

# The Vision of the Glory of God

by John F. Walvoord

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*The sermon explores the significance of Daniel's Fourth Vision, in which he sees the glory of God and receives a revelation about the future.*

**Scripture:** Daniel 10:1-20

**Topics:** "Prophetic Vision", "Divine Revelation"

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## Description

John F. Walvoord preaches on the final three chapters of the book of Daniel, highlighting the extensive revelation of the prophetic future, unique in Scripture, with detailed prophecies from the immediate future to the end times. The setting of Daniel's fourth vision in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia reveals a true revelation to Daniel, preparing him for the vision through fasting and mourning. Daniel's glorious vision of a majestic man by the Tigris River signifies a theophany or appearance of God Himself, strengthening Daniel for the divine revelation to come. The angelic messenger's visit to Daniel involves a spiritual conflict with the prince of Persia, emphasizing the unseen struggle between angelic forces in fulfilling God's plan for Israel in the latter days.

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## Transcript

The final three chapters of the book of Daniel record an extensive revelation of the prophetic future which is without parallel anywhere else in Scripture, As Leupold has expressed it, "There is hardly anything in the Bible that is just like these chapters, especially like chapter 11. The word, the vision, and minute prediction are combined in a manner that is found nowhere else in the Scriptures."<sup>542</sup> The entire content of chapter 10, for instance, is introductory, indicating the extensive character of the prophecy to follow. The introduction actually extends through the first verse of chapter 11. The next section, 11:2-12:4, is divided into two major divisions. The first, 11:2-35, deals with the immediate future, from Darius to Antiochus; and the second, 11:36-12:4, with the far future, the end times just before the second advent of Christ. A final message and revelation is given to Daniel in 12:5-13. The last three chapters constitute the fourth vision of Daniel which gathers together the significant threads of prophecy, especially as they relate to the Holy Land and to the people of Israel.

### The Setting of Daniel's Fourth Vision

10:1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

Almost every detail of the first verse of this chapter has been subject to debate in commentaries. The date of the vision, "In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia" (536 B.C.), has been attacked as a discrepancy as compared with Daniel 1:21 where Daniel is said to have "continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus." As was noted in the exposition of chapter 1, Daniel 1:21 does not say that Daniel died or terminated his career in the first year of king Cyrus but that he continued until this important event which introduced the kingdom of the Medes and the Persians. Although the Septuagint changes the statement in Daniel 10:1 to "the first year," this is a needless harmonization.<sup>543</sup>

Critical objection has also been leveled at the expression Cyrus king of Persia. Montgomery, with many liberal critics, holds, "The designation of Cyrus as 'king of Persia' was not contemporary usage; the Pers. king was entitled 'the king,' 'the great king,' 'king of kings,' or after his conquest of the Babylonian empire 'king of Babel,' 'king of the lands'; Dr. [Driver], Int., 345 f. Cyrus was 'the Persian king' only later ace. to Hellenistic use."<sup>544</sup> Although scholars agree that Cyrus was not normally called by the simple designation "king of Persia" under ordinary circumstances until later, at least one contemporary usage of the term has been found.<sup>545</sup> And, after all, why should not Cyrus be called "king of Persia" even if it was not the ordinary way of referring to him? Young states flatly, "This designation of Cyrus was contemporary usage (despite M [Montgomery] )."<sup>546</sup> After all, why should the scriptural designation have to conform precisely to ancient usage? The statement is quite clear and pinpoints the time of the vision.

It was in this third year of Cyrus king of Persia, late in Daniel's career, about seventy-two years after he had been carried away as a youth to Babylon, that "a thing," better translated, "a word," that is, a revelation, was revealed to Daniel. By way of identification, his Babylonian name Belteshazzar, is given, to make clear that he is the same Daniel who was so named by Nebuchadnezzar seventy years before.

