

The Book of Daniel Chapter 10

- I. Introduction to the Book
- II. Comment and Commentary on the Book.

Part One: The Life Ministry of Daniel (and friends) in Babylon ,1:1-6:28

Part Two: The Visions and Prophecies of Daniel in Exile, 7:1-12:13

Four visions or revelations are in this section: Two in the first and third year of Belshazzar (chapters. 7, 9) and two Medo-Persian monarchs (unless Darius and Cyrus are the same person, chapter 8 and 10-12).

Introduction

- A. Daniel's Vision of four Successive Kingdoms, 7:1-28
- B. Daniel's Vision of the Fourth Kingdom, 8:1-27
- C. Gabriel's Revelation of the "Weeks," 9:1-27
- D. Daniel's Final Vision: The Third Empire, 10:1-12:13

The final vision, in terms of subject matter, does not come with animal symbolism though it covers the same subject as in chapters 7 and 8 (the Persian Period). But, the revelation is through a messenger as in chapter 9. Here there are added details not found earlier, as well as the Great Tribulation in the last period.

The division of the long discourse is three-fold: The preparation for the final vision (10:1-11:1), the content of the vision (11:2-12:3), and final instructions to Daniel (12:4-13).

This is not an easy chapter to understand because of its length, being prefatory to the explanation in the following chapter. Since Michael, an archangel, the protector of the nation Israel, comes to the aid of Gabriel in a cosmic battle with Satan's emissaries (the princes of Persia and Greece), the demonic powers behind the evil of nations. The question that concerned Daniel on the eve of the nation's return from exile (536) was foreboding considering that dark days seem to be on the horizon for the returnees, not peace. This, Daniel did not understand; he seemed to be at wit's end.

Chapter Lesson: The take-away for me in this chapter is that failure will describe man's efforts to bring about a time of universal peace using force and conquest. The reason is an invisible war in the spiritual realm between the angels of God to protect the people of God in the nations and the forces of Satan who are constantly seeking to destroy God's intervention. In the end of times (the Great Tribulation) it will appear that Satan has won the battle for supremacy through the anti-Christ and the false prophet. On the brink of his total victory, God will come, destroy all evil, and bring His people from all ages and nations into a kingdom without end. This picture is much the same as Nebuchadnezzar's vision in chapter 2.

- 1. The context, vv. 1-3
 - a. The disclosure of a message of great conflict, v. 1

In the third year of Cyrus, the Persian (536, the year of the return to the land), Daniel received a message and, though true, it caused weakness and consternation. Two facts seem to account for this: first, the message had to do with “a great conflict” yet to come upon the people God. Second, it was terrifying, not what Daniel wanted to hear. I surmise that Daniel thought the return to the land would inaugurate the kingdom promised to Israel (just as the disciples thought Jesus’ final trek to Jerusalem would inaugurate the final kingdom) interrupted by dereliction but following their repentance and miraculous return to the land.

- b. The troubled spirit of Daniel, vv. 2-3
So disturbed (“mourned”) in his spirit that he suspended his diet and physical care (personal grooming). The context seems to have been that Daniel was praying for his people, the length of his struggle resulting in emotional and physical distress.
2. The vision of a heavenly messenger, vv. 4-9
 - a. Stated, vv. 4-6
Several things strike one about these verses: first, they are specifically dated. It was the month of Passover and Unleavened Bread, the celebration of Israel’s great deliverance from slavery in Egypt (the thought of a second deliverance unfolding before his eyes, but the message of troubles may have occasioned his behavior). Second, the vision came while he was awake accompanied by others near the Tigris River, during the day not night. Third, the person he saw had supernatural characteristics (perhaps a preincarnate appearance of the Lord) though the actual message was delivered by an angel.
 - b. The flight of his Daniel’s companions, v. 7
While Daniel’s companions did not see the vision in the sky, they nonetheless experienced it, sensing danger because they fled (perhaps they saw Daniel’s reaction without an apparent cause).
 - c. The depletion of Daniel’s strength, v. 8-9
When Daniel heard words from the messenger, he collapsed, destitute of power, into a deep sleep.
3. The deliverance of the messenger’s message, vv. 10-14
 - a. The strengthening of Daniel, vv. 10-12a
 - 1) The comforting touch, v. 10
The angel (likely Gabriel since he appeared in 8:16 and 9:21) appeared and touched him, lifting him to his knees and palms of his hands, though he was trembling in fear.
 - 2) The encouragement of Daniel, v. 11
As in 9:23, the angel addressed him with comforting words, (“...a man highly esteemed”). With his cognitive senses restored, the angel addressed Daniel telling him to stand on his feet for he had a message to deliver.
 - 3) The command to cease being afraid, v. 12a
The angel once more instructed Daniel, “Do not be afraid.”
 - b. The purpose of the messenger revealed, v. 12b
The messenger was sent in answer to Daniel’s prayer for understanding, the meaning of the foreboding cloud in Israel’s future.
 - c. The reason for the delay in coming, v. 13
Though the angel was sent when Daniel prayed for understanding, having humbled himself, the angel was met with opposition delaying him for 21 days by the “prince of the Persian kingdom.”

