

GODLY LIVING IN A GODLESS WORLD

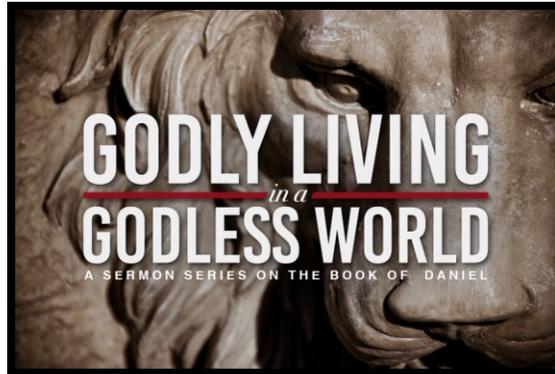
Expositional Study Of Daniel

Daniel 10:14-11:1

Written By

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For graduation from high school in 1976, my mother's sister, my Aunt Roberta, gave me a copy of C. S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*. She, one of the greatest spiritual mentors in my life, and who passed into the Lord's presence at 52 years of age after a thirteen year battle with breast cancer, made a wise strategic investment in my college-bound life with this instructive little novel.

What's the book about? Written by a more mature and skilled demon, Screwtape, to his demonic nephew in training, Wormwood, the book shows the lengths Satan's cohorts will go to either keep a man in unbelief, or how they will respond if, and when, that man dares to follow after the Enemy, Jesus. Logically, then, the story chronicles the ongoing battle in the heavenly sphere between Satan and God's angelic forces as the former attempts to subvert and shipwreck the faith of Wormwood's earthly demonic assignment.

While the book is a must read and is highly entertaining, as well as paradigm shifting, and while it is also pure fiction, when compared to biblical narrative stories like that recorded in Daniel 10, Christ-followers quickly learn the book is no joke. As we have seen in our study of this chapter thus far, Daniel's prayers on earth in 539 B.C. (Daniel 9:1) in light of God's powerful, provocative, and purposeful revelation about Israel's future in God's kingdom plans (Daniel 9:1-27), moved him three years later in 536 B.C., coupled with a new precise revelation from God (Daniel 10:1-3), to spend twenty-one days in focused and fervent prayer. Just when he thought his prayers simply bounced off a brass heavenly ceiling, a marvelous and mighty angel materialized (Daniel 10:4ff). Within a few jaw-dropping moments, the angel explained how he

had battled with a powerful demonic being in charge of the country of Persia for twenty-one days in an attempt to get to Daniel (Daniel 10:12)-13. Only after he called for back-up from Michael, a mighty archangel of God (Jude 9), did he secure passage to assist Daniel in his prayer life.

And you thought *Screwtape Letters* was just an amusing, clever, thought-provoking fictional story. Right. It's clever, all right insofar as it puts the real struggle between light and darkness, truth and error, and God and Satan in proper perspective. Daniel 10 teaches us otherwise. Daniel 10 teaches us that Satan is covertly and overtly opposed to God's kingdom plan (Daniel 2 and 7) as it relates to Israel. It also teaches us that God is providentially and powerfully working to ultimately defeat the forces of evil and usher in His promised messianic reign of world and cosmic shalom, or peace (Isaiah 2, 9:6-7; Psalm 2). Ostensibly, these same truths apply to us as believers during this Age of Grace. We, too, fight demonic forces (Ephesians 6:10ff). We, too, live in a world held within the sway of the power of the wicked One (1 John 5:19). We, too, need to realize that the motif of this inspired passage is timelessly true:

Spiritual Delay Could Be Because Of The Spiritual Fray (Daniel 10:1-13)

Looking back over my life as a fifty-nine-year-old, I stand in awe at the wisdom of my aunt, Robert Sanchez. That little book helped equip me, as an eighteen-year-old, for the challenges of college and those of life beyond college, stretching from dating in a quest to find the right wife to shepherding a local church. For the last forty-one years, I have learned, on more than one occasion, that I am a soldier in God's army and I fight a ferocious foe. I have also learned, like Daniel, that the living God is with me on the battlefield of life, giving me strength, support, wisdom, and direction. Additionally, I have learned that sometimes spiritual breakthroughs only come after there is a breakout of extreme difficulty and moments of great dismay. It is at those times the battle rages in the angelic realm, but in due time, God always shows up in a profound, never-to-be-forgotten fashion. God did not forget Israel (the apple of His eye, Zechariah 2:8). He did not forget Daniel. He will not, He does not, forget you and your prayers for assistance. We gain additional insight into this cosmic spiritual struggle, as we focus our interpretive sights on the final two movements of this pericope. I trust these insights and their logical applications will put wind in your limp sail and propel your ship further and farther than you ever thought you would go spiritually.