The general nature of the revelation is described in the verses which follow. Daniel first affirms that the "thing" or word was true, as might be expected of a revelation from God. The second fact concerning the prophecy as translated in the King James Version is that "the time appointed was long." This exceedingly difficult expression has called for considerable comment. The Hebrew here, *sa,ba, ga,do,* has been variously translated "great warfare"<sup>547</sup> or "a great task"<sup>548</sup> or, more freely, "involved great suffering."<sup>549</sup> The implication is that the period in view is a long and strenuous one involving great conflict and trouble for the people of God.

In contrast to the previous visions, Daniel states that "he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision." The previous visions had left questions in Daniel's mind which were not fully resolved, although he had faithfully recorded what he had seen and heard. It is doubtful whether Daniel completely understood all the vision which followed, but at least he comprehended its general characteristics and was not left in a state of perplexity, for instance, as indicated in Daniel 8:27 where he was physically sick as a result of the extensive vision given to him. The introductory statement is sufficient, however, to alert the reader that a tremendous revelation is about to be presented.

#### Daniel's Preparation for the Vision 10:2-3

In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

In preparation for the great revelation to follow, Daniel spent three weeks in mourning during which he did not eat the dainties of the king's table, abstained from flesh and wine, and also did not anoint himself at all. Pleasant bread is literally, "bread of pleasures, of desires," in contrast to bread of affliction (Deu 16:3), that

is, the unleavened bread which was eaten during the Passover. During this period, Daniel apparently partook of basic nourishment and water but followed a meager diet. What was the occasion of this experience of self-inflicted fasting?

The duration of the period is obviously three weeks composed of days in contrast to the seventy "weeks" of Daniel 9:24-27. Although Leupold resists the idea that the Hebrew expression here, literally, "three weeks of days," is used in contrast to Daniel 9, that may be precisely the point; that is, Daniel wants to make clear that normal days are in view in this prophecy. Practically everyone agrees that twenty-one days is the resulting sense.<sup>550</sup> In any case, the three weeks included the normal week for the Passover season, as can be learned by comparison with Daniel 10:4: Passover occurred in the first month, the fourteenth day, and was followed by seven days in which unleavened bread was eaten.

The occasion for Daniel's fasting probably was his concern for the pilgrims who had returned to Jerusalem two years before, anticipated in his prayer in Daniel 9. As the book of Ezra makes plain, the children of Israel had encountered great difficulty in getting settled in the land. Although the altar had been set up and the foundation of the temple laid (Ezra 3), the work had been suspended because of opposition by the people of the land (Ezra 4:1-5, 24). All of this was a great concern to Daniel, for his primary purpose in encouraging the expedition had been the restoration of the temple as well as the city of Jerusalem.

Humanly speaking, there was ground for anxiety. But Daniel did not understand that the seventy years of the captivity which expired with the return of the exiles in Ezra 1 did not fulfill the seventy years of the desolation of Jerusalem and the temple. This required an additional twenty years (the difference between 605 B.C., the first deportation of the Jews, and 586 B.C., the date of the destruction of Jerusalem). From God's point of view, things were moving exactly on schedule. In a sense, the vision which followed was a reply to Daniel's questions concerning God's purposes for the future of Israel in relation to the Gentiles. These purposes involved a far more extensive program than that fulfilled in the book of Ezra and Nehemiah. While the saints of God may justly be concerned over what seems to be a defeat of God's purpose, the suffering saint should never forget the majesty of the sovereignty of God which ultimately proves "that all things work together for good to them that love God" (Ro 8:28). From the divine viewpoint, while we should pray, we should be delivered from anxiety--as Paul stated many years later (Phil 4:6-7). The period of fasting, however, constituted a divine preparation for the revelation. No doubt, abstinence from all but absolutely necessary food and drink, and the omission of anointing oil--indicative of his grief for the affliction of Israel (Amos 6:6; 2 Sa 14:2)--helped to ready Daniel for his great experience.

#### Daniel's Glorious Vision of God

10:4-6 And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel; then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: his body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning; and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.

