

NATIONAL COMMUNITY CHURCH
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Unshaken_ Daniel Chapter 9 – The Unseen Battle
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Growing up we had a family tradition that when you turn 13 years old, you could go anywhere on your very first mission trip and so my dad and I chose Nairobi, Kenya. The country was in a time of unrest because for the first time in decades, they had an open election for the President. Now the opposition party had gained some serious momentum, but Daniel Moi ended up squeaking out the victory for the canoe party, to the dismay of many people in the country and so riots ensued. We were there and it was the last day and so we had a bit of a fun day we went out to Lake Naivasha and got to do some fishing. And we're on our way back into the city when we look ahead and we see about 30, angry Kenyans that were approaching and as we do, all the sudden, stones start flying towards us. And immediately, the missionary driver says they're gonna stone us and so he punches the gas, and we take off. And right when he does, it's like a hail storm hitting the car, and the car starts getting dented and we're getting pelted, glass is flying everywhere, and the windows are spider webbing. And for days after this experience, I was picking glass shards out of my head. And this is crazy about every three minutes or so we would approach a group of between 30 to 100, angry people who were trying to attack us and all different kinds of things. I saw it at one point one person in a mob came up and he threw a crowbar that stuck right in the middle of the windshield. Another group actually hit our missionary driver in the head, this huge gash and blood is running down into his eyes, he can barely see because of all the blood. Another group, I ducked my head down low, and I began to pray. And then I got back up after we got through, and I look over and there's a hole in the window right next to where my head was. And I leaned over and I look next to me, and there's the rock sitting right next to me. How many y'all know I got close with Jesus that day? Right? I mean it was intense. You say how do you get the gift of tongues? I'll tell you, you just get in the car and you drive through some angry mobs that want to kill you; you will learn a new prayer language. That's what I mean. I'm praying I'm confessing my sin, my sibling's sin, my dog's sin every sin I can think of because that's all I got it. I'm praying to God to save and so we go through and, you know, we end up passing a couple of semi trucks that are up in flames. And we end up hopping or like jumping a tree trunk in the middle of the road. And somehow we get through this thing with our lives still intact.

Here's the part of the story that I usually don't tell. We got back home and this is pre cell phone pre computer days. So people back home didn't know what was going on. So we get back home and people in our church, multiple people come to us and say, "How are you guys? Like what was going on?" They didn't know anything that happened. We were woken up in the middle of the night. We were disturbed. And so we've been interceding for you. We've been praying in the Spirit on your behalf. And this moment, something occurs that we were not just in the middle of a physical battle but behind the physical battle, behind the scenes was a spiritual realm that had been entered into. And here I am, you know, this young kid and I see this imminent outcome that is going to happen. But an alternate reality

ends up happening and the only thing in between was these people who knew nothing about it, but were entered in into the realm of the Spirit into a spiritual battle in their prayer lives.

Welcome to National Community Church, we're going to be talking about completely normal things today, okay. We're just gonna go for it, alright. So I just want to open this up in a word of prayer.

God, we invite you into our minutes today. We pray for your wisdom. As we dive underneath the surface, God help us to learn to love you, to love our fellow brother and sister better through this time we have together. In your name we pray, Amen.

Well, we continue on today in our series on the book of Daniel and today we go to Daniel chapter 10. And Daniel 10 through 12 is really one package group of Scripture that is put together. And so today is really an introduction to a revelation of the supernatural in a man who is desperate to see the work of God in the people around him. And we start off in verse two of chapter 10.

It says... ² *At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. ³ I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over. ⁴ On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, ⁵ I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. ⁶ His body was like topaz, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, (I love Daniel, it keeps you interested, doesn't he? This is some crazy stuff.) his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.*

So after Israel had been taken captive by Babylon a number of years later, they're allowed to actually go back. So it's a great thing but in reality, it's kind of like if a prisoner was released from prison, and he's allowed to go back to his home that was burned down. That's kind of what they're looking at and so not many Israelites actually go back. And Daniel is hurting. He is distressed, as you can see, in this season, and he's distressed for his people. He's hurting for his nation. And so he decides to go into a time of fasting of denying his body and praying and seeking God.

