

Faithful to the end

(built around Daniel 10 to 12)

By the time we reach Daniel 10, the old prophet is nearing the end of a long and remarkable life. He has served under kings who did not know his God, survived a den of lions, and watched empires rise and fall around him. He could, quite reasonably, have put his feet up. Instead, we find him mourning for three weeks, eating no delicacies, no meat, no wine, until his fast is complete (Daniel 10:2-3). Decades into his walk with God, Daniel is still hungry for more of Him, and the messenger who comes to him confirms it was that very hunger which moved heaven: "from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard" (Daniel 10:12). Faithfulness is not a burst of youthful zeal that fades with age. It is a hunger that deepens the longer we know God, the kind Jesus called blessed when He said those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be filled (Matthew 5:6). That hunger is the foundation everything else in these chapters is built on. Without it, none of what follows makes sense.

That hunger is tested almost immediately. The messenger explains he was delayed twenty-one days, resisted by "the prince of the kingdom of Persia," until Michael came to his aid (Daniel 10:13). Here is a rare glimpse behind the curtain of unseen resistance to answered prayer. Daniel's words were heard on day one, yet the visible answer took three weeks to arrive. When our prayers seem to go unanswered, it is not proof that God has not heard. Sometimes the answer is already on its way, contested every step of it. This is precisely the posture Scripture calls us to elsewhere too, praying always and never losing heart, because the God who hears on day one is not always the God who answers on day one. Daniel's endurance in the waiting is a second foundation stone: a hunger for God that refuses to quit when the answer is slow.

Then comes chapter 11, and if we are honest, it is not the easiest reading. Verse after verse of kings of the north and south, alliances, betrayals, wars fought and lost long before Christ was born. It can feel dry to us, yet consider who this was given to. An elderly man near the close of his earthly service was shown, in exacting detail, the turbulent centuries that would follow him, so that generations not yet born could read it and know their God was neither absent nor surprised. That is worth carrying into our own turbulent headlines. The nations rage, and it can look like chaos to us, but it was never chaos to God. This is the same confidence Paul later puts into words for us: "we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). Our foundation is not that the world will stay calm. It is that the world, however stormy, remains in the hands of the God who works even its chaos toward good.

Which brings us to Daniel 12, and the promise that gathers up everything that has gone before. There comes a time of trouble such as never was, yet "everyone whose name

shall be found written in the book" will be delivered (Daniel 12:1). And "those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above, and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever" (Daniel 12:3), the very picture Jesus gives His own disciples when He calls them the light of the world and tells them to let that light shine before others (Matthew 5:14-16). A faithful life is never only personal. It becomes a light that guides someone else home.

Daniel himself is not given full understanding. When he asks what the outcome will be, the answer he receives is not an explanation but an instruction: "Go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days" (Daniel 12:13). That is the whole of it. Not certainty about every detail, but faithfulness that keeps going, right through to the end, the same race the writer to the Hebrews calls us to run with endurance, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:1-2). Daniel did not need to see the whole picture to be found faithful. He simply needed to keep his heart set on God and keep walking. So do we. Whatever your Babylon looks like this week, go your way. Stay faithful. Your allotted place is waiting.

Questions

1. Daniel kept seeking God even after decades of walking with Him. What keeps you hungry for more of God? **(Daniel 10:12)**
2. Daniel's answer was delayed but never denied. How do you keep praying when the answer is slow? **(Daniel 10:13)**
3. Daniel 11 shows God was never surprised by turbulent history. Where do you need to trust His sovereignty right now? **(Romans 8:28)**
4. The wise who turn others to righteousness will shine like the stars. Who is God calling you to point towards Him? **(Matthew 5:14-16)**
5. Daniel was told to go his way without full understanding. What helps you stay faithful without every answer? **(Hebrews 12:1-2)**