

The Book of Daniel⁵¹

Lesson 10

Daniel Chapter 10

The Lord and Israel's Future 533 BC

Shortly after the lion's den event, Darius dies and Cyrus arrives in Babylon to issue the decree to let all the Jewish exiles return home to the Southern Kingdom, but not all return. Daniel stays in Babylon with those who decide to remain in the area, holding the governmental position granted him by Darius. Within the year, Daniel leaves office, never to serve again. In the third year of Cyrus' reign in the new empire, a messenger arrives in Babylon to help Daniel understand a vision.

Daniel's Vision

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.

Cyrus became the king of Persia in 560 BC, just a year after Nebuchadnezzar's death and broke away from the Babylonian Empire. He overthrew the Medes in 550 BC and Lydia some time thereafter, taking them away from the Babylonians. Finally, in 536 BC he conquered the Babylonian Empire and ushered in the Medo-Persian Empire. The contents of Daniel 10 occur in the third year of the new Medo-Persian Empire in 533 BC. The first verse simply states that the message delivered to Daniel is true and one of great conflict. Although it will frighten him greatly, Daniel understands the vision completely.

Daniel's Mourning

Daniel ^{10:2} In those days I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks. ^{10:3} 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.

Prior to the arrival of the messenger, Daniel had grieved for three weeks, eating only what was necessary to keep away the hunger pains. Nothing was specially prepared for a person of his stature. Daniel did not drink any of the luxurious wines at his disposal, nor did he use expensive perfumes or scented oils. Why did Daniel grieve for three weeks? The Scriptures do not tell us thus far.

Daniel's Description

Daniel ^{10:4} And on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I was by the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris, ^{10:5} 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. ^{10:6} His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms

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and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult.

Great difficulty arises when trying to determine the exact Gregorian date for the 24th day of the first month. The first month in Daniel's Babylonian calendar and the Hebrew calendar was the month of Nisan, a Babylonian name. Prior to the exile, the Jews called it Aviv, but they became accustomed to the Babylonian name and carried it back to the Promised Land when they returned, retaining it in Jewish life even today when it occurs in the month of March or April on the current Gregorian calendar. It occurs in March or April every year because of the work of the Jewish priest Hillel, who, in 320 AD, inserted an extra month every three years to keep the Hebrew Calendar in sync with the seasons, causing the time of the Passover to occur each year in the same solar season as the original Passover in Egypt. However, in Daniel's day, Nisan moved backward through the seasons because the Hebrew year contained only 354 days rather than 365 1/4; therefore, the first day of each new year fell 11 days before the end of the actual solar year. To determine the Gregorian date for Nisan 24 we must use a close and widely accepted date as an anchor to make our calculations. The closest would be the 9th of Aviv, 586 BC, the day Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem. According to Josephus, the 9th of Aviv occurred on what the Gregorian calendar would call Sunday morning, August IV. Using August IV and counting forward on the Hebrew Calendar for 53 years, we find that the vision occurred on Nisan the 24th or December 31st, 533 BC.

Daniel's short vision pictures an awesome, yet terrifying man. His description of the man closely resembles that of John in Revelation 1:12-15.

And I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the middle of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His breast with a golden girdle. And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire; and His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters.

The similarity between two passages in Scripture, does not guarantee that they represent the same person or story. However, in this case, both Daniel and John speak of the same Person Whom we know as the Lord Jesus.

Daniel's Men

Daniel^{10:7} 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.

The men with Daniel fear the presence of the Lord and run away. A similar reaction will occur when the same Lord approaches Saul of Tarsus and his men on the road to Damascus in Acts 9:7.

And he said, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but rise, and enter the city, and it shall be told you what you must do." And the men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but seeing no one.

Daniel's Reaction

Daniel ^{10:8} 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. ^{10:9} 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. ^{10:10} Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees.

The presence of the Lord strips Daniel of his strength and endurance. With the "sound of his words" in his ears, Daniel falls on his face and enters a stupor. Then the hand of an angel sets him on his hands and knees and gives him strength.

Man's Response

Daniel ^{10:11} And 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.

The angel who has set Daniel on his hands and knees, speaks to him, regarding his value in the sight of the Lord. The sight of the Lord still strikes fear in Daniel.

Man's Response

Daniel ^{10:12} 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.

The angel tells Daniel not to fear the vision of the Lord because the Lord had assigned him to help Daniel understand the vision three weeks before on the first day that Daniel had begun mourning for an understanding from the Lord God. The angel's main assignment rested in Persia where his task included controlling the events of history for the Lord's purposes.