According to verse 4, the time of the vision was the twenty-fourth day of the first month, that is, April or the month Abib (Ex 23:15), known later in the Old Testament as Nisan (Neh 2:1). Scripture does not reveal when the twenty-one days of mourning began, but it seems clear that they had concluded by the twenty-fourth day of the month. The new year was normally begun with a festival of two days celebrating the advent of the new moon (1 Sa 20:18-19, 34),<sup>551</sup> and it was of course unsuitable for him to fast while

that joyous festival continued. Daniel probably had observed the Passover on the fourteenth day and the Feast of Unleavened Bread which followed from the fifteenth day to the twenty-first. If the vision came to Daniel immediately after his twenty-one days of mourning, his fast must have begun immediately after the new moon celebration, concluding just before the vision was given to him.

The place of the vision is declared to be "by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel." Here we learn for the first time that Daniel did not accompany the pilgrims who returned to Jerusalem, although this is implied in the earlier verses of chapter 10. Liberal scholars attempt to turn this into an argument against the historicity of Daniel, assuming that he would automatically return to his native land as soon as permitted. As Young points out, however, if Daniel was merely a fictitious character, an ideal created by a writer in the Maccabean period, it would have been far more natural to have pictured him returning triumphantly to his native land. Young concludes, "The fact that Dan. does not return to Palestine is a strong argument against the view that the book is a product of the Maccabean age."<sup>552</sup> The obvious explanation of Daniel's failure to return is that he was quite old, probably eighty-five years of age, and, according to chapter 6, had been given a prominent place in the government and was not free to leave as were the others. Probably he could do Israel more good by remaining at his post than by accompanying them in the limitations of his age to Palestine.

The statement that the vision occurred by Hiddekel, or the river Tigris, has also been subject to criticism on two counts. First, the question has been raised whether this should be considered a literal and geographic statement or part of the vision. In Daniel 8, Daniel's vision "was by the river of Ulai," but the context makes plain that he is only there in vision not in reality. In chapter 10, however, the context and narrative makes plain that he is actually by the Tigris River, as the following verses relate how the men who were with him but did not see the vision fled. Liberal scholars like Montgomery, however, consider the reference to "the great river" a contradiction with the specification "Hiddekel" or the Tigris River, as the Euphrates River is normally called "the great river." Montgomery, accordingly, regards this "as an early gloss" in the text, with the only alternative that "otherwise we must attribute a solecism or gross error to the writer."<sup>553</sup> The Syriac version substitutes "Euphrates," for "Hiddekel." All of this, however, is quite arbitrary as there is no reason why the Tigris should not also be called a great river; and if that expression uniformly referred to the Euphrates, it would be all the more strange for a copyist to insert, "Hiddekel." Conservative scholars generally agree that the river is the Tigris.<sup>554</sup> The probability is that Daniel had come to this geographic area in connection with his duties as a chief administrator of the government. No great amount of travel need be assumed here because just above Babylon the Euphrates and Tigris are only about thirty-five miles apart.

In this situation, Daniel records that he had a vision of a glorious man. Daniel describes the man as clothed in linen, his loins girded with fine gold, his body having an appearance of beryl, or chrysolite. His face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes as flaming torches, his arms and feet like polished brass, and his voice sounded like the words of a multitude. All commentators agree that the personage was not a man, but either a glorious angel or a theophany, that is, an appearance of God Himself.

Leupold, after considerable discussion, concludes that the personage is a mighty angel on the fact that he requires the help of Michael, mentioned in verse 13, which would not be true of deity. If an angel, it may have been Gabriel, who appeared to Daniel in chapter 8. However, Leupold prefers to identify him with an unknown angel of equal stature with Michael.<sup>555</sup> Young notes that Hengstenberg identified him as Michael and that the Jews considered the figure an angel.<sup>556</sup>

Although there is room for debate even among conservative scholars, the evidence seems more in favor of considering this a theophany. In this case, the man of 10:5-6 is to be distinguished from the angel of 10:10-14 as well as Michael mentioned in 10:13. Although mighty angels are frequently difficult to distinguish from God Himself, as in other visions such as those in Ezekiel and Revelation, the similarity between the man described in 10:5-6 and the glorified Christ in Revelation 1:13-15 has led conservative expositors such as Young and Keil to consider the man a genuine theophany or an appearance of Christ as the Angel of Jehovah.<sup>557</sup>

