

Daniel's 21 Days

By Jerry Jetter

Text: Daniel 10:1-3

Introduction: The life of Daniel is one of the most intriguing in the Bible. When you read this short book, it is filled with stories of God's powerful hand upon Daniel and his friends as they live out their commitment to God in a foreign land. It also contains revelation on some of the great mysteries of the end times.

The book of Daniel opens up by telling us the reason why Daniel is in a foreign land. Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon has conquered the city of Jerusalem and taken many of the best people captive to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar would take the best and brightest young men and reprogram them to serve in his Babylonian court. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were among those taken captive. The story of Daniel is that of a man who finds God's favor in a foreign land despite much opposition.

When we read Daniel's story we find that Daniel faced many dangers in his time in Babylon. Think about this. He faced the captivity. In Daniel 2 he faces the king's command to kill all the wise men. In Daniel 3 the three friends of Daniel face the king's furnace. In Daniel 6, Daniel is cast into the lions' den where he spends the night with hungry lions. He survived a change in leadership when the Babylonians were overthrown by the Persians and new kings came to power.

In the midst of all of this Daniel has prolific dreams and visions. He can interpret dreams and has understanding of prophetic words. Daniel not only has a sense of the times in which he is living but Daniel receives prophecies about things which have yet to be fulfilled.

How was it that Daniel was able to endure all that he did and yet receive such powerful visions and words? Daniel understood the power of prayer and fasting. Daniel 6 tells us that Daniel prayed three times a day. But we also find throughout the book references to him fasting. I see three times where Daniel specifically is mentioned to fast. Why did he fast?

Daniel fasted to:

1) keep himself pure.

A. Daniel 1:8-16

B. The king's food would be ritually impure so Daniel and his friends did not eat it.

- C. Because of their resolve God blessed them above all the other boys in the training period.
 - D. Daniel 1:17-20
 - E. We can fast to purify our bodies but also our spirits.
- 2) see the promise of God fulfilled.
- A. In Daniel 9 Daniel is reading from the prophet Jeremiah when he understands that the captivity is to last only 70 years and the time is up.
 - B. Daniel realizes that the promise had been given but not yet fulfilled.
 - C. Daniel prayed and fasted to see the promise fulfilled.
 - D. Daniel 9:3, *“Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.”*
 - E. We can fast to see the promises of God fulfilled in our lives.
- 3) receive revelation from God.
- A. This brings us to our text.
 - B. Daniel fasted meat, “pleasant food”, and fine wine for a time of 21 days as he sought understanding about the word of God which had come to him in Daniel 9.
 - C. This is where we want to focus this morning.

Central Theme: Daniel received a powerful spiritual revelation and breakthrough when he went on a partial fast for 21 days.

Transition: In Daniel’s 21 days he received:

I. Understanding

1. This was the purpose for which Daniel was fasting.
 - A. In Daniel 9 he receives a vision about the restoration of Jerusalem but it also involves events of the end times related to anti-Christ.
 - B. Daniel understands part of this vision but there is still a great deal he does not understand.
 - C. For this reason Daniel is very troubled by what he does understand and desires more knowledge so he begins to fast.
2. Some have tried to say that Daniel’s fast was just mourning for the vision and not a desire to have greater understanding.
 - A. They point to Daniel 10:1 *“had understanding of the vision.”*

- B. Daniel also did not anoint himself or put on fine lotions as a sign of mourning.
- C. Some say he is just sorrowful over what he has seen.
- 3. But Daniel is seeking greater insight.
 - A. Daniel 10:12
 - B. The angel tells Daniel that God has heard his prayer to understand.
- 4. Perhaps you have some questions this morning.
 - A. Maybe questions about spiritual things.
 - B. Maybe questions about personal matters.
 - C. Maybe questions about family issues.
- 5. Through fasting you can receive understanding.
 - A. Does God require me to fast?
 - B. No, but you have the option to greater understanding.
 - C. Is fasting easy?
 - D. Daniel is fasting during the feast of Passover.
 - E. Daniel 10:4

