

Daniel Chapter Ten

Daniel 10-12 forms one, final connected vision – the fourth given to Daniel. The vision comprises a *Prologue* (10.1-11.1) and *Epilogue* (12.5-13) which give tantalising glimpses of the Man clothed in linen. The main sections give an overview of the history of Israel from the Persian period until the coming of the kingdom of God. Note the *near* future from Darius to Antiochus (11.2-35) and *far* future of the tribulation end times (11.36-12.4). More specifically, the vision shows the conquest of *Medo-Persia* and rise of *Greece* (11.2-3); the decline of *Greece* and reign of *Antiochus Epiphanes* (11.4-35); and the rise and rule of the ‘wilful king’ in the day of Jacob’s troubles (11.36-12.3). The length of the prologue (22 verses, including 11.1) and time devoted to the special exercise of Daniel’s soul (21 days) underscore the importance of this final vision. *MacArthur: We dawdle around with petty little things while God is trying to give us a glimpse of monumental, eternal truth. You know, some Christians, they don’t really ever get into their own study of the Bible, they piddle around with churchianity and never ever plumb the depths.*

The Mourning of Daniel [vv.1-3]

v.1: This final vision was given to Daniel in the *third* year of Cyrus (536BC) when he was approximately 87 years of age. At this time a ‘thing was revealed’ (word of revelation) and received by Daniel, which thing was ‘true’ – a necessary affirmation given the astounding nature of the prophecy. The ‘time appointed was long’ is better translated ‘even a great warfare’ (RV) or ‘concerned a great war’ (NET). The prophecy concerns warfare in *both* the heavenly and earthly spheres, resulting in suffering and affliction for the people of God. *Paisley: Three great warfares are found in these verses. 1. The Warfare of the Angelic Princes (10). 2. Warfare between Successive Kings of North and South (11). 3. Warfare against Israel (12).* On this occasion, the vision (or ‘appearance’, cf. v.6) clarified some important questions that had arisen in Daniel’s mind (cp. 7.28; 8.27). **v.2:** Daniel had been ‘mourning’ (lamenting) for *three* weeks (the word ‘days’ is appended in Hebrew to contrast the seventy weeks of *years*, 9.24-25). The text does not tell us the reason for Daniel’s sorrow. Certainly he desired to understand more of the prophecies he had already received (v.12), but there was another concern. Only 42,360 exiles (out of a likely several million) had returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt the altar (Ezra 3.1-7). They had become sufficiently paganised as to have little or no desire to return! At this particular time (April, 536BC) the temple foundation was laid (Ezra 3.12) amidst difficult circumstances (Ezra 4.1, 4). Daniel was clearly deeply anxious over the condition and state of God’s people, temple and work (cf. Romans 10.1). Are we? **v.3:** Such was Daniel’s concern and diligence in prayer for his people that he starved the flesh. Eating ‘no pleasant bread’ (bread of desire) is a refraining from delicacies, or pleasant food. He did not forego *all* food but took basic nourishment and water. Beware! Early habits die hard. Daniel had mastery over his belly from the very beginning (1.8). Neither did he ‘anoint’ himself with oil (a symbol of joy, Proverbs 27.9) – used as a skin-care product (protection from the sun) and fragrance. There is nothing wrong with these things in themselves, but there could be no trifling with trivialities when higher issues were at stake (Allen). Not wearing deodorant or fasting does not secure favour with God – it was Daniel’s burdened attitude of heart that drew His blessing. Daniel is not alone in his compassion for God’s people. Others wept until they could weep no more (cp. Jeremiah 9.1-2; 10.19; 23.9; Matthew 23.37-39). *Bell: Are we characterised by continuous, unceasing, unremitted seeking of blessing upon the people of God?*

The Man Clothed in Linen [vv.4-9]

v.4: The ‘first month’ was the month Nisan. Daniel had humbled himself before God for 21 days since the *third* of Nisan (after the new moon ceremony, cf. 1 Samuel 20.18, 27), right through the celebration of Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread (14-21 Nisan). Perhaps the season of remembrance had stirred him to prayer. Daniel was by the river ‘Hiddekel’ (Tigris) which passed a mere twenty miles from the city of Babylon. This was the same river that flowed from Eden (Genesis 2.14) and is thus associated with the *beginning* and *end* (revealed in this vision) of divine purpose on earth. We do not know why Daniel did not travel with the exiles back to Jerusalem. His age may have precluded the 600-mile trip, and he was still a man of great influence in the kingdom of Darius (6.3, 28).

v.5: By the grace of God, Daniel received a vision of the Man (Messiah) who was Israel’s only hope. Daniel’s deep sorrow was expelled by a glimpse of the glory of Christ. This is not the first time Christ has been presented in the book. He is the Stone (2.35), Son of God (3.25), Son of Man (7.13-14) and Sovereign (9.24-27). Many argue this cannot be a Christophany as the man is ‘withstood’ (opposed) by the prince of Persia and required Michael’s help to overcome him (v.13) – surely this is not fitting for deity! True. But this fails to recognise the *three* different persons that visit Daniel in this chapter, i.e. the Man clothed in linen and His *two* attendant angels.