Now, we learned last week from Pastor Mark that Daniel was in his 80's at this time, so this is two or three years later after that, in chapter 10. So he's in his mid 80's right here. And I like what was said last week. He said, you know, Daniel was not past his prime. I like what the old preacher said. He said, "As long as you got a pulse, you got a purpose." Listen, if you're here, and somebody's told you, you don't have a purpose, or you've told yourself you don't have a purpose. That is not true. God has a purpose for you, in you and through you. Step into that purpose be encouraged by our scripture today.

So Daniel in the dusk of his life, he decides to deny his 85 year old body, what it wants and what it needs because he is so desperate for God. He is so desperate to see the move of God in him and in his people. When's the last time that you denied your body because you are seeking a vision from God,

because you are seeking God on behalf of your family on behalf of your nation. We see Daniel step up and step out. Daniel fasted from the third to the 24th day of the first month, which is probably the most important month in the Jewish calendar. It's on the 14th of the month you would have the Jewish Passover and then following is seven days of celebration, it's the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And so it's almost equivalent to like if you were to skip Christmas and New Year's, everybody else is, they're eating the foods and they're tasting the wine and they're celebrating they're enjoying it. Daniel skips all of this. He skips all of it. And instead he seeks God, but he gets nothing. He gets no wisdom. He gets no revelation. He gets no power. He's getting nothing through this experience. Anybody relate with this in the house today, right? You seek God and you're just getting up. There's other times where you see God and everything's going right. It's going good and things are coming together you're reading the Word and things are coming out. You hear that song come on the radio right, and you're like yes, some seek it. And other times you seek God and nothing is coming back. And it's just empty and silence and you feel like this is a worthless endeavor. Why am I even seeking right now? But notice in the scripture here, that if Daniel would have stopped after the 20th day, he wouldn't have received the revelation, right? If you would have given up after day 20, he would have missed out on an incredible revelation that was given from God. In other words, don't just say a prayer, but persistent prayer.

Daniel went through 20 days of blindness, to get to the 21st day of vision. You've got to press through. You've got to persist in prayer and in fasting to get to the benefits that the Lord is waiting to give to you, to get to the eyesight to get to the revelation for him to pour out. So Daniel is confronted by this being in the Scripture, and scholars believe this is either an angel or it's the Christ.

In verse nine, *“⁹ Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground. And stand up, for I have now been sent to you.” And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling.”*

Now notice Daniel's interaction with God here. Last chapter, chapter nine, we heard one of the longest prayers in all of Scripture, right? And it's a good one. And then we come to chapter 10 and Daniel is broken. And he's poured out and he's gone from talking, the talking is stopped, and the listening is started. How many of you know that sometimes we just need to run out of words, to run into God's revelation, right? That prayer is not just about us talking to God, it's about us listening for the revelation from God.

I love how practical one of our leaders, Ann Grizzle this week talked about this in our upper zoom. And she said, "Every time I come to prayer, I bring two pens to the occasion. And the first pen I take, I pour out my spirit to God. And I pour out my feelings and my soul to God as I do. I'm writing that down on paper. And then I have a moment where I stop, take that pen, put it down, and I wait and I listen. And then I pick up the other pen and I start writing what the Lord is speaking into me, into my situation, into my life." And too many of us, we come to God and we have one pen prayer, don't we? Right, we pour out, "God, I need this." Or, "God this is going on, God, I can't handle this and take it or leave it God,

this is what's happened and I need you here where are you on that? Amen." And we're done with prayer right? And we pour out our soul. We pour out our feelings to God, but we don't allow the feathered pen of the Almighty to come write His grace and His truth and his wisdom into our heart. God is ready and willing and waiting and desiring to speak into us. Active listening is suspending our own beliefs and what we think we know and immersing ourselves in another story.

In verse nine, Daniel says, I listened to him. In verse 12 it says of Daniel, *"you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before God."* Daniel in closing his mouth, suspending his own thoughts and knowledge, immersing himself and God has found both revelation and residence in the Almighty God. Revelation begins with the ability to learn.

