



MCG
Study Guide
Daniel 10
May 16th – May 22nd



Prayer Requests:

Wednesday May 16th – Revelations

Reading Daniel 10:1-2

“...a revelation was given to Daniel...”

When I think about revelation, I almost immediately think of the last book in the Bible. But revelation is not simply the last book it is *every* book in the Bible! The word “Revelation” is defined as, “the divine or supernatural disclosure to humans of something relating to human existence or the world.”¹ The Bible reveals God’s perspective. It gives us His insight on our situation, and yet this revelation is increasingly being dismissed by society.

The 1996 bestseller *Conversations with God* has sold over 2.5 million copies.

The author, Neale Donald Walsch, says that one day he simply started writing down his direct conversations with God. The god he speaks to is not the God of Christianity, nor is it identified with any other major religion. Walsch presents a god who satisfies the spiritual yearnings of our culture. The following conversation between Walsch and god, reveals the core belief of this spirituality.

God: I cannot tell you My Truth until you stop telling Me yours.

¹ Oxford Online Dictionary,
<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/revelation>

Walsch: But my truth about god comes from you.

God: Who said so?

Walsch: Others.

God: What others?

Walsch: Leaders. Ministers. Rabbis. Priests. Books. The Bible, for heaven's sake!

God: Those are not authoritative sources.

Walsch: They aren't?

God: No.

Walsch: Then what is?

God: Listen to your feelings. Listen to your Highest Thoughts. Listen to your experience. Whenever any one of these differs from what you've been told by your teachers, or read in your books, forget the words.²

We live at a time where we are encouraged to “trust your feelings”, “go with your gut” or “let your heart lead you.” This type of feeling oriented leadership principle has long been rejected by Christians. Feelings are fleeting and deceptive. We are to “keep in step with the Spirit.”³ The surest way we can know the will of the Spirit is through the revelation of His Word - not by our feelings and emotional impulses.

² Neale Donald Walsch, *Conversations with God* (Putnam, 1996)

³ Galatians 5:25

Meditation/Application/Reflection

Think of a time when your “gut” or “feelings” wanted to lead you in a way that was opposite to God’s Word. Did you obey your feelings or the Bible? What happened as a result?

It seems that Daniel’s revelation and its meaning came in two different phases. Why do you think this was the case?

Prayer Points:

As you pray for your church family, community, MCG and yourself, please remember these prayer requests:

- Pray for Siew Chang’s family as they remember and celebrate her life at the Funeral Service this coming Saturday
- Pray for the revealing of God to be known and understood through creation, Scripture, Jesus and His Spirit.

Thursday May 17th – Mourning (By NBBC’s Bob Wilkins)

Reading Daniel 10:2 – 3

“At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks.”

Daniel 10 begins the final vision and revelation given to Daniel. It is the revelation of a great war in the future and its meaning is given to Daniel in a vision of a man dressed in linen who speaks to him. The revelations and visions given to Daniel affected him profoundly. He mourned for three weeks. He also fasted. The vision drained him of physical, spiritual and emotional strength which left him helpless (Dan. 10:8). He had no strength at all until he was touched again by the man in linen. He was left speechless until enabled by the man in linen and then confessed to him, “I am overcome with anguish because of the vision, my lord, and I am helpless. How can I, your servant, talk with you, my lord? My strength is gone and I can hardly breathe (Dan. 10:16b – 17).”

All of us have had periods of grief and mourning and so can identify with Daniel, but Daniel’s mourning seems to be a combination of planned mourning and unanticipated circumstantial grief. We in our culture tend to grieve spontaneously. Planned grief seems to be something foreign to us, and to choose to mourn seems to go right against our rationalistic approach to life. Nevertheless, periods of mourning are important to the recovery of normal life following an experience of traumatic loss.

As I write these notes, it has been a little over a day since the tragic loss of 10 lives and 15 left injured on Yonge Street in Toronto by a man using a van as a weapon. This has plunged families, neighbours, and a city into deep mourning - a mourning that no one would actually choose - but it is a period of mourning that those affected must embrace if they are to recover from the deep grief into which they have now been plunged.

