

DANIEL'S VISION OF THE GREAT WAR

Chapter 10: An Introduction to the Vision

THE MAIN IDEA: Chapters 10, 11 and 12 in the Book of Daniel make up Daniel's final vision, describing a series of wars between the unnamed "King of the North" and "King of the South" leading to the "time of the end", when Israel will be vindicated and the dead raised, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt.¹

This is the last and longest of Daniel's visions and can be seen in three parts:²

- Chapter 10: An introduction to the vision of a great war
- Chapter 11: The description of the great war
- Chapter 12: The timing of the great war

A. WHAT TO WATCH FOR



Chapter 10, an introduction to the vision: In the third year of Cyrus (the Persian conqueror of Babylon), after fasting for three weeks, Daniel sees a vision of a man clothed in linen, clearly a supernatural being, who tells him that he is currently engaged in a battle with the "prince of Persia", in which he is assisted by "Michael, your prince." He must soon return to the combat, but first he will tell Daniel what is written in the "book of truth" (10:21).

B. BACKGROUND

Chapters 10 through 12 focus on two traumatic times for Israel; one during the period of the Greek Empire, and the other a future Tribulation.

¹ Chapters 10-12 comprise one vision which was mistakenly broken into three chapters. Chapter divisions were not made until 1205 AD by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Stephen Langton (1150-1228). https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chapters_and_verses_of_the_Bible. Accessed November 17, 2020.

² (Duck and Richards 259)

This final vision describes amazing details of the struggles between the kings of the south (those who succeeded Ptolemy, one of Alexander the Great's generals), and the kings of the north, (those who succeeded Seleucas, another of Alexander's generals). Since Palestine was a "land bridge" between these north/south warring factions, it was often in harm's way



Some experts believe the "man" described in 10:5-6 closely resembles Jesus Christ in Revelation 19:11-15; others believe this is probably not Christ because this angelic being was delayed by the prince of the kingdom of Persia for 21 days.

C. DANIEL CHAPTER 10 (NIV)

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE VISION (10:1)

"In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel (who was called Belteshazzar). Its message was true and it concerned a great war. The understanding of the message came to him in a vision.

THE TERRIFYING APPEARANCE OF A MAN (10:2-9)

At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. ³ I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over. ⁴ On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, ⁵ I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. ⁶ His body was like topaz, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude. ⁷ I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; those who were with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. ⁸ So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. ⁹ Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground.



THE MAN DELAYED BY 21 DAYS (10:10-14)

A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. ¹¹ He said, "Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you." And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling. ¹² Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. ¹³ But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. ¹⁴ Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."



THE MAN STRENGTHENS DANIEL (10:15-17)

¹⁵ While he was saying this to me, I bowed with my face toward the ground and was speechless. ¹⁶ Then one who looked like a man touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and began to speak. I said to the one standing before me, "I am overcome with anguish because of the vision, my lord, and I feel very weak. ¹⁷ How can I, your servant, talk with you, my lord? My strength is gone and I can hardly breathe."

THE HEAVENLY WARFARE (10:18-21)

Again the one who looked like a man touched me and gave me strength. ¹⁹ "Do not be afraid, you who are highly esteemed," he said. "Peace! Be strong now; be strong." When he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, "Speak, my lord, since you have given me strength." ²⁰ So he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come; ²¹ but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince."

D. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The text says that Daniel received a message from God during the reign of King Cyrus (one of the Persian kings). It spoke of a great conflict.

At that time, Daniel was in mourning, eating meagerly and avoiding meat and wine. He also had stopped anointing himself.

While standing on the bank of the river Tigris Daniel saw a man clothed in linen and wearing a gold belt. He also has a body like beryl (a gem-like mineral) and a face like lightning. His eyes are literally fiery, his arms and legs "gleam like burnished bronze," and his voice sounds like a whole crowd of roaring people.

The people who were with Daniel couldn't see the man, but they trembled, and ran off and leaving Daniel alone.



Daniel starts to get pale and lose his strength. He falls on the ground, face-first, and goes into a trance when he hears this impressive-looking character start to speak. But the one who looked like a man picks Daniel up, stands him on his feet, and tells him to listen. Daniel trembles, but the one who looked like a man says he shouldn't be afraid. Because Daniel has been humble in front of God, his words have gained him favor in heaven. This has caused the one who looked like a man to come down and speak to him.

The one who looked like a man says that he was locked in combat with "the Prince of Persia" for twenty-one days. The archangel Michael also helped him in waging this battle.

The one who looked like a man says he's going to tell Daniel things about what's going to happen to his people during the last days, now. Daniel feels speechless and turns his face toward the ground, but "one in human form" touches his lips, making him speak.



Dan says that he feels unworthy and too weak to be speaking with the one who looked like a man. But the one who looked like a man touches him and sends strength into him again, while telling him to be courageous. The one who looked like a man says that he still needs to go back and fight the prince of Persia, and later the prince of Greece, but first he will tell him words that are written in the "book of truth." He also mentions the archangel Michael again, saying that he's the only one helping him to fight the prince.

E. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you suppose Daniel is mourning in verses 2-3?

2. In the table below list the reasons why the man in verses 2-9 may or may not have been preincarnate Christ.

May have been preincarnate Christ (cp. Rev. 1:13-16)	May not have been preincarnate Christ

3. What does this chapter tell you about the unseen world? How can this relate to you? See Ephesians 6:11-18.

4. In verses 11 and 19, Daniel is told that he is “highly esteemed” (NIV)/“greatly loved” (ESV). Does this mean that God only loves those who are like Daniel? Why or why not?

5. In verses 15-17, Daniel is overcome with a sense of weakness, even to the point of being unable to speak. How was he strengthened and does this passage relate to Philippians 4:13 in any way? If so, how?

6. What kinds of responses might Christians have toward prophetic (apocalyptic) texts like these in the book of Daniel? Which kind of response do you identify with most?

F. CHAPTER WRAP UP

1. Spiritual warfare is an everyday reality for believers, whether we _____
_____.
2. In spiritual warfare we are never without _____.
3. Someday spiritual warfare will _____(2 Cor. 15:24-25).