Thus far, by way of review, we have considered four concepts in verses 1 through 13: *The Power of the Fray* (vv. 1-3), *The Personage of the Fray* (vv. 4-10), *The Problem of the Fray* (vv. 11-13a), and *The Provision of the Fray* (v. 13b). Yes, God always responds to your prayers, and sometimes it is in an angelic fashion you will not appreciate until you see Christ. So, stay the course. With this review in mind, we now turn our attention to the last two structural points.

The Point In The Fray (Daniel 10:14-18)

No spiritual struggle is for naught. They always come with insight and wisdom for the saint who is willing to listen and learn from God. Samuel Rutherford, a godly Scottish Presbyterian pastor, theologian, and pastor from the 1600s, showed he understood this premise when he wrote: “Whenever I find myself in the cellar of affliction, I always look about for the wine.”¹ He looked around the cellar for the wine of God’s instructive, insight, and peace-inducing voice. This concept naturally arises from the words of the angel to Daniel:

¹⁴ “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*.”

Hold it right there. The main reason this angel showed up was to give Daniel specific prophetic insight into God’s kingdom plan concerning Israel. Daniel had lived to see Israel freed from captivity, only to be disappointed at the paltry amount who actually went back to the Promised Land, coupled with the sad news that they had major issues, internally and externally, once they arrived. Don’t you know he wondered, “God, what on the world is going on here? What are you doing? Why hasn’t the kingdom come yet? Why is Israel still opposed by her godless, hateful neighbors? When will peace arrive, the peace foretold in the prophets?” So he prayed for twenty-one straight days and then God gave him an answer. As a side note, perhaps you have not had a breakthrough in your battlefield prayer because you have not committed yourself to stay engaged in prayer. Daniel did not give up until God moved. Have you? If so, I think you know what you need to do.

God’s answer, which will be disclosed in chapter 11, will prove to be one of the most precise prophecies recorded in the Scriptures. In fact, this prophecy is so precise it is like pre-written history, and its specificity stands as the reason why liberal scholars untenably conclude the chapter had to be written after the fact. Sure. The document facts state otherwise. God will not only tell Daniel what will happen to Israel in the “short-term,” but what will happen to them in the “long-term” as He sovereignly guides all of history to its messianic consummation. You might need to read this again. This time, let it sink into the soil of your soul.

This code phrase “the latter days” (בְּאַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים) is employed throughout the Old Testament to denote God’s activity at the end of time in relation to Israel and their enemies. It is used of the messianic king who would arise from Judah in Genesis 49:1ff, of the messianic rule which will be established in Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:1-4), of the future destruction of Anti-Semitic forces and the revelation of the Messiah (Jeremiah 23:20ff), of God’s judgment of Israel’s enemies followed by her elevation (Jeremiah 30:9-23), of God coming to the rescue of Israel when they are attacked at the end of time (Ezekiel 38:16ff), of northern Israel worshipping the Davidic Messiah (Hosea 3:5), and of the topographical changes which will occur when the Messiah appears (Micah 4:1ff). God couldn’t be clearer in Daniel’s prophecy: There will be many years of opposition to Israel, but at the end of time the Messiah will reign supremely.

¹ Mark Water, editor, *The New Encyclopedia of Christian Quotations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2000), 19.

Currently, we live, as I have said, in the Age of Grace, or the time period between the consummation of the Law of Moses through the person and work of Jesus, the Messiah, and the Tribulation, as detailed in Revelation 7 through 19. In His first coming, Jesus offered the messianic kingdom to the Jews, but they rejected it and Him because He was not the Messiah they had anticipated. Christ's *Parable of the King and Wedding Banquet* (Matthew 22:1-14) clearly develops this point. The invitation to attend the messianic, millennial wedding feast went out, but the people, Israel, willfully chose, for the most part, not to attend. Christ's command in verse 9 to "Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find there, invite them to the wedding feast," shows how Jews and Gentiles would now be invited to be part of His kingdom. Christ's *Parable of the Ten Minas* (Luke 19:11-27) also illustrated how the physical kingdom offer was now going to be postponed, but not abrogated because the nobleman would one day return after he was crowned king (v. 12). Obviously, the story directly relates to Christ . . . and Israel.

