

The Messenger

by William Carrol

William Carrol's sermon emphasizes the scriptures as the ultimate messenger of God's truth and the importance of preparing our hearts to receive its message.

Duration: 39:42

Scripture: 2 Samuel 12:25, Daniel 10:21, Daniel 11:19, Malachi 3:1, John 1:23, Galatians 1:8, 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Topics: "Bible Study", "Communion With God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by describing a vision that the prophet Daniel had. Daniel sees a majestic messenger, clothed in linen and with a golden belt. The preacher draws a parallel between this unique and majestic messenger and the Bible itself, emphasizing that the Bible is not an ordinary book but a holy book that takes us into another realm and allows us to hear from God. The preacher emphasizes the importance of preparing our hearts before reading the Bible and entering into communion with God. He also highlights the awe and reverence that should accompany our interaction with the Word of God, as it is a source of divine wisdom and guidance.

Transcript

I want to talk to you this afternoon on the topic, the messenger. The messenger. Now when you read your Bible, particularly the Old Testament, you see that the word messenger is used in many different ways and for many different kinds of people.

And we are going to look at one messenger in particular and we are going to see that messenger as the messenger by which we can determine all other messengers. That messenger that acts as a means of considering any other message that we hear. And we're going to ask the Lord to speak to us through that messenger even as we spend this time together.

Would you pray with me please? Father in Jesus name we thank you for your word. We thank you that this word is your messenger to us. We thank you that you use it to speak your heart and your ways, your desires, your plans.

You use it oh God to speak to us in times when it seems no other word can get through and you use it as a means of determining every other word that we hear. We thank you for your word. We ask that you open it to us even now and use it to speak to us.

And let its message come through loud and clear. Lord I pray that you strengthen your name in our midst. We love you for it.

We thank you in Jesus name. Amen. Amen.

Would you turn with me in your Bible to the book of Daniel? I've been hovering in that book for a certain amount of time and gleaning as much from it as I possibly can. Daniel the 10th chapter. The messenger.

One of the names for the Lord in the Old Testament is the messenger of the Lord. And oftentimes you'll see that same term the messenger used for the heavenly host. The cherubim or the seraphim that come to men and women with a word from God.

Again the term is oftentimes used for men and women of God who have a particular word that God sends them with. It's used for people who are delivering God's word. It can be used for a person who's delivering a message for the king or for anyone.

It's basically someone or something that contains a message and has a responsibility to deliver that message. So when we see the word angel in the Bible, that is translating the word malach which basically means malach the messenger. And so in this particular case as we read in Daniel the 10th chapter, we see that one of the heavenly host comes to Daniel in a time where Daniel is praying over some very serious needs and he's preparing his heart to hear from the Lord.

And what I want to do this afternoon is I want to make a parallel between that kind of a messenger and the holy scriptures themselves. And I want to suggest that while it might not be as common for us to see an angelic vision in the sense of the seraphim or the cherubim, we always have one messenger at hand at any given time that will speak to us at any given time and will often say to us many of the things that this angel spoke to Daniel. And if you turn with me to that portion of scripture Daniel 10 and just begin to look at the first verse, you'll notice it says in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a message was revealed to Daniel whose name was called Belteshazzar.

The message was true. And then if you look all the way at the 21st verse which is the last verse of the chapter, the messenger begins, he ends one element of his revelation and begins another by saying, but I will tell you what is noted in the scripture of truth. And so we see this parallel between the heavenly host, that messenger that was speaking to Daniel and the scripture of truth.

Basically what he is saying, what that angel was saying was everything that I'm telling you, you can find in the word of God. Everything that I am expressing to you, you can find in the word of God. Some of the specifics that Daniel was told that when you go into the 11th chapter, of course you and I are not going to expect that every time God speaks to us, he's going to tell us about the next you know 10 kingdoms or dynasties that will come in the future and things of that nature.