This is quite a mysterious passage. Delayed but assisted by Michael, Gabriel was able to come to Daniel's aid. "Michael, your prince" (coupled with the "prince of Persia," the noun is plural indicating the many evil angels are attempting to control Persia) suggests a cosmic conflict between good and evil is ongoing in the spiritual realm. "Your Prince" suggests that Michael was assigned to be Israel's protector. The nations are influenced by fallen angels, Satan's minions, and God's people are protected and preserved by God's servant-angels limiting the powers of evil.

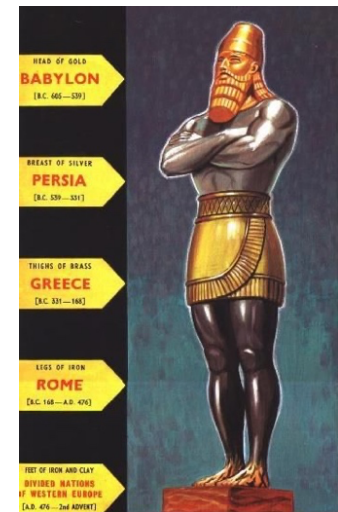
What can we learn about angels from this passage?

- angels do indeed exist
 - there are two types of angels: fallen and unfallen
 - the two types are in conflict in the spiritual world
 - angels influence the course of nations
- d. The issue addressed of his coming, v. 14
Daniel was still troubled, mystified, and confused in his understanding of the visions ("...what will happen to your people in the latter day, for the vision pertains to days yet future"); the purpose of the angel's visit is to clarify Daniel's confusion.
 4. The discourse between Daniel and the messenger, 10:15-11:1
 - a. The demeanor of Daniel and it's cause, vv. 15-17
The experience with a speaking-angel must have overwhelmed him, the trauma of speaking to an angel whom he called "my Lord."
 - b. The strengthening of Daniel a second time, v. 18
 - c. The speech of the messenger, vv. 19-11:1
 - 1) The messenger's gracious beginning, v. 19a
The words of the messenger are generally repeated, though in this instance he does not call him by name ("O man of high esteem"). Also, he added two additional comments to "do not be afraid:" "Peace be with you" and "be courageous."
 - 2) Daniel's invitation to the messenger, v. 19b
Daniel is strengthened to receive instruction, so he asks the angel to speak.
 - 3) The announcement of the messenger's return, v. 20a
 - 4) The coming of the Prince of Greece, v. 20b
If the "prince of Persia" suggests demonic powers that operate in nations opposing God's actions, the same can be argued for the "prince of Greece." Gabriel is off to fight one prince, but another prince is coming. It seems to indicate that a cosmic war is going on for the heart of each nation, one protecting and the other seeking to destroy.
 - 5) A parting comment, vv. 21-11:1
Gabriel will return to the cosmic battle assisting Michael, the protective prince of Israel. Gabriel supported Michael before coming to Daniel which is dated in the first year of the reign of Darius, the Mede.
 5. The troubling revelation disclosed, 11:2-12:3
 - a. The context: A Persian invasion, v. 2
The essence of the vision concerns two kingdoms in succession: Persia and Greece. Four kings will reign in Persia with the last attacking the Kingdom of Greece. Three kings did succeed Cyrus the Great in Persia: Cambyses (530-522), Smerdis



(also called Gaumata, 522) and Darius I (522-486). The fourth was Xerxes I (486-465).

In Xerxes' idealization of power, he sought to conquer Greece by a massive sea invasion (300,000 soldiers) only to suffer a series of defeats spelling the decline of the empire and his assassination. The preparation for the invasion of Greece is the context of the Book of Esther (the disposition of Vashti and Xerxes' marriage to Hadassah or Esther).



b. The rise of Greece, vv. 3-4

The “mighty king” that arose was Alexander the Great and the Greek Empire which brought an end to the Persian Empire in 334-331. He died in 323 with none to succeed him, his two sons having been murdered.