During this Age of Grace, the gospel message of the crucified and risen Messiah, Jesus, is for all sinners to come to Him for salvation, cleansing and restoration. Have you come yet while the door is open? Jesus calls this part of history "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). Some, like *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*,² liken the start of this time to the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar, while others, like *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* equate it, in relation with Luke's precise usage of the term "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24),³ with the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and lasting until the end of time. Either way, Israel was prophesied to be the focus of Gentile opposition at either start date until the arrival of the Messiah. Such is what you see in the world today, is it not? This is exactly what Zechariah prophesied about the end of time. Jerusalem would be the fierce focus of the wicked world (Zechariah 12:1-5). Paul says in Romans 11:25 that one day the fullness of the Gentile time period will end. Since the term "has come in," *eiserchomai* (τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰσέλθη) is used of gaining access to God's kingdom (Matthew 5:20; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; John 3:5; Acts 14:22), this period will summarily and suddenly close when the last divinely chosen convert converts. Once this occurs, we will be ushered into the final aspect of the "latter days," where God works during the Tribulation to judge the wicked world system so He can reclaim the title deed to the earth (Revelation 4-5), and so that He can return and redeem the nation of Israel, as Paul prophesies in Romans 11:25-29.

But in the meantime, as Daniel learns, there will be ever-increasing Anti-Semitism. He is given the details beforehand so he knows, without a doubt, that God's hand is on the wheel of history and it will play out as He prophesied through all the prophets, including Daniel himself. The Messianic kingdom will come (Daniel 2, 7, 9:24-27); however, in the meantime God's servant needed to be strong and courageous. Quite obviously, these are wise words for we who live in the testy times of the Gentiles.

² John F. Walvoord, and Roy B. Zuck, Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1334.

³ John D Barry, David Bomar, Derek R. Brown, Rachel Klippenstein, Douglas Mangum, Carrie Sinclair Wolcott, Lazarus Wentz, Elliot Ritzema, and Wendy Widder, eds. (*The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

How did the old eighty something year-old prophet, who had seen and done it all, respond? Like you would have:

¹⁵ When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless.

He couldn't even form a word he was so overcome with emotion. Ever been there in relation to the teaching of God's Word and revelation?

Note, well, how God's emissary responded.

¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ "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." ¹⁸ Then *this* one with human appearance touched me again and strengthened me.

The compassion is just, well, amazing, isn't it? Truly angels *are* ministering spirits sent to care for the saints (Hebrews 1:13-14). He touched Daniel in a supernatural way and immediately recharged the batteries of his drained spirit. The touch did not just uplift his spirit, the touch gave him a word of utterance, as occurred in the life of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:5-9) and Isaiah (Isaiah 6:5-7). Don't you ever forget, as God's saint, that He stands ready to do the same for you. As God promises through the pen of Isaiah: "¹⁰ Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41). May your prayer today be precise: "Lord, I'm beaten down and battered, I'm drained and dry, touch me in order to strengthen me so I can speak up and out for you again."

We live in godless times. We all see it, know it, and experience it. We live to watch the Gentile nations, including ours, sadly move out and against God's ancient chosen people, Israel. We see this small little democratic nation like a small flame of hope flickering in a room of great darkness, all while the wicked wind is certainly picking up against them in a bid to snuff them out. How could this encroachment of outright evil, coupled with all the old and new forms of evil we see in and among us, not bring distress to the life of a godly, God-fearing person? Yes, we like Daniel can, at times, just feel drained and dry. We can't even have a Presidential inauguration without societal disruption, turmoil, and criminal activity designed to shut it all down man, as they used to say when I was a kid in the 60s. Might we, at that point is dismay realize that there is a divine providential point in all of this, and time is moving to God's intended and glorious end-point with the revelation of the Christ. History will end with the singing of a song something akin to the Hallelujah Chorus.

In addition to there being a *Point In The Fray*, there is also what I would call . . .

The Plan In The Fray (Daniel 10:19-21)

As we deal with our own versions of Screwtape and Wormwood, might we also recall in the heat of battle, in the thick of the fight that our Lord has a two-fold plan for us.

God Gives Spiritual Encouragement (Daniel 9:19). Read on and you will see what I mean:

¹⁹ He said, “O man of high esteem, do not be afraid. Peace be with you; take courage and be courageous!”

Ah, this is most interesting and instructive. Two times in this verbal exchange the angel told Daniel not to be afraid (Daniel 10:12, 19). Faith in God, my friend, is not about fear. Fear is from the likes Screwtape and Wormwood. Daniel had no reason to fear anything because the living God was working out His loving plan and nothing the Devil and his minions could hurl at him would stop the fruition of that plan. Nothing. Sure, the prophetic fulfillment God would reveal through the angel would make the most stalwart among us probably lose hope; however, hope was, and is, the order of the day because God reigns supremely. His prophetic plan for Israel and the world will be fulfilled and nothing will permanently derail it. Yes, the King will come. Yes, peace will reign.