In my relationship I might get frustrated a time or two when Nina has an expectation on me, and I didn't know about that expectation, right. But here's how it usually progresses. I don't know you might relate with me to this point maybe you relate after this. I don't know. Here's how it usually progresses. Well, did you check your text? Huh, I checked it? Look at that, 15 new texts. There you said it. Well, yeah, don't worry about it. It's fine. Hey, I forgive you. No big deal. Everything's good. Well, hold on, wait. How am I supposed to communicate with you if you don't check your text? And isn't this true? Sometimes we come to God and we put a lot of blame on God, why aren't you speaking to me? God says, Hey, do you check your text? Have you gone...? Well, you know, it's has been, wow. Yeah, it's been a while since I've got here. We'll look at that. And don't worry about... No, here's the thing I've been trying to talk to you. I got a whole lot that I'm trying to say through the text. I have some things to deposit in your spirit. There is an inheritance that is waiting for you. Go get your inheritance. It is waiting in my word, but you gotta check the text. We've got to be active listeners of the almighty.

Verse 10 *"A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees."¹¹ He said, "Daniel, you who are highly esteemed."*

So 20 days and nothing right. And then God speaks up and here's what he says to Daniel, *"Daniel, you who are highly esteemed."* You whom I love. This isn't a new revelation. This is a reminder revelation right here. He says this over and over you have heard this in the scriptures. The Hebrew words "ish hemudot" literally mean man of preciousness. Daniel was precious to God not only because he was one of God's chosen people, but also because God was precious to him.

Verse 12, *"Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them."*

In other words, when that answer goes, or when that that prayer goes unanswered in your life, maybe you get a little understanding here now, right? When you've been waiting and you're asking for God. "God, I've been waiting on you. Where's your answer? Where are you God? I've been looking to you

what's happening?" Now you've got a little perspective as you read this passage knowing that maybe there is a battle happening behind the scenes, that there is a spiritual battle happening over here. It doesn't mean that God's timing is thrown off. It means that he is still working on your behalf and on other's behalf behind the scenes.

Verse 13, *"But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me."*

Now most commentators contend that this is not an earthly prince but this is actually a reference to a fallen angel, to a demonic presence that has come against them. Hello, what'd y'all think we were gonna talk about today, right? There is a contention that there is not just good angels working for the people purposes of God in and around us but there are fallen angels there are demons working against the purposes of God.

Alright, how many people that I just lose on that little diatribe right there right. Now, I would just acknowledge and I just pause here for a second, maybe, maybe some of us are just uncomfortable going here. And honestly, it's pretty, it's hard for us. We wouldn't even go to this conversation. And I just have a couple of quick thoughts. Number one, this is not foundational to our faith, our faith is in God. God sent His Son Jesus into this world to live a sinless life, to give his life on the cross, a sacrificial death for us. Then he rose from the grave after three days and he was seated at the right hand of the Father so that we can have salvation through faith in Christ and by His grace. This is foundational not our faith in a demon in an angel or a devil. No, our faith is in Christ, right? But I would also say this that this is in the Scripture. So as we desire to grow our spiritual muscles and grow in faith, we need to wrestle with this, don't we? And so I want to encourage, I want to thank you one for trusting me and for listening. And two maybe the Lord has something to say. And let's look at a few other scripture passages as well.

The apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 6:12, *"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."*

The Apostle Peter jumps in as well in 1 Peter five it says, *"Be alert of sober mind, the enemy, the your enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."*

And Jesus pipes in as well in John chapter 10:10. He says, *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."*