He might tell us some things about our personal future, he might tell us some things about the nature of what he's doing in the final times, but we can be certain that the things that I'm going to read to you today, the Lord speaks to us in his scripture on a regular basis and we simply have to be open to this book as a messenger of the Lord. And ultimately that messenger by which we compare, we test every other message. That's why Paul said at a certain point, he said even if an angel from God comes to you and preaches to you any other message than that we have preached to you, he said let that one be accursed.

So this is the book. This is the way I can determine if the Holy Spirit is speaking to me or not. If it's him or if it's my flesh, this is the way that I can determine that.

The Bible talks about the Berean Christians or at least at that stage they were simply listening in and trying to figure out what Paul was saying, but the Bible says that they were a people who had a particular gifting in that when they heard the gospel message, they simply went home, opened up their Bibles to find out if what they heard preached to them was true. So this messenger becomes the ultimate arbiter. It's the means by which we we test every other message.

Now let's see what the Bible says about this particular angel and then let's simply make a parallel between the angel that spoke to Daniel and the word of the Lord that speaks to us. Beginning at verses 5 and 6, we have to first consider the nature of this messenger. He said, I lifted my eyes and looked and behold a certain man clothed in linen whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz.

His body was like beryl and his face like the appearance of lightning and 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. The first thing that Daniel recognizes when he sees this messenger is that it is unique and that it is majestic. This was not like somebody else that he had seen it.

It was not like anybody that he would have seen as he was walking down the street. Just like this holy book is not like any of the book that you and I will ever read. It is a unique book.

It is a majestic book. It is a book that causes all. A book that causes one to recognize that as I open this, I am entering into another realm.

I am entering into another world. If you and I were to read some of the books that were written at around the same time this Bible was written. Some of the books that were written by what's been termed the anti-Nicene fathers and people of that name.

The difference is as far as east is from west. Now these are men of God who wrote words of comfort and exhortation and strength to their brothers and sisters in Christ. Godly men writing godly words but they are nothing like this.

There is no other book to be compared with this one. When God opens this book to us he draws us into its atmosphere. When Daniel saw this angel he realized he was in another atmosphere.

To a certain degree the heavens were cracked open and he saw into another realm. He was no longer simply in his world. God had opened to him the kingdom of heaven and he was able to see into another dimension.

When you and I open this holy book it takes us places. It takes us into another dimension. We actually see heaven.

We get a window into heaven. When we open this holy book we move from one realm to another realm and all of a sudden we are in the presence of the great God and he is able to speak to us. This book is a messenger.

It tells us what God is thinking. It tells us what God is saying. It doesn't just tell us what happened.

It tells us what is happening and what will happen. This book tells us the mind of God. It tells us the intentions of God.

It tells us the plans of God. It enters into the heart of God and it speaks to us everything that God says. It is the mind of God.

It tells us everything that we need to know in order to do what God has called us to do and to be what God has called us to be in this generation. This is no ordinary book. This is not just something that we read so that we can get a few life principles.

This book draws us into its own gravity. It draws us into its own atmosphere. It draws us into its own world and it puts us at the table with God.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. This is God's messenger.

And then in Daniel verse 7 it says, 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. Pastor David was talking about the fear of the Lord this morning.

My brother and my sister, I want to suggest to you that when this book is truly open to us, the people of the world might not understand what's happening. But when this book is open to us, there is an awe that is a part of us and there is an awe that is a part of them. We are in awe of this word because we know who wrote it.

We're in awe of this word because we know what it's talking about. We hear the words of it. We see the vision that it projects.

They don't understand that, but they know when somebody has been exposed to this book. They might not understand everything that you read and everything that you believe, but they can tell when a man or woman of God has been exposed to this holy book. They can tell when you've been in this atmosphere.

They can tell when you've breathed this rarefied air. There is something about the air of a Christian. There is something about the way of a Christian.

There is something about the hope. There is something about the faith. There is something about the courage of a Christian that this society must acknowledge.