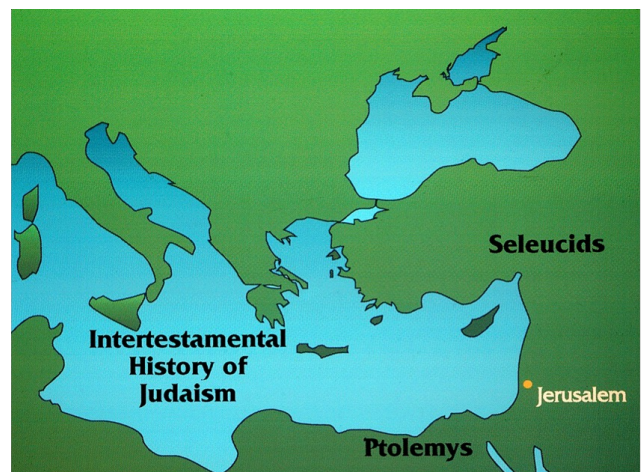
With his death, the Greek Empire was divided to his four conquering generals. Of importance to the biblical narrative are two of these generals who become kings over a portion of Alexander's empire: Ptolemy and the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt and Seleucus and Seleucid dynasty in Syria. Israel was tormented between two powers seeking to destroy each other.

c. The Syrian-Egypt Wars, vv. 5-20

These verses rehearse the continued military conflict between the Ptolemy's of Egypt and the Seleucids of Syria. The conflict brought armies that crossed and pillaged the returned Jewish exiles.

1) Ptolemy I Soter, v. 5

The “king of the South (Ptolemy I), one of Alexander's generals, was granted authority over Egypt in 323, kingship in 304. “One of his (Ptolemy I) commanders,” Seleucus I Nicator (312-280) acquired significant power, defeated another general, and became king (305) over Persia, Babylonia, and Syria (a huge territory). Thus, the stage was set for conflict between the two dynasties for supremacy in the East.



- 2) Ptolemy II (285-246) and Antiochus II (305-262), v. 6

Clashes continued under the successors in Egypt and Syria. However, a peace treaty ended the hostility. The agreement was affirmed with the giving of Ptolemy II's daughter, Berenice, to Antiochus in marriage. The agreement fell apart when Antiochus II, Berenice, and their child were murdered by Laodice, a wife of Antiochus, who then ruled Syria (246-226). She was murdered by Berenice's brother who later became Ptolemy III.

Ptolemy II sponsored a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, the Septuagint, in Alexandria, Egypt.

- 3) Ptolemy III (246-241) and Seleucus II (246-225), vv. 7-9

In retaliation for Berenice's murder, war broke out between the two nations with the "king of the North" being defeated and his capitol, Antioch, captured, and their gods taken to Egypt. Laodice was captured and murdered. Later the "king of the North" attempted to attack Egypt but met with defeat.

(To be continued)

Thoughts:

1. While we long for peace, the end of bitterness, aggression, and hostilities in our lives and world, it will come until the Lord of Heaven brings it to us (an effect partakes of the nature of its cause). Fallen mankind and corrupt powers cannot bring to us what is not characteristic of themselves.
2. Daniel's consternation, fear, and emotional instability came from a misconception of what was unfolding before his eyes (the return of God's people to the land beginning in 536 would inaugurate Israel's final deliverance). How often is that not true of us? The remedy is to hear God's voice (for us in Holy Scriptures). Daniel required an angelic visit and instruction; we need to shape our hopes with the content of the whole witness of God, not by selective verses interpreted separated from all that God has to say to us.
3. Nation clashing with nation has been a part of human history since the fall and will so until our Lord comes with His kingdom. The present likely distresses us all for a plethora of various reasons, but we have the promises of God. A great day is coming!
4. Those who believe experience is the sum of what is true and enduring (the material, the empirical) simply are ignorant of greater dimensions of truth and reality beyond what the eye can see, the mind can conceptualize, or feeling penetrate. Our chapter give us a glimpse of spiritual realities that far exceed what we see. A cosmic battle is (ongoing since the Devil entered the Garden of Eden) between the devil's minions who work through nations to destroy the plan and people of God and God's holy angels who prevent it by sustaining and protecting God's people. For us, there will be troubles but not ultimate defeat. You and I are more secure than we will ever realize this side of the eternal kingdom of God.