

I. Daniel's Final Vision – Part 1 (Daniel 10:1-21)

A. Introduction

- To this point, Daniel had received three separate visions (chapter 7 – vision of the four beasts; chapter 8 – vision of the ram and goat; chapter 9 – vision of the 70 weeks).
- Chapters 10-12 are one unit detailing the final vision Daniel received, the last of his predictive revelations.
- Chapter 10 introduces the vision and serves as a preparation for it; in fact, it takes all of chapter 10 to properly introduce the contents of the vision.
- Chapter 11 contains the prophecy and is comprised of 2 sections: 1) 11:2-35 deals with the immediate future for Daniel, from Darius to Antiochus; 2) 11:36-12:4 deals with the far future, the times just prior to the Second Coming of Christ.
- Chapter 12 adds a final message and revelation.
- The theme of this vision fits the theme of the book: to give Israel hope in the midst of their bondage, to remind them that God has not forgotten them, and to instruct them that, though there will be a time of the Gentile dominion over Israel, it will end in the glorious coming of Messiah's earthly kingdom.
- Although difficult times lie ahead for Israel, Messiah will come to establish His earthly kingdom.
- This vision stretches in time from Daniel's day until the Great Tribulation, the return of Christ, and the coming of the kingdom of God.
- It contains the sweep of human history from Daniel to the Second Coming of Christ.
- What makes this section unique is that it provides greater details about the Tribulation than any other previous prophecy.
- This vision also provides a phenomenal peek into the heavenlies and the spiritual forces that stand behind human conflict.
- Behind what is played out on the stage of human existence, there is another realm operating.
- There are spiritual forces at work, a spiritual warfare that takes place on a plane that is usually not detected by those on earth.
- There is a Satanic, demonic realm that is operating, trying to thwart God's purposes.
- There are adversaries that are human, but behind them is supernatural evil.
- The believer's greatest enemy is not against the world they can see, but against the world they cannot see.
- Believer's foes are not primarily visible but invisible.
- These chapters provide a glimpse into that supernatural conflict that is taking place behind the scenes of human existence.

B. Expositional Notes

Daniel 10:1 ~ In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar; and the message was true and one of great conflict, but he understood the message and had an understanding of the vision.

- This final vision to Daniel occurred in the “third year of Cyrus king of Persia.”
- Since Cyrus came to power in 539 BC, the year is 537-536 BC, when Daniel was around 84 years old (still alive and faithfully serving the Lord).
- It had been about two years since Daniel had received the prophecy of the seventy weeks.
- Daniel prayed in chapter 9 that God would let His people return to the land, a request made in the “first year of Darius” (Dan 9:1).
- It was in that same year that God granted Daniel the answer to his prayer as it was in the first year of Cyrus that God moved Cyrus to issue a decree to return to the land (cf. Ezra 1:1-3).
- Thus, Cyrus issued the decree for Israel to return to the land in 539 BC.
- The vision in Daniel 10-12 occurred 2-3 years later (“in the third year of Cyrus”) and Daniel was still in Babylon.
- Daniel did not go back to Israel with the others who returned from the exile.
- Some have suggested that it was because he was quite old, which is likely.
- But it may also be that Daniel was discouraged by the few people who actually went back to Israel after Cyrus’ decree.
- Ezra 1-2 indicates that only 42,360 people went back which amounted to only a fraction of the Jewish people in Babylon.
- It is possible that Daniel remained in Babylon because he had a passion to see his people forsake Babylon and return to their country.
- Thus, perhaps he stayed because he “had important ministries to perform on behalf of that remnant in the Medo-Persian government center in Babylon.”¹⁹⁶
- The message Daniel received (described in chapter 11) was “true.”
- Perhaps Daniel stated the truthfulness of this vision because it was so startling and astounding, so humanly unbelievable.
- It was also a message “of great conflict,” one that would great warfare and incredible suffering.
- The word “conflict” (*saba*) is often used to refer to “an army” or “a host of angels” or “the warfare itself in which an army engages.”
- Daniel learned that God’s people Israel would be involved in many conflicts in the future.
- This was a prophecy about conflict and warfare involving holy angels and demons and human conflicts on earth from Daniel’s time to the future.

¹⁹⁶ Whitcomb 1985: 136.