When you and I have been with God in the holy place and when we've opened up this holy book, I tell you, my brother and my sister, the world might not hear the voice. They might not see the vision, but they feel the awe. They know that there is God in heaven and that his people are in his presence and they're hearing his words.

There is a uniqueness to this book. There is a majesty to this book. There is a proper response to this book.

Verse 8, 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. Yet I heard the sound of his words and while I heard the sounds of his words, I was in a deep sleep on my face with my face to the ground. Suddenly a hand touched me and made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands.

And he said to me, O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you and stand upright for I have now been sent to you. While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling. One of the first things that this holy book does for us and to us as we allow the Holy Spirit to read it to us is it causes us to recognize that we have absolutely no strength in ourselves.

We have absolutely no capacity to stand before this holy book. When it starts to read us and it starts to remind us and it starts to tell us of how much we need that one who wrote it and that one who sent it. When it begins to remind us of our own frailty, we fall on our face before it.

We acknowledge that everything about us must bow down before it. All of our hopes, all of our dreams, all of our plans, all of our sense of self and sense of destiny, all of our agendas, everything must bow down to this book and we find ourselves saying I have no strength in myself. You can always tell when you're reading this book right.

You can always tell when it's being read to you by the Spirit. You can always tell when you're allowing it to read you because you come out knowing that you have no strength in yourself, no capacity to do any good and everything in you begins to tremble and all of your hopes, all of your dreams, all of your aspirations, all of your agenda, all of your sense of self and identity, all of your sense of destiny, everything bows down before it and you acknowledge God I have nothing in myself. I have no power.

But then he said as I was doing this, as I was humbling myself before this word, and as I bowed myself down as a dead man, he said the word began to speak life into me. The word began to speak God's strength into me. That's why Paul was able to say I have no problem now acknowledging my weakness.

He said I'll glory in my weakness because when I am weak, then I am strong. And he says the word begins to speak. Hallelujah.

He begins to speak into your heart and into mine and begins to say yes, you're weak in your own strength, but you are strong in the grace of God. The Bible says that one place that it is a loving kindness, the covenant loyalty of God that makes us great. We have nothing in ourselves, but God is loyal to his covenant.

God chooses to speak life into us and strength into us. And he said, stand on your feet. When you and I read this book, we might go in feeling like we have nothing to stand on.

We might open this book and say, God, I can't make it another day. I can't do another thing because the emphasis is on the eye, the eye, the eye. But we get into this holy book.

And God said, as we hear who made man's mouth and who made no, no, it's not about you. It's about God. It's not about me.

It's about God. And so I go in saying, I can't this and I can't that. And I can't the other thing.

And it sounds like humility, but the emphasis is still on the eye. And then God says, it's not about you. Try that kind of humility.

But he begins to breathe life into us. And he begins to say, I'm going to teach you how to stand. The enemy has been telling you, you can't stand.

But God says, I'm going to teach you how to stand. Then it has been telling you, you don't have any strength. Of course you don't have any strength in yourself, but the enemy tells a little piece of truth.

He'll say you don't have any strength, but he forgets. Maybe, I don't know. I don't know.

Maybe he has a bad memory, but he forgets that God is our strength. Hallelujah. And as long as I have God, I have strength.

Amen. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Strength to stand in this generation and to give glory to God. But that's the proper response to this messenger. When this messenger begins to speak his words to us.

And then he gives some idea of the process in which this message comes in verse 11. He says, and he said to me, old Daniel, man, greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you and stand up right. For I have now been sent to you.

While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling. Then he said to me, do not fear Daniel for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard. And I have come because of your words.

But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me 21 days and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes came to help me for I had been left alone there with the Kings of Persia. Two things we want to recognize. One, there is this process.

Daniel prepared his heart to receive this word. This is a holy book. Thank God.

Thank God. Many, a Bible still contain the term, the holy Bible, not Fred's Bible or Joe's Bible and so on and so forth. Right.