II. Vision

- 1. Daniel 10:4-9
 - A. This was not just a dream as Daniel is accompanied by other men (v. 7).
 - B. The vision is so powerful that Daniel's strength is gone.
 - C. We may think we don't want a vision like this, one that leaves us with no strength.
 - D. But lets look at what Daniel saw.
- 2. Daniel's vision is that of a "*certain man.*"
 - A. Some have speculated as to who this was. Three popular theories are:
 - a. Michael; this seems unlikely as he is mentioned by name later.
 - b. Gabriel; he has already appeared to Daniel to give him answers to dreams but his name is not mentioned.
 - c. Pre-incarnate Christ
 - B. This vision looks much like a pre-incarnate Christ appearing to Daniel.
 - A. Look at the description again.
 - B. Daniel 10:5-6
 - C. Now look in compassion to another passage with a description of Christ.

- a. Ezekiel 1:13-14, *“As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches going back and forth among the living creatures. The fire was bright, and out of the fire went lightning. And the living creatures ran back and forth in appearance like a flash of lightning.”*
 - b. Revelation 1:12-16, *“Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.”*
3. As Daniel fasted he had a vision of Christ.
- A. If we will fast we can have greater spiritual vision.
 - B. We can get a revelation of Christ in our life.
 - C. We can hear his voice speaking to us.

III. Breakthrough

1. In this last section of chapter 10 we have some very powerful insight into the warfare that takes place in the spiritual realm.
 - A. This passage has been the center of much controversy and speculation.
 - B. But to those who do not wish to talk about spiritual warfare and demon spirits it is a problem because it gives very plain teaching on the matter.
2. During the time of Daniel’s 21 day fast an angel has been dispatched to bring the answer but during the 21 days he has fought with the prince of Persia.
3. Daniel 10:12-14
 - A. Who is the prince of the kingdom of Persia?

- B. This is not a physical person. This is not the leader of the Persian empire.
- C. This is a demon spirit which has been given authority over the kingdom of Persia.
 - a. The Bible calls Satan the god of this present age (2 Corinthians 4:3)
 - b. This demon promoted the idol worship and false teaching that prevailed with gods of the Persians.
- 4. This is all interesting but what does it mean to us? What do we get out of this? What we can learn from this:
 - 1) There is a warfare taking place in the spiritual realm.
 - A. We may not see it with our eyes but this is going on all around us.
 - B. Ephesians 6:12, *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”*
 - 2) We are caught up in the spiritual conflict.
 - A. You may think that you don’t want any part of spiritual warfare but you are in it.
 - B. This demon was assigned to the part of the world where Daniel was living.
 - C. Daniel’s activity in prayer put him in the fight.
 - D. Your service for God puts you in the fight.
 - E. You can not serve God and avoid spiritual warfare.
 - 3) Prayer and fasting can make a difference.
 - A. This angel in Daniel 10 was coming into the domain of the prince of Persia.
 - B. This demon was fighting this angel to keep him out of his territory.
 - C. Daniel’s prayer and fasting allowed this angel to break in on the demon’s territory.
 - D. This may come as a shock to some of you, but their are demons assigned to areas around your life.
 - a. Your family
 - b. Your spiritual life
 - c. Your finances
 - d. Your community
 - E. How are you going to break in on the devil’s territory?
 - F. Through prayer and fasting we can break strongholds.

- G. Through prayer and fasting we can take the territory which the devil is holding.
- H. Through prayer and fasting you can see breakthrough in:
 - a. Your spiritual life
 - b. Over your personal struggles
 - c. In your marriage
 - d. Over your children
 - e. In your family
 - f. In your finances
 - g. In health
 - h. In your community
 - i. In your job
 - j. In our church

Close: Daniel 1:17 says that Daniel had knowledge and skill with understanding of all dreams and visions. In a foreign land he found favor with the kings of Babylon and Persia. Why? Because he understood the power of prayer and fasting.