- This revelation shattered any hope Daniel might have had that Israel would enjoy her new freedom and peace for long.
- “Daniel had already learned of eschatological conflicts in store for his people (7:21, 25; 8:24-25; 9:27) and of persecutions at the hand of the little horn of the third kingdom even before the time of the end (8:10-14). But now he was to learn of great angelic conflicts involving Israel and the nations and of seemingly endless struggles between kings of the north and south, also involving Israel.”¹⁹⁷

Daniel 10:2-3 ~ In those days, I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks. 3 I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all until the entire three weeks were completed.

- Although Daniel understood the message (vs. 1), it hit him hard knowing that, although their captivity was over, they would still face great conflicts.
- Daniel’s response to this vision was similar to his response to the vision in chapter 8 (cf. Dan 8:27).
- He fasted for “three entire weeks” (lit. “three sevens of days” or “three weeks of days”).
- Daniel likely added the word for “days” to distinguish it from the “week” of years in chapter 9.
- During this time, he ate no “tasty food” (lit. “the bread of pleasure,” referring to the king’s delicacies), ate no “meat,” and did not allow any “wine to enter [his] mouth.”
- Nor did he “use any ointment,” likely referring to oil that was used in that day to keep the skin soft.
- “Anointing the body with oil was a common practice among the Jews and other ancient peoples, its purpose being to soothe and refresh the skin and to protect against the heat.”¹⁹⁸
- These were all marks of a man in mourning who was given over to extended and focused prayer.
- Why was Daniel driven to such intense prayer and fasting?
- First, he was trying to understand the future which awaited his people.
- Second, he may have been disturbed by reports coming back from Israel of the ongoing and unrelenting opposition the returned exiles had encountered upon their return to the land.
- He was in a spirit of fasting and mourning as he looked to God, again showing the character of Daniel.
- He was a man who was preoccupied with God, concerned for God’s people, and intensely committed to God’s purposes.
- He longed to see God’s people restored and wanted God’s name honored among them.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 136.

¹⁹⁸ Miller 1995: 278.

- “But why does God do it this way? Why does he bring his help through the cumbersome and agonizing process of Daniel’s prayers? Why doesn’t he directly apply heaven’s muscles to Israel’s troubles?...So often...God seems to take the long way round, the time-consuming way...God seems to choose this inefficient way in Daniel 10: he moves his servant to pray for his people, then in response to the sweat and struggle of prayer he begins to bring help to his people...Daniel prayed, and angels went to war.”¹⁹⁹

Daniel 10:4-6 ~ On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I was by the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris, 5 I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen, whose waist was girded with a belt of pure gold of Uphaz. 6 His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult.

- After three weeks of fasting, Daniel was beside the Tigris River in physical presence, not simply in a vision.
- There he was visited by a majestic being.
- The two primary views about the identity of this individual are : 1) A pre-incarnate appearance of Christ; 2) An angel, perhaps Gabriel himself or some other unnamed angel on the same level with Gabriel.
- Those who hold that this person was Christ offer the following arguments:
 1. He appears to have knowledge above that of angels, since they inquire of him for information (Dan 12:6).

Objection: But this could be because he was a higher-ranking angel.
 2. Christ can appear in a vision like a son of man (Dan 7:13-14).

Objection: But so can angels (Dan 8:15, 16; 9:21).
 3. An “angel” who is actually Christ can appear along with angels (cf. Gen 18-19).

Objection: While this is true, it does not prove that the same thing is happening in Daniel 10.
 4. The description of this “man” is very similar to the description of Christ in Ezekiel 1:26-28 and Revelation 1:13-18.
 - “dressed in linen” (vs. 5) – white linen symbolized purity (cf. Dan 11:35; 12:10); it was worn by the priests in the OT (Ex 28:42; Lev 6:10) and by the angels at Christ’s tomb (Matt 28:3; Mark 16:5); saints in heaven also wear white robes (Rev 3:5; 6:11; 7:9).

¹⁹⁹ Davis 2013: 142.

- “whose waist was girded with *a belt of pure gold of Uphaz*” (vs. 5) – possibly a statement of sovereignty and power.
- “His body also *was like beryl*” (vs. 6) - called *tarshish* in the original indicating it may have originated from Spain; also known as chrysolite or topaz or jasper; yellowish in color.
- “his face had the appearance of lightning” (vs. 6) – a reference to its brilliance.
- “his eyes were like flaming torches” (vs. 6) – similar to how Christ is described in Rev 1:14; 19:12; possibly a reference to divine judgment and penetrating insight into all this is impure.
- “his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze” (vs. 6) – may symbolize divine judgment.
- “the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult” (vs. 6) – his voice was like that of the crashing of the surf against the rocks on shore.