Daniel listened to the angel. Don't tell me you can't teach an old dog new tricks.

Now as soon as he spoke to me, I received strength and said, “May my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.”

The kind angel did not let him down, either. He continued to speak.

²⁰ Then he said, “Do you understand why I came to you?”

What's the answer to the question if you were Daniel? “You came to give me precise prophetic details about Israel's place in world history until the coming of the Messiah.” This would be tough news to a large degree, but it would, in due time, be triumphant news. Daniel just needed some much needed encouragement to continue to hang in there and remain faithful to the living God. Perhaps you can identify. Perhaps an angel is whispering words of encouragement right now in your ear, especially if the advance of evil has done a number on your mind and heart. Listen to him. He's there to encourage you. Isn't this just like God to make sure we, who are discouraged at times, are built up and re-energized?

A second part of God's plan for His people who serve as His troops in this tumultuous times is articulated in the closing verses of this chapter and with the beginning verse of the next chapter. What truth is this?

God Summons To Spiritual Engagement (Daniel 9:20b-11:1). Again, the concept readily emerges from the inspired text as the angel speaks:

But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; . . .

In Hebrew, the angel's wording is most emphatic: **וְעַתָּה אֲשׁוּב לְהִלָּחֵם עִם־שָׂר פָּרֶס**. Reading right to left, the first word is *w'attah*, which is the conjunction “and” (*waw*) wedded to the adverb “now” (*attah*). This kind of disjunctive clause is highly emphatic in Hebrew, something akin to a hand being driven down onto a wooden desk. Ostensibly, the angel let Daniel know he was not just calling the prophet to be courageous in his life of faith in a godless day, but he, also, lived similarly. He demonstrated this by revealing he had every intention of jumping back into the angelic fray with the great demonic spirit in charge of keeping Persia poisoned by anti-Semitic thinking.

Folks, this will preach all day long. I think J. P. Moreland is onto something when he remarks concerning the overall impact of the great American revivals of the 1700-1800s that . . .

. . . their overall effect was to overemphasize immediate personal conversion to Christ instead of a studied period of reflection and conviction; emotional, simple, popular preaching instead of intellectually careful and doctrinally precise sermons; and personal feelings and relationship to Christ instead of a deep grasp of the nature of Christian teaching and ideas. Sadly, as historian George Marsden notes, ‘anti-intellectualism was a feature of American revivalism.’⁴

We’ve been retreating ever since into faith not wedded to sound, well-thought-out, well-articulated Aristotelean, Thomistic reasons. We’ve left the universities, the halls of justice, the media, the locker room, the break room and so forth without an adequate and reasoned voice representing the living God. We’ve been duped into thinking faith is, well, just faith, lacking foundational, formative logical proofs. The result is we’re not as courageous as we should be, we’re not as biblically and philosophically informed as we should be, and we’ve watched the culture naturally and tragically slip into the churning moral and spiritual chaos their godless views germinate.

God, on the other hand, calls us to ENGAGE. God’s angels do. Do you? Will you?

Toward the close of the New Testament, Peter, an ardent follower of Christ and leader among the disciples, tells believers how they should live as representatives of their Lord and Savior: “*But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence*” (1 Peter 3:15). The imperative “sanctify” (ἀγιάσατε) can be classified as an ingressive aorist, denoting the beginning of the saint’s need to start fearing their Lord instead of their enemies (1 Peter 3:13-14).

In addition to having a proper attitude about Christ on a moment by moment basis, Peter also uses the ellipsis of an imperatival verb, coupled with the presence of the adverbial clause “to always be prepared” (ἔτοιμοι δὲ αἰὲν), to establish how believers are to be constantly intellectually prepared to engage the erroneous, demonically tainted thinking of the lost they encounter. The word for engagement is translated “a defense” (ἀπολογία), and it etymologically

⁴J. P. Moreland, *Love Your God With All Your Mind* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2012), 16.

comes from the world of Greek law.⁵ Alister McGrath defines *apologia* well when he remarks, “An *apologia* is a ‘defense,’ a reasoned case proving the innocence of an accused person in court, or a demonstration of the correctness of an argument or belief.”⁶ The preposition *pros* (πρὸς), preceding this crucial accusative noun, expresses the purpose of the believer’s perpetual preparation. God’s design is for saints to be studied so they can adequately handle the critics and questioners of the faith in order to guide them toward a reasoned belief in Christ. And, of course, each exchange is to be done with a spirit of meekness and respect for the lost. Winning the argument is important for spiritual truth(s) will be at stake; however, one must not smugly win the argument while losing the opponent because of a caustic, unloving, arrogant approach.