You know, send \$50 to my TV show and I'll send you my version of the Bible. That kind of a thing. This is a holy book.

It is the holy Bible. And when we enter into communion with God, we must prepare our hearts. It's good sometime to get familiar with the off switch to all of our electronic equipment and sometimes just sit there and allow our hearts to be prepared.

He prepared his heart by fasting before the Lord. And sometimes fasting includes more than food. Sometimes fasting includes those things that will on some level or another influence what we're about to read before we ever read it.

And so there are good things that we have to turn off sometimes as well, just for enough time for us to just sit in the presence of God and prepare our hearts to enter into that kind of holy communion. And we have to say, God, I just want to have a calm mind for a while. Sometimes we have to unplug some of our worries and some of our concerns and some of our fears.

Sometimes we go to the Bible because we want an answer for a particular thing. And maybe God's not looking to talk to us about that right now. So we go looking for that answer in any text that we just happen to come upon.

And we stuffed that answer into that text. I don't care what it takes. God is going to say what I want him to say kind of a thing.

And so sometimes God just says, let the worries go for a little while. I'm going to talk to you about that, but maybe I'm not ready to talk to you about that right now. The second thing is there is an enemy trying to keep you and me from this message and trying to keep this message from us.

I want to tell you, my brother, I don't know about you, but it seems to me that the cover of my Bible weighs about 2,000 pounds. You know what I mean? I mean, it takes forever sometimes to get this thing open. I mean, once I get it open, it's all right, you know, but it seems like it weighs a few thousand pounds for me.

You know, maybe it's me. I don't know. Because the enemy does not want you and does not want me to open up this book.

He does not want us to get in there. And so the angel says, you know, there's a fight between me and this enemy. I wanted to come to you and I wanted to bring you this word.

I know you've been preparing your heart. I know you've been abstaining from this thing and that thing so that God can speak to you. He said, I've been trying to get to you, but there's been this thing withstanding me.

Sometimes it's an enemy. Sometimes it's something that's trying to work against us. Something maybe in our own lives periodically where the word is saying, I want to get through, but you just need to open up to God.

So this preparation so that the Holy Spirit can come and open that word to us. That's not something that we can forego. That is something that must be a part of our discipline as we open our hearts to the Lord.

Again, the next few verses 14 and following. Now I've come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision refers to many days yet to come.

When he had spoken such words to me, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. And suddenly one having the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips. Then I opened my mouth and spoke saying to him who stood before me, my Lord, because of the vision, my sorrows have overwhelmed me and I have retained no strength.

For how can this servant of my Lord talk with you, my Lord? As for me, no strength remains in me now, nor is there any breath left in me. And again, the one having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me. One of the awesome things about opening this book is sometimes God will share his burden with us and tell us things that we don't always want to hear and tell us things that even if we want to hear them, they will oftentimes seem too marvelous for us, too wonderful for us, things that we could never contain.

In David's or Daniel's case, it was both. Daniel was brought into the burden of the Lord and the concerns of God. You see, Daniel didn't have, you know, cut and paste scriptures that he, you know, stuck to his refrigerator and so on and so forth.

You know, the ones that kind of make you feel good, right? You know, it's more like he read the whole thing and some of it makes you happy and some of it makes you sad. I mean, when you read the

prophets, there's going to be some good news in there and there's going to be some bad. And when you open your heart to the word of the Lord, he's going to give you some insight sometimes into what's going to happen in our generation.

And not all of it is good news. In fact, a lot of it is bad. But Daniel understood that it wasn't enough for God to simply tell him what was going to happen, but how he also fit into God's plan.

So he heard what was going to happen and he realized that he still had a responsibility to do something in it because as you go into the verse, rather the next chapter, he begins to talk about how there's going to be great evil on one side, but those who know their Lord, those who know their God are going to be strong and do exploit. So he understood one, that there was going to be sorrows and two, that God was still going to be glorified and that God was going to actually use him to glorify his name. And he was utterly overwhelmed.