It is only under such circumstances that we can make sense of these words in Ecclesiastes 7:2-4:

It is better to go to the house of mourning
Than to go to the house of feasting.
For death is the destiny of every man;
The living should take this to heart.
Sorrow is better than laughter,
Because a sad face is good for the heart.
The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning,
But the heart of fools is in the house of pleasure

Meditation/Application/Reflection

Reflect on mourning that you have experienced. Did it have a positive outcome in your life?

Have you been overcome with grief as Daniel obviously was? What helped you to work through it?

Were there specific steps that you followed that you could recommend to others?

What do you think Jesus had in mind when He said, "Blessed are those who mourn (Matt. 5:4)." Is there such a thing as good mourning (no pun intended) and bad mourning? If so, how would you describe the difference?

Prayer Points:

As you pray for your church family, community, MCG and yourself, please remember these prayer requests:

- Pray for those who mourn and grieve
- Leaders meet tonight at NBBC. Pray for God's presence.

Friday May 18th – The Terror of the Spiritual World

Reading Daniel 10:4 – 11

“...those who were with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves.”

We in North America, have tended to domesticize the spiritual world. We have treated it as if it is safe, kind and largely inconsequential to our day to day lives. Although, as followers of Jesus, we believe that the spiritual world is real, we do tend to downplay its role in our lives.

No doubt this is, in part, a reaction against those who are overly pre-occupied with what they claim are demons behind every advertisement and newspaper report. Perhaps in our rush to avoid the sensationalism of seeing demonic influence everywhere, we have neglected to see the spiritual world anywhere.

Yet, is it possible that in our caution not to overplay the spiritual world, we have overly downplayed it. Might I even suggest that we have tried to tame God? We have forgotten that the Bible tells us that He is a consuming fire⁴ and that it is actually “a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”⁵

This explains the reaction of those who were with Daniel, they were overwhelmed with terror! While I am not trying to advocate being terrorized, I am urging us to rediscover the awe of God. A recent issue of the Oprah Magazine has an interesting article on awe. The article's introduction states: "Somewhere at the intersection of joy, fear, mystery, and insight lies awe, the ineffable response to the amazing world around us." The article goes on to give a more refined definition: "Overwhelming, surprising, humbling, even a little terrifying—awe is what we feel when faced with something sublime, exceptional, or altogether beyond comprehension."⁶

⁴ Hebrews 12:29

⁵ Hebrews 10:31

⁶ David Hochman, "The Wonder of It All", Oprah Magazine, (December 2010)

I suspect it is not a matter of God having absented Himself but rather that we have become less observant, callous, perhaps even oblivious. Elizabeth Barrett Browning once wrote, "Earth's crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God, but only he who sees takes off his shoes— the rest sit round it and pluck blackberries."⁷

The difference between the terror which caused Daniel's friends to run and hide and the terror that caused Daniel to gaze at the great vision was that Daniel saw what was truly there and his friends did not. Perhaps God is more present to us than we realize and if we are patient and observant we will see Him.

Meditation/Application/Reflection

It seems that we need to be "noticers" if we are going to learn to see God at work in our world and in our lives. Take time to think through your whole day (or yesterday if you are doing this in the morning). Ask God to open the eyes of your heart to see where He was at work. Invite Him to help you to notice.

Does Daniel's vision of the man remind you of any other passages in the Bible? Which ones?

What do you think it means when it says, "his voice like the sound of a multitude"?

Prayer Points:

As you pray for your church family, community, MCG and yourself, please remember these prayer requests:

- The spiritual sphere is not seen, but the effects of it can be. Pray for eyes to see where God is working.

⁷ Elizabeth Barrett Browning, quoted in "Reflections," *Christianity Today*, (7-31-00)

Saturday May 19th – Spiritual Warfare

Reading Daniel 10:12 – 14

“...the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days.”

One of the themes that we continue to bump into throughout the book of Daniel is the reality of God’s perspective on human affairs which contrasts with the human perspective of those same events. There are times when our world seems chaotic and we think God is not in control when actually He is completely in control. There are other times, like in today’s verses, when we think nothing is happening and yet there is very significant spiritual warfare taking place – it is all a matter of perspective.