The description of Daniel attributes to the man in the vision a glorious appearance. The linen was probably the fine white linen which characterized garments of the priests (cf. Ex 28:39-43). In other instances, linen forms the clothing of heavenly visitors (cf. Eze 9:2-3, 11; 10:2, 6-7). The angels at the tomb of Christ are described as having long white garments of brilliant character without specifying that they are linen (Mk 16:5; Lk 24:4; Jn 20:12; cf. Ac 1:10). The girdle was probably also linen embroidered with fine gold. The reference to the "fine gold of Uphaz," has only one other similar reference in the Bible (Jer 10:9), and it is not clear whether Uphaz is geographic or poetic. No clear identification has ever been made, although some have equated Uphaz with Ophir (Is 13:12) on the basis that this word is substituted for Uphaz in a Syriac version of Jeremiah 10:9.<sup>558</sup> It is sufficient to consider the girdle as being embroidered with fine gold of unusual quality.

The appearance of the body as a jewel called "beryl" from the Hebrew tarshish is translated "chrysolite" in the Septuagint and is considered by Driver as a topaz. He states, "the topaz of the moderns--a flashing stone, described by Pliny as 'a transparent stone with a refulgence like that of gold.'"<sup>559</sup> The same stone seems to be mentioned in Exodus 28:20 and Ezekiel 1:16; 10:9. It is called tarshish as if originating in Spain.<sup>560</sup> Porteous identifies it as the yellow jasper.<sup>561</sup> The impression given to Daniel was that the entire body of the man in the vision was like a gigantic transparent jewel reflecting the glory of the rest of the vision.

The description of the face illumined as it were by lightning, with eyes as flaming torches, is quite similar to the reference to Christ in Revelation 1:14-16. The polished brass of the arms and feet is similar to the "feet like unto fine brass" of Christ (Rev 1:15). And the lightning compares to the countenance of Christ likened to the sun in brilliance in Revelation 1:16, also to similar references in Ezekiel 1:13-14. Accompanying the visual image of glory was the mighty sound of the voice of a multitude, apparently not words which could be understood, but giving the impression of great power (cf. Rev 1:15). As Driver expresses it, "An impressive, but inarticulate, sound seems to be what the comparison is intended to suggest."<sup>562</sup> The total impression upon Daniel, described in the verses which follow, must have been tremendous and similar to that of John the apostle when he saw the glorified Christ (Rev 1:17).

#### Effect of the Vision on Daniel

10:7-9 And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.

The vision which Daniel saw was apparent only to him and not to the men who accompanied him. The situation was somewhat similar to that of the men who accompanied Paul on the road to Damascus (Ac

9:7; 22:9), except that here the men saw and heard nothing but apparently sensed something which gave them great fear. When those who accompanied Daniel fled to hide themselves, Daniel was left alone as he states in verse 8. The failure of the men to see the vision, however, can hardly be attributed simply to their lack of spiritual perception as Leupold suggests.<sup>563</sup> Undoubtedly, Daniel alone of the group was spiritually qualified to receive a vision, but the choice of the recipient of the vision was made by divine will and those who accompanied Daniel were not allowed to see the vision which was intended for Daniel only.

The fact that the men did not see the vision and fled makes clear that this is an actual event which occurred near the Tigris River and that Daniel is not there merely in vision. Those who accompanied Daniel were not part of the vision itself, and their departure opened the way for Daniel's further experience alone.

The sight of the vision affected Daniel physically, robbing him of normal physical strength; and his normal appearance of health, described as "my comeliness," was affected in a way similar to the appearance of Christ in Isaiah 52:14, the Hebrew of corruption (Dan 10:8) and marred (Is 52:14) coming from the same root.

