***Daniel 10:1-10 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message was true, but the appointed time was long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision. 2In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. 3I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled. 4Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that is, the Tigris, 5I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz! 6His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude. 7And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. 8Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength. 9Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground. 10Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands.***

Tonight, we’re back with Daniel in yet another vision. This vision falls sometime between 536 and 534 BC. The Medo-Persian empire is firmly in control. Ezra 1:1 tells us - *Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying.* In the proclamation, Cyrus released the Jewish people to return to Jerusalem. In Isaiah 44:28, 150 years before Cyrus, Isaiah prophesied the name Cyrus as the king who would release the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem. In fact, the historian Josephus records that it was Daniel that read the prophecy of Isaiah to Cyrus. The Bible is knit together. Scripture testifies to scripture.

Verse 1 *In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message was true, but the appointed time was long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision.*The third year of king Cyrus or between 536 and 534 BC. A message in the form of a vision is revealed to Daniel. The vision is true, but it is a vision that will occur long into the future. Unlike the earlier vision. Daniel had some understanding of this one.

Verses 2-3 *In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. 3I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.*This verse has an idea of mourning and fasting. Daniel started to mourn and fast. He ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came to his mouth. 21 days or three full weeks. This is reminiscent of his time in chapter 1, when he sought a diet of water and vegetables.

One of the known benefits of fasting is that brain function improves, according to the National Institutes of Health. Daniel sought to sharpen his mind to better perceive what the Holy Spirit was saying. Fasting has long been part of the Jewish and Christian practices. King David fasted and prayed for his young child to heal. Jesus fasted 40 days and 40 nights, Moses fasted, Ezra fasted, Joel fasted, the Apostles in the Book of Acts fasted. Daniel fasted in chapter 9. All of these were seeking clarity around the will of God. Not only that, but Daniel did not anoint himself. In the climate he was living in, he would have rubbed his skin with oil to protect it and moisturize. The point of these verses is to communicate that Daniel is foregoing niceties. He is clearing his mind and seeking God, and he is giving up comforts as he seeks.

Today, there are still Christians that fast, particularly when seeking the Lord in certain situations. I once attended a church that fasted the 24 hours leading up to Revival. We prayed, had Revival, and then shared a meal after the first night of Revival. Some regularly give up something for Lent as a form of worship.

Verses 4-7 *4Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that is, the Tigris, 5I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz! 6His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude. 7And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.*  In the Aramaic language, verse 4 says Daniel is by the Euphrates River. In Greek, it says he was by the Tigris River. We know that the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers meet and become one before flowing into the Persian Gulf, so it is very possible that he is where the two come together. He lifts his eyes and sees a Certain Man. In Rev 1:12-16 we read *12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 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. 14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; 15 His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; 16 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.* This is Christ. Daniel sees the preincarnate Christ when he lifts his eyes. The other men flee and hide. A great terror has fallen upon them. So Daniel is alone. It makes sense that, in the presence of the perfection of Jesus, that men that had not prepared to meet the Lord would flee. That happens today. John 3:20 says *For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed*. We have no reason to believe that the men with Daniel were sanctified as Daniel is.

Verses 8-9 *Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength. 9Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.* Daniel is alone when he sees this glorious vision of Christ. In Rev 1:17, we know that John fell at Jesus feet as though John was dead. All strength left John. We see that Daniel had no strength left in him while in Christ’s presence either. His vigor turned to frailty. Daniel would have been in his 80s, yet he was still in great health. But in Christ’s presence, even a man as godly and beloved as Daniel realizes that he is completely unworthy to be in the presence of the Son of God. Daniel is in good company – Moses bowed, Isaiah said he was undone, Paul, then Saul, fell to his knees, and of course John fell as if dead. People often say, “When I get to heaven, I’m going to ask Jesus this!” No we won’t. We will kneel, and sob, overcome to see our Lord, thanking Him for what He did for us. Pride makes us believe otherwise.

Daniel still hears Jesus words, though he fell into a deep sleep. Some theologians say he fainted. Some say he did as John did and fell down as though dead. Regardless, Daniel could not stand in the Savior’s presence.

Verse 10 *Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands.* We change gears here. A hand touches Daniel. This hand most likely belongs to the angel Gabriel. It seems that Daniel is now in a crawling position.

We will leave Daniel here for this week. He never ceases to be fearless, focused, and faithful. When faced with the preincarnate Christ, all around Daniel fled. I cannot imagine the glory, the light, the radiance of Jesus – John says *His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength*. I’d probably die of fear… or burst with joy… Daniel falls down, no strength or vigor left, yet still he seeks to more fully understand the vision before him. May we be as fearless, focused, and faithful, as we navigate these wicked times. May we seek to understand, so we might share the Gospel with as many as will receive it before it is everlasting too late.