Objection: Even angels can be described as having great glory (Rev 18:1).

5. The response of Daniel and his friends (vs. 7-9) was similar to that of Ezekiel’s in Ezekiel 1:28 and John’s in Revelation 1:17.
- Perhaps a better view is that it refers to an angel (possibly Gabriel since he had previously been sent by God to reveal truth to Daniel in Daniel 8:16) for the following reasons:
 1. The man in linen (vs. 5) is likely the angel who spoke to Daniel in vs. 9a, 11-14, 19-21.
 2. If it was Christ, it would be improbable that he was hindered by the prince of Persia and needed the help of the angel Michael (vs. 13).
 3. The fact that the person is giving a message from heaven might point to him being a mighty angel.

Daniel 10:7-9 ~ Now I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, while the men who were with me did not see the vision; nevertheless, a great dread fell on them, and they ran away to hide themselves. 8 So I was left alone and saw this great vision; yet no strength was left in me, for my natural color turned to a deathly pallor, and I retained no strength. 9 But I heard the sound of his words; and as soon as I heard the sound of his words, I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.

- Although only Daniel saw this individual, the others with him sensed something significant had happened.
- In a similar way, only Paul saw Jesus on the road to Damascus but the others with him felt the presence of the Lord, heard His voice, and became speechless (Acts 9:1-7).
- As a result, “a great dread fell on them and they ran away to hide themselves” (vs. 7).

- This encounter left Daniel nearly undone, robbed of his strength, and white as a ghost (vs. 8).
- It also made him like a dead man (vs. 9).

Daniel 10:10-12 ~ Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. 11 He said to me, “O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you.” And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. 12 Then he said to me, “Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words.

- There is debate surrounding the identity of this individual.
- Some suggest that the heavenly being in verses 10-14 is Christ and that the individual mentioned in verses 10-12 is a new person, an interpreting angel.
- However, “[t]he flow of thought in the passage strongly suggests that the one who now speaks to Daniel is the same one Daniel had just heard (“I heard the sound of his words” – twice in verse 9).”²⁰⁰
- “Although it is strange that his name was not given as in the previous two visions (cf. 8:16; 9:21), many scholars identify this angel as Gabriel, a view that probably is correct. Gabriel served as a communicator of God’s messages on several occasions (cf. 8:15-16; 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26-27).”²⁰¹
- The angel spoke to Daniel, comforting him and encouraging him.
- Interestingly, there was a three-week delay in God answering Daniel’s request (cf. vs. 2).
- The angel informed him that from the very beginning of his intercession God had undertaken to answer his prayers and sent the angelic messenger to him (vs. 12).
- Why did it take 21 days for God to respond?

Daniel 10:13-14 ~ “But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. 14 Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future.”

- The angel had been dispatched from heaven to give this message to Daniel but was held up for three weeks.
- He was delayed enroute to bring Daniel the answer to his prayer.
- The “prince of the kingdom of Persia” was likely the demon whose assigned territory was the region of Persia.
- “God has arranged the angelic realm in differing ranks referred to as ‘rule, authority, power, and dominion’ (Eph. 1:21). Gabriel and Michael have been assigned authority

²⁰⁰ Whitcomb 1985: 139.

²⁰¹ Miller 1994: 283.