Although apparently rendered immobile by his lack of strength, Daniel was still able to hear "the voice of his words"; but this only increased his incapacity, and he fell in a swoon with his face toward the ground (cf. Ex 19:16-22). Daniel's experience illustrates the difficulty of mortal, sinful man, even a prophet like Daniel, of encountering the glory of God, in relation to which the holiest of men come short (Ro 3:23). It was in this posture of weakness and semiconsciousness that Daniel was to be strengthened to receive additional revelation.

#### Daniel's Strength Restored by an Angel

10:10-11 And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands. And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.

In verse 10, Daniel records that in his extremity a hand touched him, raising him sufficiently so that now he was resting on his hands and knees. If the original vision was a theophany or an appearance of God, it is evident that this is another personage, probably an angel. It is said that the angel "set me upon my knees," literally translated, "shook me up upon my knees." The action was much like arousing one from sleep.

The angel addresses Daniel and gives him the title, "a man greatly beloved." Although God loves the entire world so much that He provided His Son as its Savior, certain individuals, because of their special relationship to God, are the objects of unusual divine love. David, in spite of his sins, was sought of the Lord as "a man after his own heart" (1 Sa 13:14; Ac 13:22); and John the apostle was "one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved" (Jn 13:23). As a parent loves all of his children but may love one or more in a special way, so the heart of God responds to those who love Him most.

The angel then exhorts Daniel to understand his message and to stand upright to receive it, for this was the purpose of the angel's coming to Daniel. Upon this exhortation, Daniel is able to stand upright although trembling. The message of the angel naturally tended to reassure Daniel that God's purpose in giving him the vision was gracious and loving, and Daniel had nothing to fear.

## The Purpose of the Angel's Visit

10:12-14 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days.

Daniel is further encouraged by the exhortation, "Fear not, Daniel." To allay the fears of Daniel still further, the angel informs him that from the very beginning of his intercession, three weeks before, God had undertaken to answer his prayers and send the angelic messenger to him. What a reassurance it is that when one comes to God as Daniel did, setting his heart to understand and chastening himself before God, one may expect Daniel's experience of the response of God that his words were heard and the messenger dispatched. The delay is explained in verse 13 as being occasioned by the opposition of "the prince of the kingdom of Persia" who "withstood me one and twenty days." This "prince" is not the king of the kingdom of Persia but rather the angelic leader of Persia, a fallen angel under the direction of Satan, in contrast to the angelic prince Michael who leads and protects Israel. That the angel described as "the prince" of Persia is a wicked angel is clear from the fact that his opposition to the angelic messenger to Daniel is given as the reason for the delay of twenty-one days.

All during the period of Daniel's fasting and prayer, a spiritual conflict was underway. This was resolved by the coming of Michael described as "one of the chief princes" (cf. Dan 10:21; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev 12:7). Michael seems to be the most powerful of the holy angels, and with his assistance the messenger to Daniel is released to fulfill his mission. The statement / remained there with the kings of Persia may be translated, "I was left there with the kings of Persia," meaning, that having been delivered from the prince of Persia, the angelic messenger was permitted to go on his way. unattended.

Driver suggests that the phrase and I remained there actually means "I was superfluous there," inasmuch as Michael, who was more powerful, had relieved him. The Hebrew word translated "I remained" (ndarti, from yatar) does not properly signify "to remain behind" but "to remain over, to be superfluous." Driver says of Daniel 10:13, "I was left over there beside the kings (i.e., I had nothing more to do)."<sup>564</sup>

Zöckler refutes Calvin and others who understand the conflict of the angel as being with an earthly king rather than an angelic being. Calvin says, "If we weigh these words too judiciously, we shall readily conclude, that the angel fought rather against the king of the Persians than for him."<sup>565</sup> Zöckler supports the idea that this is angelic warfare on the basis of the following considerations:

