

PATIENCE (FROM DANIEL 10)

Read [Daniel 10:1-21](#)

Americans aren't big on patience. We've grown used to getting things fast and easy. An article in the internet chronicled how we've become used to getting things quicker and quicker. For example:

- We used to have to wait days to get our pictures. Then there was One-Hour Photo. Now there's instant digital.
- We used to have to spend some time in the sun to get a tan. Then came tanning salons. Now there are spray-on tans.
- The average news story is only four sentences.

In European history there was such a thing as the Hundred Years War. When the latest War in Iraq had gone longer than a week, TV pundits were already wondering what had gone wrong.

In 1893, Cream of Wheat took 15 minutes to prepare, and it was considered a fast breakfast for the time. By 1939, Cream of Wheat was down to 5 minutes to prepare. Today it's down to 30 seconds.

Even the old-fashioned world of classical music has changed. In Beethoven's time, a classical music concert could last 6 hours. Even 15 years ago, the standard concert was 2 hours long. Today's music lovers get restless if a program exceeds 90 minutes.

We have grown accustomed to instant cash from ATMs, microwave ovens, overnight delivery from across the country, fast cars, fast planes, fast computers, broadband Internet, and drive-through everything—from restaurants to banks to drugstores to Starbucks. Patience is not our strong suit. We like things fast and easy.

Yet there are going to be times when we need to have patience, even in our modern society. A Chicago Tribune article estimated that the amount of time spent sitting at stoplights in a lifetime was six months! And the Texas Transportation Institute said the average American will spend about 50 hours per year in gridlock—trapped in traffic, bumper to bumper. We still need patience in our modern world.

And then there are those life moments when nothing will do but a patient sigh. A first grade teacher had such a moment when she had finished helping the last of her students, 32 in all, put on their galoshes. The last little girl said, "You know what, teacher? These aren't my galoshes." The teacher paused a moment, then removed one galosh and then the other from the girl's feet. The girl said, "They're my sisters, and she lets me wear them." The teacher paused another moment, breathed deeply, and put the galoshes back on the girl's feet.

We may not be big on it, but there are times when patience is a necessity.

That is true when it comes to prayer, too. We have seen in this chapter that God promises to see and reward us when we come to a *meeting place* with him in prayer, and that one of those rewards is answered prayer. God promised the reward would come, but he didn't promise when it would appear. It may appear immediately, it may appear a few days or weeks later, or it may appear much later. When the answer is delayed, we have a need for patience.

One of the things that will help us wait patiently is to realize that though the answer may not have appeared yet, it's already been sent. We see this remarkable truth in a story from the prophet Daniel's life. Daniel was one of the Israelites taken to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar when he attacked and eventually overthrew Judah and Jerusalem. After being in exile a long time, Daniel began to pray for the return of his people to Jerusalem and for the future of his fallen nation. One day he had a vision and a heavenly messenger appeared to him and said:

“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.”

DANIEL 10:12 (emphasis added)

Notice that the heavenly messenger (who seems to be the angel Gabriel) told Daniel that his words of prayer had been heard ***“Since the first day ... and I have come in response to them.”*** God had heard Daniel's prayer and sent the answer from the moment Daniel prayed, but the angel was only now arriving with the answer (and it was 23 days later, as we'll see in a moment).

Isn't that an encouraging truth? Perhaps you've presented a request to God, and nothing has happened. The truth is nothing you've *seen* has happened. An answer, perhaps in the person of an angel, has been sent.

Why the delay then? One possible reason is spiritual warfare. Look at the reason Gabriel gave Daniel for his delay:

“But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.”

DANIEL 10:13

Gabriel wasn't delayed by a human prince. The prince he ran into was in the spiritual realm, some kind of evil spirit who was seeking to exert influence in the ***“Persian kingdom”*** to hinder the return of the Jews to their land. Gabriel, the messenger angel (remember, he was the one who came with the news of Jesus' birth to Mary), had to have help from ***“Michael,”*** the warrior angel, to get through this demonic force. There was no doubt that he would get through, for he had been sent by God, but it did take time for him to get through, and help from Michael. Spiritual warfare delayed the answer to Daniel.

You might wonder how demons could possibly put up a meaningful fight against the angels of Almighty God. It's not because demons are anywhere near as strong, but it's

because God allows demons to work in a region or situation where people are in agreement with them, whether they know it or not. God gave the earth to men—as I'll discuss in detail later on—and he's never taken it back. Generally speaking, he requires our agreement to work in the world; that's the purpose of prayer.

Spiritual warfare may have delayed the answer to your prayer. If so, it's not that there's any doubt the answer will come. It's just that there's a spiritual process that has to be worked out first—things in the background, which perhaps you know nothing about, that have to be cleared up.

So if you've met with God, and feel certain that what you've asked for is according to his will, but you've yet to see any results—be patient. You were heard from the moment you prayed, and the answer was sent. It just hasn't appeared yet.

What request have you made to God that you're still waiting on?

Do you feel like this is a situation where the delay might be due to spiritual warfare?

If not spiritual warfare, what might be another reason for the delay?