And, like the angel of Daniel’s day, we must be prepared to use powerful proofs in our defense of the faith. What proof did the angel employ? Prophetic proof. Mark well what he says so matter-of-factly:

. . . so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come²¹
 “However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth.

Did you just get what he said? What year was it? It was the third year of Darius, or 536 B.C. He was going back to the heavenly sphere to take on the rest of the angelic turf war during the rest of Persian history, which would stretch from **CYRUS** (559-530 B.C.), **CAMBYSES** (530-522 B.C.), **DARIUS I THE GREAT** (522-486 B.C.), **XERXES I, AHASUERUS** (486-465 B.C. . . . during which Mordecai and Esther would be instrumental in keeping Haman from exterminating the Israelites), **ARTAXERXES I** (465-423 B.C. . . . during which Israel would return two more times to the Promised Land, 457 B.C. according to Ezra 7:6-7 and 444 B.C. according to Nehemiah 2:1), Xerxes II (423 B.C.), Darius II (423-404 B.C.), **ARTAXERXES II** (404-358 B.C.), **ARSES** (338-336 B.C.), and **DARIUS III** (336-331 B.C.) who was defeated (in three battles: the Granicus River in Asia Minor, 334; Issus (the gateway to Syria and Palestine, 333 B.C.; and Gaugamela the gateway to the heartland of the once mighty Persian empire, 331 B.C.), as prophesied by God through Daniel, by the Greeks under the blitzkrieg military leadership of **ALEXANDER THE GREAT**. All throughout this time period this angel would be fighting for Israel to make sure the Devil’s forces did not destroy them and thereby thwart the kingdom purposes of God.

But, please, underscore what he says after the phrase, “*and behold.*” From the first part of the verse, which covers Persian history from 536 B.C. to 331 B.C. he identifies the next demonic enemy assigned, by the Devil, to the next empire, Greece, and he gives us this prophetic information 205 years BEFORE THE FACT! (No, I’m not yelling, just jumping up and down.) The only way he, or Daniel, could have known that was for God, who stands outside of time and space and knows all things, to reveal it. This is why he calls the essence of his prophetic words in chapter 11 “*the writing of truth.*” No kidding. In this chapter the angel, based on God’s direction

⁵William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 117.

⁶Alister E. McGrath, *Mere Apologetics: How to Help Seekers and Skeptics Find Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012), 15.

will detail, with precision, the rise and fall of the Persians beginning with **KING AHASUERUS** (486-465 B.C.) to the coming of the sinister Seleucid, **ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES IV** (170-168 B.C.), who will, in turn, become the great type of the Anti-Christ of Matthew 24 and Revelation 13. Please, stop right here and do the math. What year was Daniel 10 talking about? 536 B.C. Subtract that number from 168 B.C. and you get 368 years! In case you still have not connected the prophetic dots simply wrap your logical, I need proofs in order to believe mind that God will detail the rise and fall of the kings of this tumultuous period where Israel is concerned 368 years BEFORE THE FACT! (No, I'm not yelling, just jumping up and down in excitement.)

Again, you say you need evidence to believe the Bible is the Word from God. I don't think you need any more evidence. Today is the day to believe. Today is the day to switch armies, from the Devil's to God's. Today is the day, if you are Christ-follower, to say, "Lord, I'm going to make sure I'm committed to making sure my faith is a balance between faith and reason. Lord, I like the angel will go out to do battle with false ideas, erroneous worldviews, and vacuous religious thinking armed with the cold, hard facts of why this Book is your book and why that means you are THE God."

While you are thinking about boning up on the facts of the faith, I leave you with the words of this amazing angel who spoke to Daniel:

Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince. ¹ In the first year of Darius the Mede, I arose to be an encouragement and a protection for him.

Chapter 11, verse 1 should not have been divorced from chapter 10 verse 21. Stephen Langton added chapter divisions in the twelfth century A.D. to the Latin Vulgate, and in 1551, Robert Estienne added verse notation to his fourth edition of the Greek New Testament. Both of these men made an wrong division between Daniel 10 and 11 because the angel was still talking. What does he say? He tells Daniel that three years prior, or back in 539 B.C., he and Michael the Archangel had teamed up together for mutual encouragement, probably when the Persians took control of Babylon and the Jews. Translated, calling for backup in 536 B.C. in chapter 10 was not the first time these angels had teamed up to stand against great evil.

What does this mean to you, to me? A lot if you are listening. Here's how I understand this angelic counsel: While you are engaged in spiritual delay because of a spiritual fray, never, ever forget to have a godly buddy with you for support and encouragement. Who's your battle buddy? . . . as they say in the U.S. military.