- over angels who administer God's affairs for the nation Israel (cf. Michael in Dan. 10:21; 12:1; Jude 9). In imitation Satan has also apparently assigned high-ranking demons to positions of authority over each kingdom."²⁰²
- This high-ranking demon was given the area of Persia as his special area to carry out demonic activity.
 - "Persia ruled the world in that day, and Satan would surely have concentrated his personal efforts in this most influential area. If the demon was Satan, it would explain why Michael, one of God's most powerful angels, was needed to fight against him."²⁰³
 - The angel sent to give Daniel this message couldn't do so because he was engaged in a three-week battle.
 - All during Daniel's praying and fasting, a spiritual conflict was underway.
 - This is a peek behind the curtain of human endeavors as this angelic messenger pulls back the curtain and provides a glimpse into the spiritual realm which is in constant conflict.
 - He described a realm where good angels and evil angels are locked in a constant struggle.
 - This shows that Satan has an incredibly clever organization, a network of demons that are behind all of the activities of human history (cf. Eph 6:12).
 - There is a demonic hierarchy, highly structured and well organized to carry out Satan's schemes.
 - So intense was this heavenly battle that this angelic messenger needed some reinforcement from Michael (vs. 13).
 - Michael appears to be the most powerful of the holy angels (Jude 9 ~ archangel; cf. Rev 12:7) and his assistance was needed.
 - Michael is only referred to three times in the OT, all three of those times coming in Daniel (10:13, 21; 12:1).
 - He was assigned by God to be Israel's prince and protector (cf. Dan 10:21; 12:1).
 - "The implications of these statements are clear. Israel has a mighty angelic supporter in the heavenly realm. Therefore, regardless of Israel's political, military, and economic weaknesses, its existence is assured because no earthly power can resist their great prince."²⁰⁴
 - Arguing that the person Michael helped was actually a pre-incarnate Christ, Whitcomb observes: "Does the Son of God need the help of angels to accomplish His purposes on earth? In His nonglorified state, following His temptation by Satan, 'angels came and began to minister to Him' (Matt. 4:11). At Gethsemane, He asked: 'Do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve

²⁰² J. Dwight Pentecost in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* 1985: 1366.

²⁰³ Miller 1994: 285.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 285.

legions of angels?’ (Matt. 26:53). Thus, there have been times when the Son of God has chosen to use the ‘help’ of angels. Michael’s ‘help’ in defeating Satan’s forces will once again be used during the seventieth week (see Rev. 12:7-9).²⁰⁵

- This shows what is taking place behind the scenes all the time.
- In fact, in verse 20, the angelic messenger indicated that he needed to return to the fight.
- The conflict in the spiritual realm is a perpetual conflict, revealing that a heavenly battle rages continuously.
- This reveals the fact that the ultimate power struggle is fought in a realm which most people know nothing about.
- The primary power struggles in the universe are not between earthly nations or opposing political parties or world religions.
- Rather, the ultimate power struggle occurs between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness.
- Throughout all of human history Satan's network of demons have been behind the scenes, endeavoring to do all they can to foil the plan of God.
- “The teaching seems to be that unseen evil powers influence and control the kingdoms and governments of this world in order to inflict harm and havoc on the people of God. There is what we see on the surface, but then there is this whole unseen arena; an invisible war is going on behind the ‘seens.’”²⁰⁶
- Abraham Kuyper: “If once the curtain were pulled back, and the spiritual world behind it came to view, it would expose to our spiritual vision a struggle so intense, so convulsive, sweeping everything within its range, that the fiercest battle ever fought on earth would seem, by comparison, a mere game. Not here, but up there – that is where the real conflict is waged. Our earthly struggle drones in its backlash.”²⁰⁷
- Since believers may be caught up in a spiritual conflict they may likely be completely unaware of, it is critical for them to have their spiritual armor on (cf. Eph 6:10-18).
- And it is essential that they confront such spiritual warfare with weapons appropriate for such conflict (cf. 2 Cor 10:3-5).
- Despite the delay, the angel arrived to bring a message to Daniel concerning the future of Israel (vs. 14).
- Although Daniel was praying and thinking mainly about days in Israel’s near future, the angel brought him news about their days far ahead, “the latter days...the days yet future” (vs. 14).
- The vision and its message pertained to the future that spanned from the time of Daniel through to the arrival of Antichrist in the Tribulation and to the 2nd coming of Christ.

²⁰⁵ Whitcomb 1985: 141.

²⁰⁶ Davis 2013: 146.

²⁰⁷ Quoted in Ferguson 1988: 199.

- It was a revelation concerning the warfare (cf. Dan 10:1) between Israel and her neighbors until Israel is given peace by the coming Prince of peace.
- The vision of chapter 11 contains the most detailed prophetic revelation in the Book of Daniel concerning Israel's future.
- In this sense, Daniel got a whole lot more than he originally asked for, namely a description of the suffering Israel would face in the near future (under Antiochus Epiphanes) and the far future (at the hands of Antichrist in the Tribulation).
- Although it must have been hard for him to hear about all the suffering they would experience, it must have been a joy at the same time to know that, in the end, the power of God would triumph and Israel would be exalted as a nation.