(1) in chap, xi.5, where [sar] is unquestionably employed in the latter sense, the connection is entirely different from the character of the present passage, where the [hassa,ri,m] which immediately follows obviously denotes angelic princes; (2) the Persian kings, on the other hand, are termed [malke, pa,,ra,,s] at the end of the verse; (3) the idea of an angel's conflict with a human king seems very inappropriate; (4) the angel Michael was Israel's 'prince,' i.e., guardian angel, according to 5:21; chap, 12:1; and corresponding to this, the prince of Persia who is here noticed, and the prince of Graecia mentioned in 5:20, were, without doubt, the angels of Persia and Javan respectively; (5) the idea of guardian angels over entire realms, whether friendly or hostile in their disposition toward the theocracy, is attested by various Old-Test, parallels, particularly by Isa. 24:21...; Isa. 46:2; Jer. 46:25; 49:3 (where the gods of the heathen nations take the place of the guardian angels); Deut. 32:8; and Psa. 96:4, 70; also Bar. 4:7 and Ecclus.

17:17...--to say nothing of New-Test, passages, such as 1 Cor. 8:5; 10:20 et seq.<sup>566</sup>

Although the entire subject of the unseen struggle between the holy angels and the fallen angels is not clearly revealed in the Scriptures, from the rare glimpses which are afforded, as in this instance, it is plain that behind the political and social conditions of the world there is angelic influence--good on the part of the holy angels, evil on the part of the angels under satanic control. This is the struggle to which Paul referred in Ephesians 6:10-18.

Keil interprets the expression, "I remained there with the kings of Persia," as meaning that a victory of major character was won against the demonic forces which had previously controlled the kingdom of Persia, and the subsequent result was that the kingdom of Persia now would become the object of divine direction through angelic ministry. He understands the plural of "kings of Persia" to indicate all the kings of Persia which followed. Keil states, "The plural denotes, that by the subjugation of the demon of the Persian kingdom, his influence not merely over Cyrus, but over all the following kings of Persia, was brought to an end, so that the whole of the Persian kings became accessible to the influence of the spirit proceeding from God and in advancing the welfare of Israel."<sup>567</sup>

Leupold summarizes the correct interpretation in these words,

Bad angels, called demons in the New Testament, are, without a doubt, referred to here. In the course of time, these demonic powers gained a very strong influence over certain nations and the government of these nations. They became the controlling power. They used whatever resources they could muster to hamper God's work and to thwart His purposes... We get a rare glimpse behind the scene of world history. There are spiritual forces at work that are far in excess of what men who disregard revelation would suppose. They struggle behind the struggles that are written on the pages of history.<sup>568</sup>

The fact that the angelic messenger needed the help of Michael, however, refutes Young's interpretation that the speaker is the Angel of Jehovah or the Lord Himself.<sup>569</sup> While even an important angel might need the help of Michael, it is hardly acceptable that Christ in the Old Testament, prior to the incarnation, would need angelic help to gain a victory over a fallen angel. The circumstances seem to indicate that this must be an angel, not a theophany, and, therefore, be distinguished from the theophany of 10:5-6.

The angelic messenger now explains to Daniel that his purpose in coming is to make Daniel understand what would befall "thy people," that is, Israel, "in the latter days." The angel explains that much time is involved in the vision.

The expression in the latter days is an important chronological term related to the prophetic program which is unfolded in the book of Daniel. As previously considered in the exposition of Daniel 2:28, this phrase is seen to refer to the entire history of Israel beginning as early as the predictions of Jacob who declared to his sons "that which shall befall you in the last days" (Gen 49:1) and extending and climaxing in the second coming of Jesus Christ to the earth. The latter days view the entire history of Israel as culminating in the climax of the second advent and the establishment of the earthly kingdom.

Daniel's concern for his people, which probably occasioned his three weeks' fast and prayer, is now to be somewhat relieved by a specific revelation in addition to that already given in Daniel 9:24-27. The particulars of the vision include the experiences of Israel in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and culminate in the great tribulation just before the second advent. Although Daniel probably did not understand the details, he could be reassured that God had a plan which ended in the ultimate victory of divine power.

Although the prophecies made clear that there were powerful forces at work against Israel, which would inflict upon them much suffering and loss, in the end the power of God would triumph and Israel would be exalted as a nation.