- This ‘certain (one individual) man’ clothed in linen is a man of highest degree (*ish*), a great man in comparison to ordinary men – his sovereign voice already having been heard (8.16). He is revealed at the end of the vision as having the attributes of *omniscience* and *omnipotence* (12.6-7) – not to mention the parallel descriptions

(though with minor differences) employed in Ezekiel 1.26-28 and Revelation 1.12-16. The glorious spectacle of the coming Sovereign would no doubt have dispelled Daniel's fears. This is the **Christ**.

- The *second* person of the vision is none other than **Gabriel**. He has already been sent to *touch* and *teach* Daniel (8.16, 18; 9.21) and does so again (10.10), referring to him as 'greatly beloved' for the *second* time (cf. 9.23). He gives Daniel the strength to stand before Christ. Thus, the one withstood by the prince of Persia is angelic!
- The *third* person of the vision is 'one like the similitude of the sons of men' (10.16, 18). This was another *angel* in the form of a man and gives Daniel the courage to speak before Christ.

'Linen' was the garment of the *priest* (Exodus 28.42) and represents *purity* and separation (7.9). It is often the dress of those who have access to or association with the presence of God (Revelation 15.6). His 'loins' are 'girded' indicating a *readiness* to serve. Far from the towel of the upper room, Christ is here girded with 'fine gold' suggesting the glory and dignity of princely rank. **v.6:** His 'body... like the beryl' speaks of a 'human body with the glow of full health' (Allen). 'Beryl' (Heb. *tarshish*) is described by Pliny as 'a transparent stone with refulgence like that of gold'. Thus, it is associated with *glory* as well as the *administration* and *government* of God's throne (Ezekiel 1.16; Revelation 21.20). Christ is the one who *directs* and *sustains* the affairs of God. His 'face as the appearance of lightning' suggests the brilliant brightness of His dazzling glory (cf. Luke 9.29). 'Eyes as lamps of fire' is a unique description of Christ (Revelation 1.14; 2.18; 19.12). Here is one with omniscient, penetrating discernment. He cannot be deceived and thus judges in righteousness. Polished 'brass' is a metal associated with strength and endurance – nothing can deter the Servant as He moves (*work* and *walk*) to accomplish the purpose of God. The voice of deity is described as 'the sound of many waters' (Ezekiel 43.2; Revelation 1.15) – and here, as the 'voice of a multitude'. Both of these sounds cover a multitude of frequencies so as to drown out all others. This is the power and authority of His spoken word.

This Man stands out in the Functions noted below

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|---|-------------------|
| 1. Clothed in linen | A Priest – purity |
| 2. Loins girded with fine gold of Uphaz | A King – royalty |
| 3. Body was like beryl | A Man – humanity |

This Man stands out in the Features noted below

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|---|------------------------|
| 4. Face as the appearance of lightning | Dazzling splendour |
| Deity in humanity | |
| 5. Eyes as lamps of fire | Penetrative insight |
| 6. Arms and feet colour of polished brass | Irresistible power |
| 7. Voice like the voice of a multitude | Unanswerable authority |

v.7: The appearance of deity has an overwhelming impact on Daniel's company. As on the Damascus Road (Acts 9.1-7) only Daniel *saw* the vision, though the 'men' felt a supernatural presence. A 'great quaking' (terror) overwhelmed them as they 'fled' to 'hide themselves' in the shadows (cf. Revelation 6.16). A revelation of Christ in glory cannot be borne by mere men! **v.8:** This verse describes the effect of the *sight* of Christ rather than his *sound* (v.9). In the presence of deity, even Daniel is confronted with his own weakness – try as he might to *retain* it, his strength is *drained* away. His 'comeliness' was turned into 'corruption' (to destroy, slay) meaning he lost his normal appearance of health and vigour. Instead of a picture of *life*, he became a picture of *death*. A revelation of divine glory as well as confession of *sins* and *self* has brought Daniel to his knees in the dust before God. It is such a 'dead' person that God can use (Romans 6.11)! **v.9:** The unrecorded words Daniel heard (cf. v.6) caused him to fall into a 'deep sleep', even 'flat out with a mouthful of dirt' (MacArthur). He was shattered in the awesome presence of the mighty God (cf. Revelation 1.17).