Persia's Prince

Daniel ^{10:13} "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.

The angel that arrived to help Daniel had been on assignment in Persia, trying to guide its king in matters important to the Lord. For 21 days, the angel guided the state of affairs of the Persian king until Michael, one of the top angels in the Lord's organization, arrived to relieve him while he came to fulfill his assignment with Daniel.

Man's Purpose

Daniel ^{10:14} "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 explains the vision of the Lord to Daniel but its fulfillment of the prophecy will not occur until "the latter days" in the future. The vision began like the vision to John on the isle of Patmos. John's vision pertained to what would happen to the Jews in the future just like Daniel's. John reacted to his decision just as Daniel reacted to this vision. But the recorder of Daniel 10 does not reveal the portion of the vision

that explained the future of the Jewish people. Perhaps Daniel saw the same vision that John saw.

Daniel's Anguish

Daniel ^{10:15} And when he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. ^{10:16} 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. ^{10:17} "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."

Evidently, Daniel hears the explanation and it causes him to continue in his grief. He turns his face to the ground and cannot think of a thing to say. The angel has a human form, unlike that of the Man he saw in the vision with the flaming eyes. Nevertheless, the explanation of the vision drains Daniel of his strength and his breath.

Daniel's Strength

Daniel ^{10:18} Then *this* one with human appearance touched me again and strengthened me. ^{10:19} And 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."

The vision of the Lord does not present Him in human form. Instead, he appears with flaming eyes and bronze feet and hands. The one who touches Daniel is an angel who gives him strength. He encourages him, reiterates Daniel's status in the Lord's eyes, and challenges him not to be afraid, to live in peace, to take courage and be courageous. The words of the angel rejuvenate Daniel and he readies himself for the rest of the angel's message.

Angel's Question

Daniel ^{10:20a} Then he said, "Do you understand why I came to you?"

The angel wants to make sure that Daniel understands why the Lord dispatched him to explain the vision. "Do you understand why I came to you?" he asks. Looking back over the text of chapter 9, we find that only Daniel's vision of the Lord has been explained in the Scripture. Many other commentators and preachers have stirred up speculations concerning what the angel came to explain. Some say it concerned the problems Ezra was having when he returned to Jerusalem with the first wave of Jews. Some say it was because Daniel was no longer in a position of authority in the empire because his service had ended when Darius died in the first year of Cyrus' empire according to Daniel 1:21 which says, "And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king."

Taken in context, this angel is there only to explain the vision of the sight of the Lord God that Daniel described and the fate of the Jews in the latter days. Daniel had never seen the Lord personally. In fact, few had seen any part of God before his time. Adam saw Him. Moses and Ezekiel saw Him. Daniel had been given a glimpse of the One he had served and trusted so faithfully all his life. He needed the angel to

give him strength so he could withstand the presence of the Lord and explain Israel's future.

Angel's Departure

Daniel ^{10:20b} 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.

Even though the angel speaks of a single prince of Persia, the angel is speaking of the seat of the king of Persia regardless of who is sitting in that position at any time in the future as will be seen in the visions of Daniel 11 and 12. The Persian Empire will last 201 more years before the prince of Greece, Alexander the Great, will cast it down and establish the Greek Empire. The angel must deal with the present king, Cyrus the Great, and all the future kings of the Persian Empire, guiding them to ensure that the history of the world will occur just as the Lord has prophesied. The angel announces the soon-to-come prince of Greece. For the angel, he is about to come. For mankind, 201 years must pass before Alexander arrives.

Angel's Promise

Daniel ^{10:21} "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 angel must return quickly to fulfill his responsibilities in the history of the kings of Persia; however, he this vision of truth, inscribed in the pages of the Scripture will be fulfilled at the proper time. That truth is inscribed already in the Lord's plan and it cannot be changed. But for now, only two angels have been assigned by the Lord to the task of keeping Persia on track and the second is the angel assigned to protect Daniel, and his name is Michael. All the prophecies of the Scripture concerning the ram and the goat, the statue of Nebuchadnezzar, and the joining of the 10 toes depend on the work of these two angels. However, in 15 years, Daniel will share the vision of truth with Darius I as an encouragement and we will finally know the contents of the second part, yet revealed. No one on earth could ever expect history to fulfill with exacting detail Daniel will share in chapters 11 and 12.