#### Daniel Again Strengthened by the Angel

10:15-17 And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb. And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me.

Daniel's weakness once again overwhelms him. Speechless, he turns his face to the ground. Calvin, refuting the notion that Daniel here is repenting his prophetic office, states, "By becoming prostrate on the ground, he manifested his reverence, and by becoming dumb, displayed his astonishment."<sup>570</sup> Whether or not Daniel actually fell to the ground is not clearly stated in verse 15, but the effect may well be what Calvin intimates.

Once again Daniel experiences strengthening from God. Whether or not the personage described as "one like the similitude of the sons of men" is a theophany, that is, Christ as the Angel of Jehovah, or is another angel is not clear. Probably it is another angelic messenger. Upon being strengthened and having his ability to speak restored, Daniel again confesses his weakness and lack of strength. His sorrows, or pains, as well as his weakness had returned with the additional vision. Daniel goes on to explain that he has difficulty in talking because he lacks both strength and breath. Montgomery suggests that breath should be "spirit."<sup>571</sup> But Daniel's problem was physical rather than lack of spirit. All of this made it difficult for Daniel as expressed in his statement, "How can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord?" As Charles interprets it, "The sense then is Tiow can so mean a servant of my lord talk with so great a one as my lord?"<sup>572</sup> Daniel was in great difficulty in carrying on normal conversation with the angelic messenger.

#### Daniel Strengthened for the Third Time

10:18-19 Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me, and said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me.

For the third time in this chapter, Daniel is strengthened supernaturally by one who comes and touches him. Leupold believes that the same angel mentioned in verse 10 and following is the one who strengthens Daniel in each instance.<sup>573</sup> However, in view of the plurality of angelic ministry, there is no special reason why Daniel should not have the ministry of more than one angel. The description of verse 16, as well as the description of verse 18, would be unnecessary if only one angel was involved. The context of verses 18 and 19, however, seems to link this angel as the one who addressed Daniel in verses 11-12.

The angel again exhorts Daniel with the reassuring salutation, "O man greatly beloved," to not be afraid, to receive peace from God, and to be strong. Daniel was then strengthened and was able to say, "Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me."

The detail given to this experience of Daniel leaves the impression that the revelation to follow must be of tremendous character, as indeed it is. The triple strengthening of Daniel in this agonizing experience has sometimes been compared to that of the Lord's temptation in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mt 26:39-44; Mk 14:35-41; Lk 22:39-44).<sup>574</sup> In both cases, an angel is the source of strength (Lk 22:43). This is the last time in this vision where Daniel requires additional strength to be administered by the angel.

#### The Angelic Revelation Introduced

10:20-21 Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. But I will show thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.

The stage now having been set for the great revelation to follow, the angel poses the question once again, "Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee?" Critics have found fault with these concluding verses of chapter 10 as needlessly repetitious and confusing.<sup>575</sup> Montgomery is sure that the text here is faulty. Such criticism, however, does not take into consideration Daniel's weak and confused state. It would be quite natural after Daniel's experience of swooning and being unable to speak, now to consider the purpose of the angelic message. The angel reveals that he is obligated to return to "fight with the prince of Persia" and by implication, later with "the prince of Grecia." This also has been assailed as unnecessary, due to the previous victory; but the implication is that there is constant warfare in spiritual victory, and this would require the further attention of the angel. The mention of both Persia and Greece also directs our attention to the second and third major empires which are involved in the prophecies of Daniel 11:1-35. From this we can learn that, behind the many details of prophecy relating to the history of this period, there is the unseen struggle between angelic forces that the will of God may be accomplished.

An unusual phrase is found in verse 21, the scripture of truth. This term is literally "the writing of truth" ( *keta*,<sup>b</sup> *áe†met*), a reference to God's record of truth in general, of which the Bible is one expression. The facts to be revealed are already in God's record and are now to become part of the Holy Scriptures. The plan of God is obviously greater than that which is revealed in the Bible itself.