The Messenger from Heaven [vv.10-11]

v.10: The divine person does not appear again until 12.6. Instead, Gabriel appears and touches Daniel to set him on his hands and knees (see notes on v.5). The chapter records *three* divine touches which, through angelic agency, strengthen Daniel to further devotion. Note the touch which causes him to *stand* (vv.10-11, cf. Matthew 17.7), *speak* (v.16; cf. Mark 7.33) and *serve* (v.18; Matthew 8.15). Do we live in the good of the divine touch in our lives? We *stand* in the sphere of grace (Romans 5.2), *speak* the sacrifice of praise (Hebrews 13.15) and *serve* in the work of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15.57-58). **v.11:** Gabriel again refers to Daniel as one 'greatly beloved', i.e. a man in whom God delights (referring to something *delectable* and *desirable*). There are certain individuals in Scripture that become of special delight to God by their consistent obedience and faithfulness to His word (cf. 1 Samuel 13.14; Luke 1.30; John 13.23; James 2.23). In slow motion, Daniel is raised, trembling, to his feet that he might give full attention to the word of the angel.

The Mystery of the Prince of Persia [vv.12-13]

v.12: From the moment Daniel prayed he was *heard*. Gabriel had come to bring the answer. What a wonder! A man prays on earth and an angel arrives from heaven! **v.13:** But Daniel did not *receive* the answer until 21 days later. *Laurin: As a matter of fact the answer may be long in coming, but as a matter of faith it is ours at the time of asking.* Both the wisdom of God and need for the saints to learn valuable lessons (e.g. patience) explains why we sometimes receive answers to prayer in a longer time frame than we would like!

Gabriel now seeks to explain the delay. The problem was the 'prince (ruler) of the kingdom of Persia'. This is no mere person or king, but a fallen angelic being. His role was to control and order the affairs of Persia so as to work against the people and plans of God. Satan is the sovereign of the 'kingdom of darkness' (Matthew 12.24-30; Ephesians 6.12; Colossians 1.13). This kingdom appears to be divided into 'principalities', i.e. governments or kingdoms which correspond to those on earth – hence the princes of *Persia* and *Grecia* (v.20). These evil spirits seek to influence nations and governments to oppose the people and word of God (cf. Revelation 16.14). So, the prince of Persia 'withstood' (to block progress) Gabriel seeking to prevent him bringing the answer to Daniel's prayers. But Michael, one of the 'chief' princes came to assist. He is the 'great prince' (12.1) and 'archangel' (first angel) acting as head of God's angelic forces (Jude 9; Revelation 12.7) and responsible for the protection and care of Israel (cf. v.21; 12.1). With Michael's help, Gabriel 'remained there', i.e. gained the pre-eminence (victory) over the prince of Persia, and thus presented an on-going influence for good over the present and future 'kings' of Persia.

The Ministry of the Angel [vv.14-21]

v.14: With Gabriel having now come to Daniel, his objective was to help him understand what would happen to Israel in the 'latter days', for the vision 'pertains to future days' (NET). The particular focus of the vision would be the closing days of world Gentile rule (cf. 2.28) culminating in the great tribulation and return of Christ (time of the end, 11.36-45).
v.15: Such gracious revelation caused Daniel to bow in worship – his prayers had been answered (v.12). He was unable to verbalise his thankfulness, being silenced, even breathless (v.17) in the presence of deity (cf. Isaiah 6.5; Romans 3.19).
v.16: A second angelic being in the form of a man (see notes on v.5) touched his lips to cause him to speak (cf. Isaiah 6.5-7; Jeremiah 1.5-9; Ezekiel 3.27). Now he is able to verbalise the effect of the appearance of Christ. He speaks of 'sorrows' (used of the *anguish*, even *writhing* of a woman in childbirth) having gripped him and being without strength.
v.17: Again, Daniel humbly confesses his weakness, feeling *unworthy* (as a mere servant) and *unable* (breathless) to speak to his angelic messenger (Gabriel). **v.18:** Again, the second angelic being (v.16) touches Daniel to communicate strength that he might receive the forthcoming vision. **v.19:** Gabriel speaks to assure Daniel of his value in the sight of God and assuage his fears. This renders Daniel in a fit state to receive the revelation. **v.20:** The repeated concern of Gabriel (cf. v.11, 12, 14) accounts for Daniel's bewildered state. He will shortly depart to recommence his spiritual warfare with the prince of *Persia*, and subsequently the prince of *Grecia* (in keeping with God's divine programme for the Gentiles). **v.21:** But, before his departure, he would reveal what is 'noted' (inscribed) in the 'scripture (book) of truth', i.e. the eternal word (decree) of God which is written in heaven (cf. 11.2). But, if certain events have been predicted by God's revelation, that does not remove moral responsibility and accountability (Lennox, cf. Acts 2.23).

Note. In a short parenthesis (vv.21b-11.1), Gabriel explains his relationship with Michael. Michael 'holdeth' (strongly supports) Gabriel in the present spiritual warfare with the prince of Persia, and, during the first year of Darius, i.e. two years previous (538BC), Gabriel encouraged ('confirmed') and 'strengthened' Michael in the spiritual conflict which no doubt surrounded the fall of Babylon and decree of Cyrus (2 Chronicles 36.22-23).