To discount the spiritual battle is to discount the full act of the love of the Lord in your life. God is battling on your behalf. What does that mean? It means he loves you. He cares about you. He desires for life to be within you. Just pause for a second here. Our prayer team is so dialed in right now. And just a couple of things from that, they are affirming, the battle is hot right now. But also they've talked about

the idea that God is working in an expedient way in this season. And don't you feel that the battle is, it's rough right now, it is hot. And things are coming against us but things are also expediently advancing. Evil is expediently advancing. Good is expediently... Everything is going at a quicker pace in this season, right? But here's how it works. When we step into the spirit, it's almost like spiritual jujitsu. It's like the enemy brings things against us so hard, but jujitsu flips those things around, turns them and that same momentum is used against us and God advances His purposes. What are you contending for? What are you believing for from God in this season? Maybe you're praying for souls. Maybe you're praying for your city. Maybe you're praying for racial transformation. Maybe you're praying for unity within your community, but what are you believing for? Let's advance the kingdom of God as we battle in the spirit realm. Sometimes we go looking for understanding of our situation in the current construct of the physical realm that we're in, when there's no understanding unless we come up here to gain a different vantage point. To go into the spiritual realm and then understand what is happening on another level.

In Kenya it was not just a mob threatening our lives. No, there was a battle happening in the spiritual realm of the enemy coming against us. And it was some people who were contending, it was some angels who were working, people who are praying on our behalf, and lifting us up. I know I'm wading in the deep end today. So thanks for walking in with me.

I want to share a couple of thoughts about what it looks like for us to contend in the realm of the spirit for us to battle in the spirit. I already talked about a couple things talked about don't just say a prayer, but persistent prayer, right, that's how we battle. I talked about don't just talk to God, but listen to God in prayer. And third, I want to go here for a few moments. Number three, don't just have hopeful thoughts, but contend in prayer.

Last week, Pastor Mark encouraged us don't just pray contend in prayer. Let me give you an example. 2 Corinthians chapter four, verse 12, says *"Death is at work in us, but life is in you."* It speaks to the fact that you can go through anguish on behalf of another. Somebody has gone through some anguish, they have battled in the spirit for you, and you are living in the blessing because of it. You know what I'm talking about? You got a praying grandma, you got a praying father or praying mother or praying friend, but you are living in light when they experienced darkness, and anguish because of you, right? Listen, this is a word for some parent today. Your son or daughter they are going the wrong direction, they are going down the wrong path and you feel powerless, you feel paralyzed, you're taking a step back. Nope, today, it's time to step forward. It's time to step up. It's time to lean in, in faith. Maybe you can't force them out of that direction, but you can contend in the realm of the Spirit. You can battle in the spirit for them. There's a friend here that needs to contend for another friend. Maybe you're a son or a daughter and you need to contend for your parent, but lean in and contend in prayer contend in the spirit.

Number four, don't just read the word, speak the Word of God. Psalm 103:20, *"Bless the Lord, you His angels, you who excel in strength, who do his word, heeding the voice of his word."* The Psalmist doesn't say the angels heed his word. Did you notice that? They heed the voice of his word. So when you speak

out the word of God, you are giving voice to his word. When you give voice to his word, you are activating the word of God. You're activating in angels, you're activating it in God, you're activating it in yourself. Right, this happens in Daniel chapter 10, verse 12. The angels say, "I have come." because why? Because of your words. Say it, pray it, spit it, speak it I don't care but speak the word of God out. I've got to have the word of God in my arsenal when I battle in the spirit, right. 1 John 4:4 *"He that is within me is greater than..."* (who?) *"...than he that is within the world."*

Ahh, I don't know but I'm overcome with fear. Listen; there is a word for you out of 2 Timothy, chapter two. And it's this that, *"He did not give us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power of love and of sound mind."* I just don't know I'm just anxious in the season. We heard that on upper zoom this week. I'm anxious somebody is overcome by anxiousness and anxiety. Listen, there's a word for you in Philippians chapter four, *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, bring your request to the almighty God."* Isaiah 55:11, his word, it never returns void. It always comes back good, the seed is good, it will always sprout. It will always grow fruit in your life. Speak the word of God.

