

# A Glorious Vision

## Daniel 10:1-21

A journalist assigned to the Jerusalem bureau takes an apartment overlooking the Wailing Wall. Every day when she looks out, she sees an old Jewish man praying vigorously. So, the journalist goes down and introduces herself to the old man.

She asks, "You come every day to the wall. How long have you done that, and what are you praying for?"

The old man replies, "I have come here to pray every day for 25 years. In the morning I pray for world peace and then for the brotherhood of man. I go home, have a cup of tea, and I come back and pray for the eradication of illness and disease from the earth."

The journalist is amazed. "How does it make you feel to come here every day for 25 years and pray for these things?" she asks.

The old man looks at her sadly. "Like I'm talking to a wall." ("Wailing Wall," Religious Joke of the Day, beliefnet.com, 4-25-03; [www.PreachingToday.com](http://www.PreachingToday.com))

How often do people feel like they're talking to a wall when they pray? They pray for something over and over, and nothing seems to happen. Then they begin to wonder if it isn't all a waste of time.

If that's been your experience, you might be encouraged by what happened to the prophet, Daniel, in the Old Testament. He prayed desperately for three weeks, and nothing happened. Then all of a sudden an answer came that laid him flat on the ground.

Chapters 10-12 record Daniel's final vision and message recorded in this book. Chapter 10 is the introduction to the vision, with chapter 11 spelling out the detailed events which will occur from Daniel's day to the end of time. Chapter 12 then provides a final broad overview of the prophecies of this book, restating the big picture, and closing with comforting words spoken to Daniel.

In chapter 10, verses 1-3 provide a brief description of the events leading up to the vision. Verses 4-6 describe the One whom Daniel sees in his vision. The impact which this vision had on Daniel and those with him at the time is revealed in verses 7-9. Verses 10-14 disclose the words of the angel who spoke to Daniel, explaining the purpose of his visitation and the reason for his delay. In verses 15-17, an account is given of the debilitating impact this visitation had on Daniel. Verse 18 of chapter 10 through verse 1 of chapter 11 provides a record of the encouragement and strengthening of the angel, along with his account of the part he plays in matters in heaven and on earth.

### I. The Setting of Daniel's Vision (10:1-3)

**1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message was true, but the appointed time was long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision.**

**2 In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks.**

**3 I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.**

The chapter begins with an important chronological note. Verse 1 tells us that Daniel received this word in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, that is, about 536 BC. That date is important because it's now been 70 years that Daniel has been in Babylon. The years of the exile have finally ended. The first group of Jews have returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel. Although about 49,000 people went home to Jerusalem around this time, Daniel was not among them. Perhaps at his advanced age he could not make the arduous journey. More likely, God simply told him that he had more work in Babylon for him to do.

Verse 1 tells us three things about the message Daniel received here:

- 1) that the **message was true**,
- 2) that **the appointed time was long**, (the foot note in the New King James Version gives a different translation of that phrase as "*and of great conflict*", The NASB and ESV also read that way. That translation certainly fits the context well in chapters 10-12. The essence of the message Daniel receives condensed into one word would be "conflict." We will see war in the spiritual realm in chapter 10 and on the earth in chapter 11.

And finally we are told,

- 3) that unlike the vision of chapter 8, Daniel **understood the message, and had understanding of the vision**.

Daniel tells us that his vision was preceded by three weeks of mourning during which time he did not enjoy the fine foods were available to him. We're not surprised to find Daniel here in mourning and in prayer. We have seen his spiritual discipline before, but there is something unique about his fasting and his mourning and his tears and his prayers in this passage. A. W. Tozer in his essay, *God Tells the Man Who Cares*, says this: "The Bible was written in tears, and to tears it will yield its best treasures."

Over what was Daniel mourning? We are not given the answer. Perhaps he was still mourning over Israel's sin, or over the fact that so few had returned to the land, or over the difficulties the Jews who had returned to Jerusalem were having. Whatever the reason for it, Daniel was mourning. Daniel's vision was an answer to his prayer.

### **Daniel's Vision (10:4-6)**

**4 Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that is, the Tigris,**

**5 I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz!**

**6 His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.**

Along with several others (see verse 7), Daniel was standing beside the Tigris river when he received his vision. He was not transported to this place in his vision, as in chapter 8 (verses 1-2), but was already there when the vision appeared to him. It was now the twenty-fourth day of the first month after three full weeks of mourning. The reason for the delay will be given shortly, but first Daniel gives us an account of what he saw in the vision.

