



Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

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Chapter 10: Preview of Daniel's Final Vision

Chapters 10-12 combined give the context, content, and meaning of Daniel's final vision. In Chapter 10 Daniel sets the stage and offers a preview of what lies ahead.

10:1-3, The Historical Context for the Vision

In the third year of Cyrus: By this time, the first wave of exiles had returned to Jerusalem under the leadership of Ezra (Ezra 1-2). Daniel was in his mid-80's by this time.

The message was true, but the appointed time was long: Daniel is telling the people of God that a time of prolonged persecution and testing was in store for them.

Mourning three full weeks: Some commentators believe that Daniel was in mourning because so few Jews had returned with Ezra from exile. Others believe it was because it is revealed to Daniel that Ezra faced tremendous opposition in his efforts to rebuild the temple. Either way, Daniel was fervent to the point of mourning in his devotional life.

It's likely that Daniel did not himself return to Jerusalem with Ezra's band of exiles due to his advanced age; he would not be able to help in the ways that Ezra would need. Daniel could serve the Jewish people better from his high governmental position and by exerting influence from that position.

I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth: Daniel did not fast for three full weeks, which might have been dangerous for him at this age, but he definitely practiced a form of self-denial in his dietary practices.

10:4-7, Daniel Sees a Glorious Man by the Tigris River

A certain man clothed in linen: Some commentators say this is actually Jesus, given that the description is remarkably like John's vision of Him in Revelation 1:12-16:

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

Others think that this "man clothed in linen" is an unnamed angel of high rank, because Jesus would not require the "help" of another angel, which we'll read about later in this section about the "Prince"/archangel Michael. However, we also read about the king of Persia resisting this Man, so this very likely is a theophany of Christ.

I, Daniel, alone saw the vision: This alone shows that this was a supernatural vision. Daniel's companions could not understand what was happening, much like when Jesus appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus. Saul's companions heard a voice, but were left speechless.

10:8-9, Daniel's Reaction to the Vision of the Man

No strength remained in me: Daniel was pretty much undone by this vision of the glorious man. Daniel's experience shows us that even the holiest of men fall short before the glory of God.

10:10-14, The Man Introduces Himself to Daniel

O Daniel, man greatly loved: This was the second time Daniel was called "greatly loved" (see Daniel 9:23). Each time it was in relation to Daniel's being favored with a great and significant revelation of the future. And both times it was a comfort to Daniel, who was, to put it in modern terms, freaking out!

From the first day... your words were heard: We recall from Chapter 9 that God responded to Daniel's prayer the very moment he made his request known, before he was even finished with his prayer. This time Daniel had been in an attitude of serious prayer for three weeks.

I have come because of your words: This is one of many reminders in the Book of Daniel that prayer really does matter. It isn't merely a therapeutic psychological exercise for the one who prays. We might not understand exactly how it works, but we have assurances from God that He hears us, and sometimes responds to our need even before we ask.

The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me: A great spiritual battle is described here. Since this particular "prince" was opposed to this messenger to Daniel, we know this Persian prince was an evil force, because he opposed the word of God coming to Daniel, and stood against the angelic messenger, which may have been Christ Himself.

The word "prince" often refers to a human being in the normal line of royal succession, but it also carries the idea of a ruler or authority that may transcend the earthly. We know from the New Testament (Ephesians 1:21, Ephesians 6:12, Colossians 1:16, Colossians 2:15) that there are organized angelic ranks, and that they seem to include both faithful angels and fallen angels. And of course, Jesus referred to Satan as the "prince of this world" (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11).

Withstood me twenty-one days: Interesting! Daniel's prayer was 3 weeks, and here he is told that the angel was dispatched immediately, but the answer to his prayer was delayed by the prince of the kingdom of Persia, until the ranks of God, with the help of the archangel Michael, prevailed.

This leads me to wonder if at times our requests for spiritual well-being – for ourselves or for others, our intercessory prayers for healing, and especially our prayers for the conversion of the lost, instigates angelic battles that we are unable to perceive.

Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me: Here we see the archangel Michael referred to as a "prince". It seems he's a warrior for God, as in other passages Michael is associated with the battle between good angels and evil angels (Revelation 12, Jude 9).

Still, the idea that Michael "came to help me" does make us wonder if this messenger sent to Daniel was indeed Jesus, or just another angel. It's true that Jesus received assistance from angels as incarnate man (Mark 1:13, Luke 22:43), but it's hard to understand Him needing angelic help before His incarnation.

Now I have come: God allowed this conflict because He had a purpose for it. Perhaps God used the 3-week delay to develop Daniel – even at his advanced age – into a man of persistent prayer. This is a matter of pious speculation.

What will happen to your people in the latter days: The vision to be revealed in Chapters 11 and 12 will be focused on the “latter days”, though it also relates to the much closer time of the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

10:15-19, Daniel is Strengthened

Because of the vision my sorrows have overwhelmed me: The Hebrew for “sorrows” (צַרַי, “ṣî-ray”) communicates the thought of anguish, or twisting or writhing pain. It is used in several passages to describe labor pains in childbirth. Daniel was so severely affected by this vision that he was immobilized; he could hardly deal with prophetic complexities at this point.

One having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me: This appears to be a new helper in the story. God touches Daniel, but through an intermediary. This one’s appearance is nothing like that of the “man clothed in linen.” But his message is one of strengthening and encouragement, and it works!

10:20-21 (+11:1), The Angel Introduces the Vision

Now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia: Daniel was about to receive the answer to his prayer, but the battle was not over for his heavenly messenger. First, he must battle the prince of Persia, and then the prince of Greece. God was indeed watching out for Israel, working behind the scenes in the spiritual realm. A spiritual battle was being waged that mankind was completely unaware of, were it not for this message to Daniel.

There is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince: Michael is an angelic guardian of Israel, battling against the demonic prince of Persia, or any other force who opposes God’s people. In earthly terms, Israel seemed paltry, inconsequential, and weak. But in the heavens, Israel had the mightiest army waging battle on their behalf.