 9:7) When heaven invades earth it always leaves man in awe.

Though those with Daniel saw no vision they knew that something was happening, and they began to shake. They fled to hide from the presence of God because it was more than they could bear... a natural response of sinful man as seen many times in the Scriptures! (Gen 3: 8) So (a) (b) and: (c) THE MESSENGER IS MYSTIFIED: For look at Daniel's response to this majestic person. (10:8-9) Now Daniel was a Good man, a Godly man but he was not able to handle too much of Gods presence.

He says, "my comeliness..." "it simply means he lost his strength and acquired the death like pallor of one in absolute panic. On top of that he "heard the voice of Gods words". (10:9) That caused him to panic. Daniel was shattered by the voice of Gods Son... completely mastered by the awe of His presence My, was this not: 1. The Testimony of JOB: " I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes". (Job 42:5-6) 2.

The Testimony of ISAIAH: Isaiah was a godly man, yet when he saw God he 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 mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts". (Is 6:5) 3. The Testimony of PETER: For when Peter saw the power of the Lord Jesus he responded, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord". (Lk 5:8) Here is Daniel overcome by the awe of Gods presence. My, are you awed in the presence of God Do you find yourself rushing in and out of God's presence with no thought for His majesty When you come to worship are your thoughts focused on everything and anything but the Lord Have we not lost the awe and wonder of being in the presence of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords Daniel was overawed when suddenly "a hand touched", him.

Now this was: (2) THE INTERRUPTION OF AN ANGELIC BEING Look at (10:10) "And behold an hand touched me". Now at least five times in this book Daniel speaks of " being touched". Indeed this was the secret of his greatness. He had the touch of God upon him. He was a truly great man because God touched him. * In (8:18-19) God touched him to make him SEE: * In (9:21-22) God touched him to give him

SKILL: * In (10:10-11) God touched him to make him STAND * In (10:16) God touched him to make him SPEAK: * In (10:18) God touched him to make him STRONG: My, here was a man who had the touch of Almighty God upon him.

Now Daniel is sleeping here when he is touched by the hand of an angel. You see: (a) THE ANGEL CAME TO REVIVE DANIEL: For please remember Daniel is almost ninety years of age and he has been weakened by fasting. (10:3) So the angels touch brought him back to consciousness. The angels words ordered him to stand erect and give careful attention to his words. (10:10) (a) (b) THE ANGEL CAME TO REASSURE DANIEL: Did you notice how the angel speaks to him "O Daniel, a man greatly beloved". (10:11) "Fear not Daniel...

"(10:12) Daniel was a special man, like others named in the Bible. David was called "a man after God's own heart". (1 Sam 13:14) Abraham was called God's friend, (Is 41:8) the apostle John was called "the disciple whom Jesus loved". (Jn 21:7) and Mary was "highly favoured", by God. (Lk 1:28) You see, those who especially delight in God and obey Him, become greatly beloved by Him. The angel may have told Daniel he was beloved by God to relieve his fear... he wasn't going to be judged but blessed! (a) (b) (c) THE ANGEL CAME TO RESPOND TO DANIEL: Look at (10:12) When Daniel began to pray three weeks earlier God at once despatched his heavenly messenger to go to the prophets aid.

"Thy words were heard and I am come for thy words". (10:12) True, he did not get an immediate answer to his prayer, but then the answer that is delayed must not be interpreted as having been denied. My, the answer was forthcoming even though Daniel did not know it for three full weeks. At the very beginning of his intercession God went into action on behalf of his servant, and not only was the prayer heard at once in heaven, it was likewise answered at once in heaven. Is it not encouraging for us to know that when we pray in the will of God our prayers are heard and answered even though the answer may be delayed. (1 Jn 5:14-15) Now here is the crucial question.