Verse 21 is introduced by "But" ( *áaba*,<sup>l</sup>) which is a strong adversative particle which serves to introduce the antidote to the fears for the theocracy cited in verse 20. The angelic conflict, great though it is, is subject to "the writing of truth," translated "the book of truth" in most modern English versions. Zöckler comments, "Properly, 'in a book of truth,' i.e., in a Divine document upon which 'the yet unrevealed (Deut. 32:34) fortunes of nations (Rev. 5:1) as well as of individuals (Psa. 139:60) in the future are entered' (Hitzig). Cf. the books of judgment in chap. 7:10 and also the term [ *áe†met*] in chap. 11:2, which briefly comprehends the contents of the book of truth."<sup>576</sup>

Concerning the "writing of truth," Jeffrey notes, "In the Talmud (Rosh-ha-Shana 16 b) we read how on New Years Day the books were opened and fates recorded. These tablets in the book are frequently mentioned in Jubilees and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, and in the Prayer of Joseph preserved in Origen, Philocalia 23, 15 we read, 'For I have read in the tablets of heaven all that shall befall you and your sons.'<sup>577</sup> The sovereignty of God reflected in His plan revealed in the Scriptures is Daniel's assurance in this hour of uncertainty and need. To this basis for faith, the angelic messenger refers.

In regard to the coming revelation and the spiritual struggle it records, the angelic messenger has been given unusual responsibility which is exceeded only by Michael, described as "your prince." Daniel in this

way is reminded of the special angelic ministry which God had provided him all through life and especially in this present period of detailed divine revelation. The entire experience of Daniel in this chapter is on the one hand a reminder of human weakness and insufficiency, and on the other, of divine enablement which will strengthen Daniel for his responsible task of recording this great revelation. The fact that an entire chapter is devoted to this preparation makes clear that the revelation to follow is important in the consummation of God's purposes in the world.

542 H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, p. 441.

543 For discussion from the liberal point of view, see J. A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, pp. 137-39; 404-5.

544 *Ibid.*, p. 405.

545 Leupold, p. 442.

546 E. J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, p. 223. Young cites in support several articles by Robert Dick Wilson, such as "The Title 'king of Persia' in the Scriptures," *Princeton Theological Review*, 15:90-145 and "Royal Titles in Antiquity: An Essay in Criticism," *Princeton Theological Review*, 2:257-82; 465-97; 618-64; 3: 55-80; 238-67; 422-40; 558-72.

547 Cf. Young, p. 223; Leupold, p. 443.

548 Montgomery, p. 404.

549 Leupold, p. 443.

550 *Ibid.*, p. 446.

551 *Ibid.*, p. 447.

552 Young, p. 223.

553 Montgomery, p. 407.

554 C. F. Keil, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*, p. 409; Leupold, p. 447; Young, p. 224. Contrast Montgomery, p. 407.

555 Leupold, pp. 447-48.

556 Young, p. 225.

557 Keil, p. 409; Young, p. 225.

558 Montgomery, p. 408.

559 S. R. Driver, *The Book of Daniel*, p. 154.

560 *Ibid.*; Leupold, p. 449.

561 N. W. Porteous, *Daniel, A Commentary*, p. 152.

- 562 Driver, p. 155.
- 563 Leupold, p. 450.
- 564 Brown, Driver, and Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 451.
- 565 J. Calvin, Commentaries on the Book of Daniel, 2:252.
- 566 O. Zockler, "The Book of the Prophet Daniel," in Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, p. 228.
- 567 Keil, p. 419.
- 568 Leupold, pp. 457-58.
- 569 Young, p. 227.
- 570 Calvin, 2:257.
- 571 Montgomery, p. 413.
- 572 R. H. Charles, The Book of Daniel, p. 116.
- 573 Leupold, p. 463.
- 574 Ibid., p. 464.
- 575 Cf. Montgomery, pp. 416-18.
- 576 Zockler, p. 231.
- 577 A. Jeffrey, "The Book of Daniel," in The Interpreter's Bible, 6:510.

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