Looking up, Daniel saw a person with human characteristics but with qualities which seemed to far surpass those of any mere man. Clothed in linen, His waist was girded with a belt of the finest pure gold. Somehow the splendor of His body could not be concealed by the linen garment, for Daniel tells us his body was like beryl. Beryl was a precious stone bright and gleaming in its beauty.

The face of this radiated with the brightness and brilliance of lightening. His eyes were like flaming torches. The arms and feet were like polished bronze. When he spoke, it was like the combined voices of a large multitude.

Whether this “**certain man**” was an angel or a theophany of the LORD has provoked considerable discussion and disagreement by Bible commentators. I have concluded the answer is found by answering this question: “What was the vision Daniel received in chapter 10?” I think verse 7 indicates that the vision Daniel received here was the appearance of this marvelous being described in verses 5 and 6.

If Daniel’s vision is the appearance of the spectacular being in verses 5 and 6, then I am convinced this being is none other than our Lord Himself. Compare this vision in our text with these two other visions, recorded in Ezekiel 1 and Revelation 1:

**(Ezekiel 1:26-28) 26 And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it. 27 Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. 28 Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. So when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One speaking.**

**(Revelation 1:12-18) 12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. 14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; 15 His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; 16 He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. 17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. 18 "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.**

It makes good sense that the final vision of the Book of Daniel would be that of none other than our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. This is the clearest vision of the Lord in Daniel, although it is not the only one. In the first prophecy of Daniel in chapter 2, our Lord was symbolically introduced by the “**stone made without hands**” who crushes the kingdoms of this world (2:34-35, 44-45). In chapter 3 He was the fourth man in the fire like the Son of God. In chapter 7, He is presented as the “**One like the Son of Man,**” who is “**given dominion, glory and a kingdom**” (7:13-14). In chapter 8, He is the “**prince of princes**” whom the little horn opposes (8:25). In chapter 9, our Lord is the

Messiah who **“shall be cut off, but not for Himself”** (9:26). Now, in chapter 10, we see our Lord in His splendor and glory, as He will appear at His Second Coming.

## **II. The Response to Daniel’s Vision (10:7-9)**

**7 And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.**

**8 Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength.**

**9 Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.**

Daniel was accompanied by others beside the Tigris river as the vision of the Lord was revealed to him. The others did not see the vision but they knew something supernatural was taking place and ran to hide themselves. Maybe it was like what happened when Paul saw the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus. Acts 9:7 tells us **“And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one.”**

The one thing the men with Daniel certainly observed was his response to the vision. Being in the presence of the glorified Lord had the same effect on Daniel as on others who saw Him in His glory. Daniel’s face lost all its color. Involuntarily, Daniel fell prostrate to the ground, weakened by the sight of our Lord’s splendor. He fainted into a deep sleep.

## **III. An Angelic Explanation (10:10-14)**

**10 Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees.**

**11 And he said to me, “O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you.” And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling.**

**12 Then he said to me, “Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words.**

**13 “But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia.**

**14 “Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future.”**

In his overwhelmed and weakened condition, a hand reached out and touched Daniel, lifting him from the ground so that he was now on his hands and knees. It seems likely that this one who touched Daniel is an angel and is different from the man in the vision. He spoke to Daniel, referring to him as a **“man of high esteem”** (see also 9:23; 10:19). Daniel was highly regarded on earth and in heaven as well. He is granted the ability to understand the words which will be spoken to him. When commanded to do so, Daniel stood, wobbling on his feet it would seem, like a new-born calf.

The angel now seeks to encourage Daniel, telling him not to be afraid. From Daniel's first request for understanding, his prayer was heard, and the angel was commissioned to visit him in answer to that prayer. The delay in the angel's visit was a part of the sovereign plan and purpose of God. Nevertheless, there was a delay from the time the angel was commissioned to the time he arrived. The angel explains his delayed visitation in response to Daniel's prayer.

The moment Daniel's prayer reached heaven, the angel was dispatched to earth to visit Daniel in answer to his prayer. The **"prince of the kingdom of Persia"** opposed the angel, resulting in his three-week delay. With the help of Michael, this angel was finally able to complete his mission and visit Daniel. Michael is the second angel to be named in the Bible. He is referred to as **"one of the chief princes"** (verse 13) and later as **"your prince"** (verse 21). In the New Testament book of Jude he is called **"Michael the archangel,"** (Jude 1:9). Revelation 12:7 tells about a war in heaven in which **"Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought."**

It seems safe to say that the **"princes"** referred to here in chapter 10 are not human rulers but angelic powers. Michael, who is Israel's **"prince,"** is a faithful servant of God. Since he fights against the princes of Persia (verse 13) and Greece (verse 20) they must be fallen angels, who are in league with the devil and who exercise dominion over particular geographical and political nations on earth.

