

WARFARE BETWEEN ANGELS

Daniel 10

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

Summary and Historical Background

The last revelation given to Daniel is recorded in chapters 10-12. This revelation covers the same period of history and prophecy as that given in chapter 8, but with much greater detail. Chapter 10 is the introduction to the revelation. It is a lengthy introduction, which indicates the importance of the message. It tells about Daniel's vision of Christ and his encounter with an angel that left him so weak that he could not stand up without help and could barely speak. The angel that brought this message from God in answer to Daniel's prayer, told him his purpose for coming and the difficulties he encountered in coming to him. His lengthy message is found in the next two chapters (11:2-12:4). One of the interesting things that the believer will learn in this lesson is the warfare that is being carried on between the good and evil angels, which affects the decisions and policies of political leaders throughout the world.

GOD'S ANSWER TO DANIEL'S PRAYER

I. Concern of Daniel – 10:1-3

1:1 – “The third year of Cyrus” – this was 536 B.C. This was two years after he had received his last vision that was recorded in chapter 9. Daniel was still in Babylon and had not gone back to Palestine with the Jews under the leadership of Joshua and Zerubbabel (Zech 3-4), due, no doubt, to his responsible position under King Darius, plus the fact of his advanced age, which was in the mid-eighties.

“Daniel . . . Belteshazzar” – Daniel identifies himself by both his Jewish name, “Daniel” and his Gentile name, “Belteshazzar.” He was esteemed highly by both Jews and Gentiles for prophesying the truth and he wanted both groups to know who was giving this prophecy that was so significant to both Jews and Gentiles.

“The thing was true” – this vision was so detailed and profound that he wanted to assure his readers that they could count on every part of it. The fulfillment of this prophecy was amazing and absolutely certain.

“The time appointed was long” – the Hebrew text it simply reads, “a great conflict.” The prophecy was about a great conflict between kings, even between angels, that would extend over an extended period of time. It would even threaten the very existence of Israel.

1:2-3 – “I Daniel was mourning” – his mourning was shown by not eating pleasant food and by not anointing himself. He was troubled by God's revelations regarding Israel's future, so he chastened himself in this way and prayed that he might understand God's plan for Israel (10:12). Some Jews had returned to their homeland, but they were having a great conflict with non-Jews who had repopulated Palestine. Furthermore, serious questions filled his mind about the vision that Gabriel had given him about another destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple that would come after 69 weeks of years, followed by more abominations that would bring another desolation after that (Dan 9:20-27). Added to this, God had told him about two little horns that were going to bring much persecution to the people of God (Daniel 7 and 8). This caused Daniel so much concern that he restricted his diet and prayed to God for answers. This prepared his heart for the amazing vision he was to receive in chapters 11-12.

“Three full weeks” – this expression in the Hebrew is “three weeks of days.” In chapter 9, Daniel spoke about “seventy weeks of years.” The word for “weeks” is the same in both cases, which means “seven.”

II. Communication from God – 10:4-21

A. Vitality for His Mind – 10:4

10:4 – “The first month – this would be the month of Nisan (April), when Daniel chastened himself and prayed for a fresh understanding of God’s ways. Since each month was begun with a joyful celebration of two days, it is not likely that Daniel began his “fast” on these two days, but probably on the following day. Nisan is the month of the Jewish Passover, which would be celebrated on the 14th day, followed by the Feast of Unleavened Bread that was observed from the 15th day to the 21st day. Since the vision came to him on the 24th day of this month, his “fast” for 21 days had taken him through the holy days of Passover and Unleavened Bread, which further prepared his mind for understanding God’s ways. He received this vision by the great river Hiddekel (Tigris River), located about 35 miles east of Babylon.

B. Vision of Christ – 10:5-8

10:5-6 – “A certain man” – this could be Gabriel or another angel of equal rank, but it seems best to identify him as Son of Man, who later revealed Himself in a similar manner to the Apostle John (Rev 1:13-15). The appearance of Christ was impressive. His linen garments suggest the holiness of a priest; His golden girdle, His righteousness and faithfulness (Isa 11:5); His body, the beauty of a precious gem; His face, the brilliance of lightning; His eyes, the penetration of light; His arms and feet, the splendor of bronze; and His voice, the words of great authority. Thus Daniel was prepared to understand the greatness of God and His ways.

10:7-8 – “I Daniel alone saw the vision” – even though other men were with him, only Daniel saw the vision of Christ, but all of them felt a great quaking, which caused the other men to run and hide. This is proof that Daniel had a physical vision of Christ, not a dream. Daniel’s personal encounter with Christ is more evidence of the importance of the message he was about to receive from the angel. His vision of Christ left him physically weak without enough strength to stand on his feet.

C. Voice of Christ – 10:9

10:9 – The powerful words of Christ overwhelmed Daniel and he fell on his face in a deep sleep. John had a similar experience when he saw Christ and heard His voice on the island of Patmos; he fell on his face as dead (Rev 1:17). Even though John had heard Jesus speak to him many times when he lived with Him for more than three years, the glory of His appearance and the authority of His voice overpowered him. So it was for Daniel.

D. Value of an angel – 10:10-21

10:10-11 – “An hand touched me” – this is the hand of an angel, not Christ’s hand. After Daniel had been overcome with the awesome vision of Christ, an angel, probably the one with a message from God, assists him back to his feet. The angel encouraged him by telling him that he was greatly loved.