June 6, 1994, was the 50th anniversary of the Allied invasion of Normandy, which began the historic World War II battle to liberate continental Europe from Nazi control. All the major television networks ran anniversary programs that included interviews with aging veterans. One of the programs paired two contrasting interviews back to back. The first interview was with a marine who had landed on Omaha Beach. He recalled horrors that sounded like scenes from Steven Spielberg's Academy Award-winning movie *Saving Private Ryan*. The aging veteran recalled looking around at the bloody casualties surrounding him and concluding, "We're going to lose!"

The next interview was with a U.S. Army Air Corps reconnaissance pilot who had flown over the whole battle area. He viewed the carnage on the beaches and hills, but he also witnessed the successes of the marines, the penetration by the paratroopers, and the effectiveness of the aerial bombardment. He looked at everything that was happening and concluded, "We're going to win!"⁸

⁸ *Leith Anderson, Leadership That Works, (Minneapolis, Bethany House, 1999), pp. 164-165*

The incredible thing about this spiritual reality is that our prayers have effect. Our pleading and petition have an impact upon the spiritual realities which in turn affect the outcomes we see on earth.

Meditation/Application/Reflection

Where do you see issues in our day which suggest that there are spiritual battles taking place? Take time to pray for some of these.

Why do you think God gives visions of the future that are so hard to understand?

Prayer Points:

As you pray for your church family, community, MCG and yourself, please remember these prayer requests:

- Take some time this long weekend and walk with the intention to be aware of the spiritual. It is easy to see the physical. Pray how God leads you to; in Jesus name.
- Pray for our summer camps that are being organized by Shari and our summer interns.

Sunday May 20th – How Daniel Became so Favoured.**Reading** Daniel 10**Sermon Notes:****Meditation/Application/Reflection**

As you think about today's sermon what is one action point that you are taking away?

Prayer Points:

As you pray for your church family, community, MCG and yourself, please remember these prayer requests:

- Discuss with another person your action point from the sermon and be brave enough to pray together.

Monday May 21st – Overcome

Reading Daniel 10:15 – 17

“I am overcome with anguish because of the vision, my lord, and I feel very weak.”

We sometimes can think that spiritual realities aren't real - that the real world is the material one and that nothing immaterial can really touch it or affect it. This is, of course, the default thinking of scientific humanism. However, the Bible teaches us something very different. It tells us that there is a spiritual reality to this world, which affects the physical reality.

Certainly, most of the time we are oblivious to this spiritual world but when it does make its presence known, it is very impactful! The glory, splendour and power of this spiritual world can leave us feeling overwhelmed.

Veronika Bankuti tells of one of these experiences from her own life:

I was a smoker for 43 years. I never thought I would ever quit, but one day, when I had no intention of quitting and was about to light a cigarette, I heard God's voice in my spirit as clear as crystal and immediately recognizable. Every fibre in my body stood to attention; I knew I was in the very presence of He who loved me and gave His life for me! His voice did not thunder out of the heavens, but spoke to me in a gentle, friendly manner: “I really don't want you to do that ANYMORE!” Obviously, He knew I did that for almost a lifetime.

I answered out loud: Lord, I've been addicted to this for over 40 years. I cannot give it up. If you want me to give it up, you have to do it for me. The answer came immediately: “You are holding on too tight – open your hand and give it to me and I WILL HELP YOU! I did – and HE DID! Yes, I was tempted to light up hundreds of times, but how could I let God down? It was unthinkable. I have not had a cigarette since this overwhelming, awe-inspiring, personal encounter on July 15, 2011 - the

day the Lord came unforgettably, intimately, ravishingly near!

While these types of experiences may not come often – or maybe not at all – we should not rule them out. Although encountering a genuine experience of the spiritual world may overcome you with fear, the end result will be that your life will be changed. Guard your heart from the jaded cynicism that keeps you from a deeper engagement with the spiritual world.

Meditation/Application/Reflection

Take time to be still and acknowledge that there is a spiritual world that you are present to, even now.

Have you ever had an encounter with the spiritual world? Consider sharing this story with your MCG.

Prayer Points:

As you pray for your church family, community, MCG and yourself, please remember these prayer requests:

- Pray for that neighbour or family member who might be difficult
- Pray for MCG-Tansley as they plan to gather Wednesdays on the field behind NBBC, inviting others to join them in sport/games.