One, because the news wasn't the best news that he wanted to hear and two, he was made to understand that he was going to be one of those members of the only good news that that time was going to have. And God oftentimes opens his word and says to you and says to me, there's a lot of things that are about to happen. That's the bad news.

You know how God comes to us and says sometimes, you know, I got some good news and some bad news. You know what I mean? The bad news is, you know, calamity. The good news is you.

You know what I mean? And sometimes it's harder to hear that. That part, you know, I'd rather hear about the bad news and say, well, you know, just keep me fed and everything will be all right. You know what I'm saying? But no, he said, no, the good news is you.

The light is you. There's going to be darkness, but the light is you. And Daniel heard that.

But you and I, we hear that when we open God's word again in verse 19. And he said, oh man, greatly beloved, fear not. Peace be to you.

Be strong. Yes, be strong. So when he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, let my Lord speak for you have strengthened me.

How do we, basically what he was saying was, how can I be good news in this generation? How can I be a messenger of God's good news in this generation, which is who we are, the church of Jesus Christ, the preachers of the gospel. How can I be that? Well, he tells him right here, first of all, that he is greatly beloved, greatly favored. That's the only thing ultimately speaking that we have going for us, that God loves us.

When David had his son and he called him Solomon, the Lord sent a messenger, a prophet and said, tell him this is what the Lord calls him, Jedidiah. Very simply put, the Lord loves him. That was all the strength Solomon had.

You know his story. That was all the strength you have. That's all the strength I have.

But with that, we can be light in this generation. We can be salt in this generation. We can be good news to this society.

And sometimes God will lay a message on your heart and he'll give you an idea of what he wants to do in your life. And you'll think to yourself, that's way too much for me. I could never, ever do that.

No, it's not about whether or not you can do this. The bottom line is whether or not God loves you. And he says to him here, and as you open your Bible, you'll see it in every single page.

God loves you. No matter how the devil tries to lie, this is your defense against every lie of Satan. Especially when the enemy tries to tell you, you can't fulfill your calling in this generation.

This is your defense. You are beloved of God. I don't care what anybody else calls you.

You are the beloved of God. I don't care what anybody else calls me. The messenger comes and whispers into my ear and says, I know what your dad named you, but now let me tell you what God calls you.

I know what your friend said about you, but let me tell you what God says about you. I know what the society might say, but now let me tell you how God feels about you. And the messenger came to David and said, this is what the Lord says.

And this messenger came to Daniel and said, this is what the Lord said. Greatly beloved. And then he said, don't be afraid.

Very simply don't be afraid, right? You don't have to be a biblical exegete. You don't have to have Greek and Hebrew. Don't be afraid.

It's not that complicated, right? Don't be afraid. You know what I mean? I got, I got a degree so I could do that. And then he says, peace be unto you.

Thousand at your right hand, 10,000 at your left, peace be unto you. No matter what happens in this generation, no matter what happens in this world, be in this book because it's going to remind you that there is peace upon you and peace that not only comes to you, but that goes forth from you. You will bring peace to men and women's heart by the preaching of the gospel, by the living of this Christian life.

He said, be strong. We don't have any strength in ourselves, but we have strength in him. His grace is sufficient for us because his strength is made perfect in weakness.

In other words, what he's saying is his strength only works in weak people. I mean, he can forgo us and do whatever he wants in his own name, but his strength only has full maturity in weak people. And in strong people, people that are strong in their own strength, his strength is often challenged and tested.

And then finally, I'll just read that last portion that we just read as we began, where he says in verse 21, but I tell you what is noted in the scripture of truth. In other words, what he's saying to Daniel is everything that I have said to you and everything that I'm about to say to you, you can find it in one way or another in this book. And sometimes God prophesies about one thing.