10:12-13 – Daniel was told not to be afraid by the awesome vision of Christ that he saw before the angel gave him God’s message. Seeing Christ at the same time that he received God’s message from the angel prepared Daniel physically and emotionally to accept the sovereign plan of God for his people. It was a difficult message for Daniel to hear, because it would pose some serious problems for his people,

but the final result would be good. God's answer in chapter 11 gave greater detail to the revelations that were recorded in chapters 8 and 9. These details that were so precise that liberal scholars believe it was written hundreds of years later by someone other than Daniel when these facts had already become history. They deny the foreknowledge of God, which He shared in part with Daniel.

"The prince of the kingdom of Persia" – this "prince" is not a human prince, but an evil angel that Satan had sent to Persia to oppose the work of God. When God immediately sent His angel with a message in answer to Daniel's prayer, this evil angel kept God's angel from bringing His message to Daniel for 21 days. Daniel kept on praying, fasting and waiting for God's answer. This evil angel knew that any message from God for Daniel would be a threat to his work for Satan in Persia. He knew Daniel prospered in the government of Babylon (10:28). So this evil angel did not want Daniel to receive this message that the good angel was bringing to him from God.

"Michael" – he is one of God's "chief princes." He has been assigned by God to protect Israel (cf. 10:21; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7). He came to free this messenger from the evil angel that held him captive in Persia. He was successful so Daniel finally received God's message.

10:14 – "Understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days" – this is the purpose of the angel's mission. He had come to help Daniel understand Israel's future. The message basically concerned the plight of the Jews in connection with events regarding the coming of the Messiah in the "latter days." The first reference to the "latter days" is given in Daniel 2:28, where it was stated that this term referred specifically to God's dealing with man in the time of the Messiah. "Latter days" is used 14 times in the Old Testament. It refers to the first and second comings of Christ, even though the people only knew of one coming who lived before Christ came the first time. "The time of the end" in Daniel 11:40 most likely refers to the Tribulation and Millennial Kingdom.

"For yet the vision is for many days" – this could simply be translated "because the vision concerns days yet to be" (i.e., the future). The underlying idea pertains to God's dealings with Israel sometime after the days of Daniel. The first part of God's message refers to the days before the first coming of Christ (11:2-35) and the second part of God's message refers to the days before the second coming of Christ (11:36-12:4).

10:15-19 – After the angel talked to him, Daniel lost his strength again. No doubt the vision was a strain on his emotional system along with the physical strain of his sorrow and fasting for 21 days. The heavenly messenger strengthened him for the third time.

10:20-21 – Basically, the angel said three things to Daniel in these verses. First, he asked Daniel if he understood the reason for his coming (as explained in verse 14). Second, he told Daniel that he must once again return to strive with the prince of Persia, that is, the evil angel that Satan had assigned to corrupt the Persian government and turn it against God. Then he was to strive against the prince of Greece who would try to corrupt that government when it would conquer and replace Persia. So this angel had a long term assignment, because these two empires ruled that part of the world for almost 500 years. The only one helping him in this conflict was Michael, the prince for Israel. Third, he assured Daniel that he would reveal to him the truth of the existing plan of God in the "scripture". The scripture includes the thoughts and plans of God. The Old Testament is the scripture (the writing) that God gave to the Jews, but there was more scripture that He did not reveal to them. The New Testament is the scripture which God gave to the Church. If God so desires He will give more scripture to future generations. The visions that Daniel received are revelations that God gave to Daniel to write in a scroll so it could be preserved for future generations. Where there is no vision, that is, no revelation from God, the people perish.

III. Confirmation of Darius the Mede – 11:1

This angel informed Daniel that he stood with Darius the Mede and strengthened him, when he became the king of Babylon. This was the time when Daniel was chosen to be one of three presidents to help Darius with the rule of Babylon, but then he decided to make Daniel the number one president. The evil angel caused jealousy to arise in the hearts of other two presidents and they stirred up many of the other government leaders against Daniel. They devised a plot to have Daniel thrown in the lion's den to be killed. This angel may have been the one that protected Daniel by shutting the mouths of the lions (6:22). When the plot of the jealous men failed, Darius had them thrown into the lion's den where they were executed. Then Daniel remained to prosper during the reign of Darius the Mede (6:24-28). It is likely that the work of this angel made Persia a country that was favorable toward the Jews. Cyrus made a decree to let the Jews return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple of God (Ezra 5:13). The evil angel stirred up God's enemies to stop the work on the Temple. The good angel caused Darius the Persian king to make a decree that forced the enemies of God to stop hindering them from building the Temple to God or they would be executed (Ezra 6:6-12). Xerxes married Esther who later asked her husband to reverse Haman's decree to destroy all Jews in Persia. Xerxes could not reverse a Persian decree, but he had Haman executed and appointed Mordecai to take his official position in government. Mordecai made a decree which allowed the Jews to defend themselves and many citizens of Persia helped the Jews destroy their enemies. Artaxerxes issued a decree for the walls of Jerusalem to be built and released Nehemiah from being his cupbearer to supervise the building of the walls. Nehemiah provided the necessary leadership for the Jews to enable them to build the walls in 52 days against much opposition from their enemies. Since this angel said he was assigned to war against the evil angel that opposed the work of God in Persia, it seems that these accomplishments were the result of this angel's work. Then he said he would strive against the prince of Greece, which conquered Persia and ruled that part of the world for almost 300 years.