In Isaiah 14 (verses 3-20), we find the **"king of Babylon"** spoken of first as a human king and second as Satan himself. In Ezekiel 28 (verses 11-19), we find the **"prince of Tyre"** spoken of in a similar manner. On the one hand he is a human ruler and on the other a personification of Satan.

So here also the **"prince of the kingdom of Persia"** cannot be merely a man. This must be some kind of demonic force assigned by Satan to serve in the court of the Persian king. Evidently his job was to hinder God's work and to discourage God's people in Persia. He must have been a strong demon because he stopped the angel messenger from God for 21 days. Then Michael the archangel intervenes and the angel is able to complete his mission.

In verse 14, the angel explains to Daniel his purpose in coming to him. The angel came to give him an understanding of what was to happen in the **"latter days."** The vision of the glorified Lord, the angel explains, pertains not only to Daniel's people, the Jews, but to **"days yet future."** We know from the New Testament that Christ will not appear in His glory until the time for judgment and the fulfillment of the kingdom of God has come.

#### **IV. Daniel's Weakness (10:15-17)**

**15 When he had spoken such words to me, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless.**

**16 And suddenly, one having the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke, saying to him who stood before me, "My lord, because of the vision my sorrows have overwhelmed me, and I have retained no strength.**

**17 "For how can this servant of my lord talk with you, my lord? As for me, no strength remains in me now, nor is any breath left in me."**

The vision of the Lord, presence of the angel, and his words render Daniel so awe-struck he is speechless. The angel reaches out, touching Daniel's lips so that he could now speak, and he did. He explained that the vision had left him in anguish and

exhausted, feeling utterly unworthy to speak. His strength vanished, and he seems to have gasped for breath. This is the reaction of everyone who gets a glimpse of the glory and majesty of the Lord.

## V. The Angel's Ministry (10:16–11:1)

**18 Then again, *the one* having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me.**

**19 And he said, "O man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace *be* to you; be strong, yes, be strong!" So when he spoke to me I was strengthened, and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."**

**20 Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come.**

**21 "But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince.**

**(Dan 11:1 NKJV) 1 "Also in the first year of Darius the Mede, I, *even I*, stood up to confirm and strengthen him.)**

The angel dealing with Daniel, like all angels which appear to men in the Bible, had the appearance of a man. Through his touch, he imparted strength to Daniel. His words likewise comforted and encouraged Daniel. Once again, he spoke to Daniel as one held in high esteem, telling him not to be afraid and giving him a greeting of peace.

Strengthened and encouraged, Daniel tells the angel he was ready and able to hear what he had come to reveal to him. Before giving Daniel the message he has been sent to deliver, he tells the prophet what awaits him upon his departure—he will return to do battle with the “**prince of Persia**.” He further informs Daniel that the “**prince of Greece**” is about to come.

Why does the angel bother to inform Daniel of these things? The princes of Persia and Greece are the heavenly counterparts of the earthly kings of Persia and Greece. The prophecies of chapters 8, 9, and 11 concentrate on these two kingdoms: Persia and Greece. It is as though the struggle is waged and won simultaneously by the angelic forces in heaven and on earth by the struggle of human kings. Daniel has certainly taught us that the rise and fall of kings is according to the sovereign plan and purpose of God (see Daniel 4:26, 32). Now we see that this involves both men and angels.

Here in our text the curtain is lifted so that events on earth, which seemed only to have human causes and instrumentality, now appear in relationship to angelic activity. This is all very mysterious to us. But if it is to be taken literally, as I think it must be, it tells us of unusual happening in the invisible realm where demons and angels fight to either promote or obstruct God's work in the world.

If this sounds like a little too much to take, consider the familiar words of Ephesians 6:12:

**12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.**

This verse is helpful on several levels. First, it reminds us that our battle is not against other humans. Sometimes we focus on the abortionists, the pornographers, the godless

politicians, the corrupt business leaders, the drug dealers, and other people, as if they were the source of our problems. Yet those people are not the enemy. They are prisoners of the enemy. Although they are still morally culpable for their choices, yet they are also in the service of evil beings who influence them in ways they do not realize.

Second, this verse teaches us that there are various kinds of demonic powers. There are “**principalities**,” “**powers**,” “**rulers of the darkness of this age**,” and “**spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places**.” It’s instructive to know that just as there are various types of angels so the demons are organized and serve different purposes in Satan’s service.

Finally, this passage in Ephesians encourages us to “**put on the whole armor of God**.” Our salvation and its resulting godly character through the Holy Spirit actually does make a day-to-day difference. We are all foot soldiers in a vast invisible war that stretches across the cosmos.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter points us to several important truths for our consideration.