Daniel 10:15-19 ~ When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. 16 And behold, one who resembled a human being was touching my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke and said to him who was standing before me, "O my lord, as a result of the vision anguish has come upon me, and I have retained no strength. 17 For how can such a servant of my lord talk with such as my lord? As for me, there remains just now no strength in me, nor has any breath been left in me." 18 Then this one with human appearance touched me again and strengthened me. 19 He said, "O man of high esteem, do not be afraid. Peace be with you; take courage and be courageous!" Now as soon as he spoke to me, I received strength and said, "May my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."

- Daniel had been weakened by the appearance of the angelic messenger (vs. 8) but now he was also overwhelmed at learning of the conflict in the heavenlies that had delayed the answer to his prayer (vs. 15).
- Additionally, he was overcome with anguish (vs. 16) upon learning of the content of the vision.
- As a result, he retained "no strength" (vs. 16-17) and was left gasping for breath (vs. 17).
- He was distraught over what he had heard and was traumatized by the divine revelation.
- The identity of the messenger, the one who resembled a human (vs. 16, 18), is either the same one who had previously talked to him or a different one.
- In his weakness, God provided Daniel the strength he was in need of (vs. 18-19).
- He was strengthened physically and emotionally as he was given the stamina and resources to be able to receive the details of the message.

Daniel 10:20-21 ~ Then he said, "Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come. 21 However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince."

- The angelic messenger stated that he would return to "fight against the prince of Persia" because "the prince of Greece is about to come" (vs. 20).
- These princes were demons, Satan's emissaries who had been assigned to nations to oppose godly forces (cf. Dan 11:2 where they are both discussed in detail).

- “Even though an initial victory had been won against the archangelic demon prince of Persia..., the divine/demonic struggle would continue, presumably throughout the two hundred years of Medo-Persian history, down to the time of Alexander the Great, when the demon prince of Greece would be confronted on behalf of Israel. Christ our Lord defeated Satan at His first coming (John 12:31; Heb 2:14), but in another sense the divine conflict against him still continues (Eph 6:12-13). ‘We get a rare glimpse behind the scene of world history. There are spiritual forces at work that are far in excess of what men who disregard revelation would suppose. They struggle behind the struggles that are written on the pages of history.’”²⁰⁸
- “the writing of truth” is likely a record of the truth of God in general, contained within the Word of God.
- “The ‘Book of Truth’ figuratively refers to God’s plan for Israel and the world, not merely the revelation entrusted to Daniel.”²⁰⁹
- The angelic messenger was prepared to inform Daniel about God’s plans for Israel under Persia and Greece (Dan 11:2–35), in the Tribulation (Dan 11:36–45), and in the Millennium (Dan 12:1–4).
- The stage is set for the great revelation to follow.

C. Theology Notes

1. The Reality of Angels and Demons

- “From this passage several important facts are evident concerning angels: 1) angels are real; 2) there are good and evil angels; 3) angels can influence the affairs of human beings. Particularly this passage teaches that angels inspire human governments and their leaders. Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who was described in chap. 8 (also chap. 11), was certainly encouraged by demonic forces in his attempt to eradicate the Jewish religion. Antichrist, depicted in chaps. 7; 9; and 11 of this book, also will be satanically inspired (cf. 2 Thess 2:9; Rev 13:2). In Daniel’s day Persia ruled the earth. Satan would naturally have attempted to influence the decisions made by the Persian government because policies made there would affect the world. Today Satan continues his attempts to sway earthly powers, and he focuses his attention on the nations of the world with the most influence. On the other hand, Dan 10:13, 20 and 11:1 demonstrate the positive activity of holy angels on governments. 4) There is an invisible, spiritual warfare being waged that involves angels and believers...5) God’s angels act on behalf of the saints. Here they are instrumental in delivering to Daniel a message from God. Believers probably would be surprised to learn of the many acts performed for them (e.g. protection) by the Lord’s angels.”²¹⁰

²⁰⁸ Whitcomb 1985: 143.

²⁰⁹ Miller 1994: 289.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 286.

D. Preaching Helps

1. Todd's Outline:

The Historical Setting (vs. 1-3)

The Heavenly Manifestation (vs. 4-9)

The Angelic Messenger (vs. 10-14)

The Divine Enablement (vs. 15-21)