What hindered the answer to this prayer Why the delay Why was prayer not answered for three full weeks Because of: (3) THE INTERVENTION OF A SATANIC FORCE Look at (10:13) Now this throws light upon the problem of seemingly unanswered prayer. For most of us at one time or another this is a peculiar problem that we have had to face. Now the Bible makes it very clear that our prayers may be ineffectual for a number of reasons. One may be: * Sinfulness: the psalmist said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me". (Ps 66:18) * Selfishness: James says, "Ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts". (James 4:3) * Stinginess: Proverbs says, "Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard". (Prov 21:13) Strife: for Peter reminds us that when there is domestic strife in the home our "prayers are hindered". (1 Pet 3:7) But assuming that all is well between us and the Lord as it was with Daniel, what is the problem here Why was prayer not answered for three weeks Well, look at the context and notice: (a) The Angel was HINDERED by a Powerful Force: Look at (10:13) Now the first question we have to ask is this.

Who is the speaker here Well, an angel is speaking possibly Gabriel. (8:16 9:21) The second question is more difficult. Who was this prince of the kingdom of Persia Well, I think we can say: 1. HE WAS POWERFUL: For he singlehandedly blocked one of heavens mightiest angels for 21 days! It is obvious therefore that he was not a man for no human being could have resisted a messenger from God. My, do you recall that in one night one angel could slay Sennacheribs army (2 Chron 32:20) Now if you look closely at (10:13) you will notice that there is a distinction drawn between the "prince of the kingdom of Persia", and the kings of Persia".

So he was powerful. 2. HE WAS PERVERTED: For he withstood Gods divinely appointed messenger and since he opposed God's emissary he must have been one of Satans evil messengers or demons. You see, this was a powerful member of Satans hierarchy! 1. 2. 3. HE WAS PURPOSEFUL: For he was "the prince of the kingdom of Persia." (10:13) And what was his purpose To influence the King of Persia against the people of God. His purpose was to influence the events in Persia so that God's plans for the future of Israel would be hindered.

You see, Persia, through Cyrus had championed the cause of Israel, and this no doubt had stirred up the fiendish hostility of Satans representative of this empire. Thats why this evil angel-prince sought to influence events against the people of God. My, does this not answer the question, "whats behind the headlines" It gives us a glimpse into the unseen. It enables us to see that behind the political and social conditions of the world in every generation there has been angelic influence both good and evil.

Think of it, behind the activity of nations on earth there are unseen powers: and angelic princes. The angel said, "the prince of the kingdom of Persia," thus this angel was hindered by a powerful force. Demonic. You see, evil angels are called demons. The Scriptures establishes: * Their ACTUALITY: " the prince of the kingdom of Persia". (10:13) For while the Persian Empire was ruled by a human prince Cyrus, (10:1) in the unseen world it was ruled by a fallen angelic prince.

It seems that angelic princes preside over the affairs of the various nations of the earth. (Is 24:21) Indeed it is not too much to say that the action in the book of Revelation is carried on and promoted by angelic beings. (Rev 5:2 7:1 8:2-3 10:1 14:6) * * Their AUTHORITY: In (Col 1:16) there is brought before us the structure of Gods government. Will you notice here that are the angels are divided into ranks. They are referred to as "thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers".

Now if you look at (Eph 6:12) you will see that there is brought before us the structure of Satans government. Now did you notice something very interesting here The four different ranks in (Eph 6) that are under the authority of Satan correspond to the four ranks mentioned in (Col 1) that are under the authority of God. My, the devil has his world rulers of darkness. There was one assigned by Satan to look after the nation of Persia. Did you notice (10:20) there was one assigned by Satan to look after the nation of Greece.

The Medo-Persia empire had about two hundred years to run before the rise of Greece yet Satan was at this time ready with a trained angel for the nation of Greece. My, Satan has appointed angels, princes over the nations. He's got one for Russia, China, Japan, and so on. I believe with all my heart he's got a special one for our country for this wee land that has stood for truth and God is being squeezed in every way. So the Scripture talks about demons and establishes * * and: * Their ACTIVITY: For just as Gabriel or Michael was responsible to promote God's purposes for Israel so these evil angel princes were responsible to thwart Gods purposes for Israel.