**1. Christ is the centerpiece of prophecy and the goal of history.** Daniel’s vision is the concluding vision of the Book, the climax of the prophetic revelation of Daniel. Daniel’s vision is of Christ. In the study of prophecy, let us be careful to never lose our focus: The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to defeat the enemies of God, to judge the world, and to establish the kingdom of God, is the climax and culmination of prophecy. Our hope and joy is not just heaven; it is to live in the Lord’s presence, eternally praising and adoring Him.

**2. God is in control of the events in heaven and on earth.** Notice what the angel says to Daniel in verse 21, “**But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth**.” The German commentator, C.F. Keil, wrote, “It is the book in which God has designated beforehand, according to truth, the history of the world as it shall certainly be unfolded.” In other words, God is the author of history, and he has already written the story. The grand scheme of history has already been written out. That’s why God is able to reveal future events to His prophets, even with the amazing detail that He does when we get to chapter 11.

I believe those two things are the major message of chapter 10. But there is also the minor subject of prayer and spiritual warfare. Let me give you five statements that summarize the truth we can take home with us. (Thanks to Ray Pritchard for these).

### **A. The prayers of believers are immediately heard by God.**

The angel tells Daniel in verse 12 that his prayers were heard in heaven the moment he sought wisdom from God. God hears us when we pray and our petitions reach Him the moment they are formed in our hearts.

### **B. Unseen spiritual warfare may at times delay answers to our prayers.**

I believe that what happened to Daniel may also happen to us. It may be that our deepest, most heartfelt prayers are sometimes delayed by what occurs in the invisible realm. When we pray for our loved ones to be saved and for wayward children to return to the Lord, we should not be surprised that those prayers are not immediately answered. Satan hates that kind of praying because it is a direct attack on his kingdom. He will not give up his captives without a fight.

### **C. Wrestling in prayer is exhausting work.**

Daniel fasted 21 days while he sought the Lord. Then he fell on his face when he met the Lord Jesus Christ by the Tigris River. Then he bowed down to the ground, totally exhausted, when he heard the angel's explanation.

When Jesus did battle in prayer in the garden on the night He was betrayed, Luke tells us, **"And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground."** And like Daniel, **"an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him."**

It's easy to say, "Lord, bless me and my family. And by the way, thank you for this food. Amen." That's good but it's hardly the kind of prayer that will cause Satan to tremble. It's time for all of us to raise the bar and pray for kingdom causes.

#### **D. There is an unseen spiritual battle going on.**

Daniel 10 is one of the few times when the curtain is pulled back and get a glimpse into the spiritual realm. 2 Kings 6 tells of another time when the invisible war became visible. The mighty army of Syria surrounded the Elisha and his servant in a city called Dothan. It appeared the situation was totally hopeless. When Elisha's servant saw the armies of the enemy on every hand, he despaired and cried out, "What shall we do?" Elisha answered with words that seemed to make no sense, "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Then Elisha asked the Lord to open the eyes of his servant. When the servant looked around, he saw above the army of Syria the flaming chariots of the army of God.

Just because we can't see something doesn't mean it isn't there. If for one second we could truly see with the eyes of God, we would realize that there is a lot more going on that meets the eye.

#### **E. Our spiritual warfare is fought with humility, prayer, knowledge, and perseverance.**

Since most of us will never see angels and demons, we don't need to worry about what they are doing. Our part is to do what Daniel did. Walk humbly before the Lord, seek his face in prayer, grow in knowledge from the Word of God, and persevere in faithfulness no matter how tough the times may be.

Let the people of God take courage. Keep your eyes on Jesus. Run to the cross when you feel faint. Lean heavily on the Lord. Be continually filled with the Holy Spirit of power.

As Ephesians 6:13 says, **"Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."**

God's victory is assured. In Romans 16:20, Paul wrote, **"the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly."**

The day of victory is approaching. Are you ready for it? Are you living in light of it? Are you living in light of the fact that Jesus is going to return soon and bring victory to this world? If you're a believer in Jesus Christ you should be.

Perhaps you haven't yet put your faith in Christ. If not, we invite you to come to Him, to believe in Jesus Christ. Daniel was given a glimpse of Him and His glory and His power by the Tigris River. Jesus is the Son of God, the all-powerful God. He became a man and allowed Himself to be arrested, tried and crucified for us, for us who are sinners. He paid price of death for all who believe in Him. So if you're here without Him, turn away from your sin in repentance. Believe in Him. Receive Him. At that moment, your sins are



taken away, you are born again as a child of God, you're clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

Come to Him today.