Tuesday May 22nd – Touched by an Angel

Reading Daniel 10:18 - 21

“...the one who looked like a man touched me and gave me strength.”

In this chapter we read of three times when Daniel was touched by the angel: vs. 10, 16 and 18. With each touch Daniel is strengthened. Regarding angels, John Calvin wrote, “The angels are the dispensers and administrators of divine beneficence towards us; they regard our safety, undertake our defense, direct our ways, and exercise a constant solicitude that no evil befall us.” Seemingly the strength that angels give, is from God. God is in the strength giving business.

I suspect that not many of us, if any, have experienced being physically touched by an angel. However, I do suspect that many of us can tell of times where God has given us strength when we felt we couldn’t go on.

The truth is that God often calls us to do that for which we do not have the strength or ability. Madeleine L'Engle writes: “We are all asked to do more than we can do. Every hero and heroine of the Bible does more than he or she would have thought possible, from Gideon to Esther to Mary. Jacob, one of my favorite characters, certainly wasn't qualified. He was a liar and a cheat, and yet he was given the extraordinary vision of angels and archangels ascending and descending a ladder which stretched from earth to heaven.”⁹

Perhaps there are times when we miss the call of God because we first assess if we are powerful enough, skilled enough or have time enough. While these types of assessment are not unimportant, they should not be the only way in which we evaluate. If God calls us to do something, He will provide the strength and resources we need.

When we live our lives without including God in the equation, it is like the 23rd Psalm with the Lord removed:

⁹ Madeleine L'Engle in *Walking on Water. Christianity Today*, Vol. 37, no. 8.

1 my ... I shall be in want.

2 me ... me

3 my soul ... me

4 I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear ... me
... me.

5 me in the presence of my enemies ... my head ... my cup

6 me all the days of my life ... I will dwell

We are left obsessing over our wants in the valley of the shadow of death, paralyzed by fear in the presence of our enemies. No wonder so many are cynical ... both the child and the cynic walk through the valley of the shadow of death. The cynic focuses on the darkness; the child focuses on the Shepherd.¹⁰

God is in the strength-giving business. What do you need His strength to do this day?

Preparing for your MCG

As you come for you MCG be prepared to share:

- **POTLUCK:** Be mindful about a story you might share regarding the importance of MCG regular group meeting together (ie what it means to you, or how the group has seen God work in or through them)
- **STUDY:** Share from your time of Meditation/Application from each day's study. What from chapter 10 of Daniel made an impression on you or what confused you?
- **PRAYER WALK/ACTIVITY:** be creative and intentional as you pray/work together.



CALENDAR, PEOPLE and DETAILS HERE:

<https://nbbc.churchcenter.com/groups>

¹⁰ Paul Miller, *The Praying Life* (NavPress, 2009)

Missional Community Group (MCG) Covenant

We desire to grow as followers of Jesus who represent Him and His Kingdom well in all of our life. We recognize that God's plan is for us to grow in and through relationships with other like-minded disciples. As those who identify as neighbourhood missionaries we enter into this covenant so that we might be transformed by God's grace and that together we might be transforming agents in our neighbourhood.

To this end, this year, we therefore covenant to:

- Meet regularly for weekly encouragement, accountability, and fellowship in our Missional Community Group and corporately with all of NBBC.
- Seek to grow in likeness to Jesus by engaging in NBBC MCG's shared practices.
- Nurture loving relationships within our Missional Community, accepting others as Christ has accepted us.
- Faithfully steward the resources that God has given us: time, abilities, resources and energy.
- Together discern where God is at work and join Him in His mission to bring the Kingdom of God to our neighbourhood.

In all that we covenant, we recognize that we are dependant upon the grace of God to enable us and so we joyfully enter this covenant in hope of what He might do in and through us.

Missional Community Group Shared Practices

1. Daily engage in reading Scripture and pray for God to bless NBBC in its missional calling.
2. Weekly purposely and intentionally bless another person.
3. Monthly practise table fellowship with someone in your Missional Community.
4. Respond to the Spirit's prompting as you sense Him leading and directing.
5. Share with others the stories of what God is doing in your life as opportunities arise.