My, have you ever wondered why the nations of this world by in large are anti-Semitic Its because that Satan is anti-Semitic and through his network of evil angel princes he influences world leaders against the Jew! What was Hitler But a world leader who was demon-energised and demon directed who got rid of 6 million Jews What about Saddam Hussein Now are you beginning to wake up Do you realise that this entire universe is a battle ground and we are in the middle of it Do you see now why the answers to some of our prayers may be delayed And do you see clearly the vital part that prayer has to play in these angelic struggles Yes, (a) but: (b) THE ANGEL WAS HELPED BY A WONDERFUL PRINCE: Look at (10:13) Now

Michael is mentioned 3 times in the book of Daniel (10:13 10:21 12:1) and 2 times in the New Testament. (Jude 9 Rev 12:7) He is called the " archangel", which means "first angel".

The name Michael means "one who is of God". Now what happened here was this. God sent Michael to release His messenger from conflict. That meant he was able to influence the Persian rulers in favour of Gods people the Jews. Now in (10:13) Michael helped the angel, but in (11:1) the angel helped Michael. This was mutual help, one helping the other when help is needed! No rivalry, no jealousy but wonderful unity. My, can we learn a lesson from the angels What do we need in our churches But a spirit of unity!

Not rivalry, not jealousy, but unity. (Ps 133) Now why did this angel come Well, the answer is given in (10:14) and brings before us: (4) THE INFORMATION OF A PROPHETIC PLAN Look at (10:14) What Daniel was about to receive was Gods plan for Israel. Now you will notice that: (a) THIS PLAN IS SPECIFIC: 1. It is about a Specific PEOPLE: " Thy people... "(10:14) This prophecy has nothing to do with the church. It concerns Daniels people, the Jews. 2. It is about a Specific PERIOD: " The latter days...

"(10:14) In other words Daniel was about to hear what would happen to Israel in "the latter days". Now the prophecies of (Ch 11 & 12) define these "later days", to be the history of Israel in the "70 weeks", of her prophetic programme with special emphasis on her sufferings under Antiochus Epiphanes in the intertestamental period and Antichrist in the Tribulation period. So this plan is specific. Its about the future of Daniel's people, and it goes from the time of Daniel to the reign of the Antichrist in the Tribulation. (a) (b) THIS PLAN IS AUTHENTIC: For (10:1) "the thing was true...

"That is, the matter, the vision, the events which are unfolded in the last chapters of this book. My, we are not dealing here with fiction, or fable but fact. Indeed the events unfolded in the last 2 chapters of this book are so accurate that the liberals have sought to explain them away. Now this chapter is not an easy chapter, but its amazing for it gives us a glimpse into the unseen world where demonic activity is flourishing! My ... 1. Beware of an overemphasis on Satan and demons: Beware of continually studying and worrying about Satan.

Beware of making Satan and demons the central focus of your thinking and Christian life! Remember Satan cannot harm the believer! John says, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not". (1 Jn 5:18) 1. 2. Beware of an underemphasis on Satan and demons:

My, Satan is alive and well. Demons do work and influence. Thats why Peter says, "Be sober, be vigilant because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour".

Robinson Crusoe taught his man Friday the doctrine of the Christian faith. When he came to the subject of the devil he told Friday he was Gods enemy trying to defeat Gods purposes in the world. Friday asked, "Is God not so strong as devil" Crusoe assured him that God was stronger, and that Christians prayed to God for victory over the devil. "But why God no kill devil so make him no more do wicked" asked Friday.

Crusoe was stuck and he pretended not to hear hoping Friday would forget the question. But he didn't. Well said Crusoe, "Will God will punish the devil in the end". But Friday persisted, "But why God not kill devil now" My, thats a question that may perplex all of us but the answer lies with God alone. For reasons all His own God allows evil to flourish and the evil one to continue. But the Bible teaches that Satan was defeated at Calvary, his doom is sealed and his destruction is certain. In the meantime it is reassuring for us to know that "Greater is He that is in you, (Holy Spirit) than he that is in the world (Satan) (1 Jn 4:4) The

question is: are you appropriating this resource for victory over the enemy?

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