God prophesies about another thing in one life or another life, but everything corresponds to God's nature and to his character. And if you and I know his nature and we know his character, because we've been exposed to this holy book, then we'll understand what God is doing in this generation. There is a word from God.

You hold it in your hands. If you're waiting for a heavenly visitation, that may or may not happen. I believe in the supernatural.

I believe in the angels. I believe in everything that this book tells me to believe in. But I have my Bible now and I can open my Bible now so that if there is a heavenly visitation, I'll know if it's an angel from the Lord, because I have this book.

And if there's something that, if I feel an impulse in my heart and I say the Holy Spirit said this or Holy Spirit said that, well, I can go right to this book to find out. Brothers and sisters, God is speaking to you. You will be good news in this generation, because you have God's book.

You will be messengers of this gospel, because you have the gospel message and you hold this messenger in your hand. And this messenger, more importantly, holds you in his. Let's stand together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There's somebody who's saying, but Will, I know what you're saying is true because it's straight out of the word, but it's been a while since I've been in God's word in such a way as to experience its atmosphere, as to be drawn into its presence, as to tremble at its word. You say, I've been doing my Bible through in a year and I've been trying to have a biblical discipline and I've been studying the Bible. Some of you might even say I've been studying on an academic level and I've been reading the commentaries.

But you say it's been a while, a while since I've been with God in the holy place, with this book. And I'm afraid in these times. And I want to be in a place where this book becomes my courage again, and my strength again, and my direction again, and my hope again, and my defense against sin, and my defense against the devil.

I want to be with God in the holy place. When I read this book, I want to commune with Him. I want to befriend Him.

I want to get back there. You know what that is? That's like Daniel simply preparing his heart for this thing to happen. If you want to do that this afternoon, would you join me here in the front of this auditorium? We'll pray together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And this messenger will come to you in Jesus' name. Amen. You know the Bible says at a certain point, it said, I send my messenger before your face who will prepare the way of the Lord.

And now we know in the Bible that that speaks directly of John the Baptist, but by way of parallel, the Bible has that effect as well. It opens our heart to God. It opens our heart to the mind of God.

It reminds us how to worship Him, how to love Him, how to bless Him. We can't do without this book. We don't do it for legalistic reasons.

We do it for love. We love this book. And we love the God that it reveals to us.

This book is going to tell you truths that the devil cannot gainsay. The devil cannot break down. This book is going to reinforce truth to you and reinforce it and reinforce it.

It's going to be a wall around you. It's going to be a fortress. It's going to protect you.

It's going to purify. It's going to cleanse. It's going to strengthen.

It's going to encourage. It is going to inform. This book is God's book.

It's His word. It's going to help you and me as well. Let's pray.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we thank you so, so much. We thank you for your holy book. We thank you for that messenger that comes to us every day, morning by morning.

We could say along with Jeremiah, even in the pit of lamentation, morning by morning, new mercies I see. Great is your faithfulness. Great is your faithfulness.

Thank you, God, for reminding us of your covenant love, your covenant loyalty, your tender mercies. Every time we open this book, we might not feel this way and that way. Every time we read it, but Lord, we know you're doing something in the heavenlies.

Even as the angel said to Daniel, you were waiting, you were wondering, but I was working. Something was happening. God, in Jesus' holy name, we pray against every lie of the devil, and we don't simply act in a way that says we don't want to hear the lies.

We say, God, we want to hear the truth. We want your word to overpower every lie. We want your truth to eclipse every deception.

We want your glory to manifest himself in our life every day in such a way that there is no room for the lie of the devil. As the light is shown in our hearts, there is no room for darkness. God, in Jesus' name, I pray against fear in this house.

Oh, God, and I pray peace, peace from God that passes all understanding, the peace of knowing that we are well loved. Father, I thank you for my brothers and my sisters. Lord, I thank you, thank you, thank you for each one.

Pray your hand of blessing. Oh, Jesus, help us to open this book and help this book to open us. We thank you.

We love you. We bless you in Jesus' name. Amen.

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