Number five; don't just know of Christ put your faith in Christ. Look at the correlation between Daniel chapter 10 and Revelation chapter 12. We see in Revelation 12, it talks about a war in heaven and Michael, and the angels are warring against the dragon and their angels. And then it talks about the dragon is called the accuser of the brethren, or devil or Satan and there's this battle that occurs in the Scripture. And then it says how they pressed into overcome. You've heard this before, right? How do we overcome its Revelation 12:11 we always come back to this. We overcome by what? By the blood of the lamb and the word of the testimony. The blood of the lamb is representative of what we talked about earlier. It's Jesus coming to the world and giving his life on the cross for you and I out of an act of love towards us. He pays for our wrongdoing. He pays for our sins with his life. And he allows us through the blood of the Lamb, that's what that is. It's a call to salvation to put your faith in Christ.

If you're here, and you haven't put your faith in Christ, and God is compelling you today, we would love to pray with you. We'd love to stand with you. We'd love to speak with you. In fact, just click that button right now it says hand raised if you'd like to express take a first step of faith into salvation. Click that button right now and let us talk with you. Let us pray with you. Let us share with you today. But when you follow Christ, you become an overcomer in the blood of the lamb and in the word of the testimony which is just hearing words of testimony and encouragement from those around us who have received in the Spirit of God.

Verse 16, *"Then one who looked like a man touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and began to speak. I said to the one standing before me, "I am overcome with anguish because of the vision, my lord, and I feel very weak. ¹⁷ How can I, your servant, talk with you, my lord? My strength is gone and I can hardly breathe."*

Can somebody relate with a prophet right here in the scripture? We're just spent, tired, ah, overcome, I'm overwhelmed, I got nothing left. And now the kids are gonna be in distance learning again. Are you kidding me for the coming semester? How am I gonna do this? I'm just hurt. My family's hurt; people are hurts because of neglect over so long of a period. I'm just sick and tired of being sick and tired. I'm here and I'm just, I can't take the discord, the intensity in our country anymore. I'm just overwhelmed or my job is just a dead end and my dreams have died in this COVID season. I'm going nowhere. All of us relating and you know what Daniel does, he pours that out onto God. He pours it out onto God.

There's an invitation for us to pour out to God. In fact, I want to invite you today in just a couple of moments, to pour out to God, to pour out to somebody else to a brother or sister via prayer. I want to make that invitation in a couple of moments. We're going to do that together.

Verse 18, *"Again the one who looked like a man touched me and gave me strength."*¹⁹ *"Do not be afraid, you who are highly esteemed,"* he said. *"Peace! Be strong now; be strong."* *When he spoke to me, I was strengthened"*

Some of us need a word today spoken into us to strengthen our bones. Receive that word today. We've got some words to speak of encouragement, and of strengthening.

I want to invite our worship team to come. They're going to lead us in just a couple of moments. And they're going to lead in a song called 'When the Fight Calls'. It's a song that will ignite something in your spirit today. So we're going to sing that but before we sing and during while we sing, I actually want to make another invitation. If you're watching live, I want to encourage you to try something today to jump on to click the live prayer button. Today, we're going to pray with you. We are going to intercede on your behalf. We are going to walk with you today and I want to encourage you to step out in faith today. And we have a prayer team that is prayed up, that is filled up, that is faith filled. And as you jump into prayer, they're going to speak the word of God over you. They're going to speak the promises of God into you. They're going to stand with you. They're going to pour it, the Holy Spirit is going to pour out into them, and they're gonna fill your bucket, alright. And so I want to encourage you right now go ahead and click that live prayer button or in a couple of moments as we sing. You can click it while we're worshiping and we want to stand in prayer. Just as Daniel is lifted up, he's so tired, he's so anguished, but he's almost pulled up by the encouragement of this being in front of him. We're going to speak that same life into you today, okay, as you go in to prayer. But as you receive that prayer, you're going to be filled up today. And when you are I'm going to ask you to then do something else. Then I want to ask you to seek the Lord. Who do you need to contend on behalf of this coming week? What's that name? Who's that person that God is putting on your heart, putting in your spirit today? Get prayed up and then pour out, right.

Alright, here's what I want to do. I want to listen again, to the exact words that God's spoke in to Daniel, after he had shared his brokenness, so just receive that and then we'll worship together.

“Do not be afraid, you who are highly esteemed,” he said. “Peace! Be strong now; be strong.”

In the name of Jesus, I pray these things. Amen. Let's worship and let's pray together.