

## ❖ CHAPTER TEN ❖

### *Daniel's Mourning*

verses 1-4

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.

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

3 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.

4 And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel;

#### **Setting**

Daniel's last vision occurred on the twenty-fourth day of the first month (Nisan) in the third year of Cyrus (verses 1, 4). The tables of Parker and Dubberstein specify the day as April 23, 536 B.C.<sup>1</sup> Why Daniel, in composing his memoirs, should have furnished a precise date only for this event is uncertain. Perhaps he wished to stress that the vision occurred at a definite time long before its fulfillment.

If Daniel was at least eleven when he was deported in 605, he was now an old man, in his eighties. Since the events reported in chapters 10-12 are the latest in Daniel's book, we naturally infer that Daniel did not live much longer. Nearly the last words that the Lord spoke to him were, "Thou shalt rest" (Daniel 12:13), perhaps a gentle notification that his death was imminent.

Daniel saw the vision by the great river Hiddekel (verse 4), known today as the Tigris.<sup>2</sup> Just as the vision in chapter 8 came to Daniel at a place that would be the setting of prophesied events, so the place he names in chapter 10 may be significant. Perhaps it will be the scene of important events during the career of the Antichrist.

#### **Glimpses of the unseen**

The KJV of verse 1 is somewhat wide of the mark. In the Hebrew text, "thing" is *dabar*, which means "word,"<sup>3</sup> and "time appointed" is *tsaba*.<sup>4</sup> The original reads, "And true (was) the word, and a *tsaba* great."<sup>5</sup>

The question perplexing translators is, what does *tsaba* mean in this context? It is a common word in the Old Testament, 394 times translated “host,” twenty-nine times “army,” and forty-two times “war” or “warfare.”<sup>6</sup> The last is probably the correct rendering here. Daniel meant that the angel’s true “word” (verse 1) displayed a warfare which, however incredible, is nonetheless real.

He was not referring primarily to the coming protracted warfare between the kings of the north and the kings of the south, for he understood that this warfare on the world stage would merely be the shadow of greater warfare in the spiritual realm. He was referring rather to angelic conflict.

The record of Daniel’s last vision gives a fuller view of unseen forces than can be found anywhere else in Scripture. Daniel learned of a past struggle between Michael and the prince of Persia (verse 13), of an impending resumption of the same struggle (verse 20), of a possible clash between the angels of God and the prince of Greece (verse 20), and of one angel’s mission to defend Darius the Mede (Daniel 11:1). Although the long prophecy of the Seleucids and Ptolemies makes no mention of angels, it suggests that spiritual warfare would intensify behind the scenes as these rival powers inflicted ever more violence upon the Jews (Daniel 11:5–35). And it suggests further that this warfare would reach a climax when the Seleucid king appeared who claimed to be divine (Daniel 11:36–45).

### **The switch to ordinary weeks**

When the vision came to Daniel, he had been in mourning for many days (verse 2). During this period he had denied himself pleasant bread, wine, and flesh and had even neglected the care of his body, for he had refrained from anointing himself (verse 3).

The period of mourning is defined as “three full weeks” (verse 2) and as “three whole weeks” (verse 3). In both instances, the literal reading is, “three weeks of days.”<sup>7</sup> Daniel specified “days” to distinguish these weeks from the seventy weeks of chapter 9. His intent was not to avert confusion about the length of his mourning, for no reader would be likely to imagine that he mourned for twenty-one years. Rather, his intent was to confirm that the seventy weeks stretch over years rather than days.

### **Cause of Daniel’s mourning**

By now a vast number of Jews and Israelites were living in exile. The number perhaps exceeded a million. Yet after Cyrus issued the decree permitting the tribes to go back to their homeland, less than fifty thousand assembled and returned (Ezra 2:64). Nearly all were

descendants of Judah or Levi (Ezra 2:1–65). The ten tribes taken into captivity almost two centuries earlier had been so completely assimilated by pagan culture that either they had forgotten who they were or they did not care to be identified with the people of God. Interest in returning was not much greater among more recent captives. Most had found good livelihoods and settled into comfortable circumstances. The prospect of returning to a ruined land, where they would be unlikely to enjoy either peace or prosperity, was not inviting. The unwillingness of the exiles to go back and rebuild the nation of Judah was doubtless the cause of Daniel's mourning.

Why had Daniel himself not returned to Judah? Perhaps, deeming his services indispensable, the king had denied him permission to return. Or perhaps the decision had been left to Daniel, and for two reasons he had judged it best to stay in Babylon.

1. Since he was now in his eighties, he was too old to start a new life, and maybe also he was not strong enough to undertake the hard journey back to Judah.

2. He could be of greatest assistance to his people by remaining close to the seat of power. Should the need arise, he could go directly to King Darius and intercede on their behalf. The king was, after all, his personal friend and patron.

## *The Glorious Visitor*

*verses 5–7*

5 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:

6 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.

7 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.

### **His appearance**

As Daniel stood by the great river Hiddekel, his eye suddenly caught sight of a splendid supernatural Being (verses 4–5). This Being was clothed in materials familiar to man. The garment He wore was made of linen, and His loins were girded with gold (verse 5). But the Being Himself was essentially indescribable. So that we might form some picture of His appearance, though it transcended human experience, Daniel furnishes a list of similes. His body was like beryl, His face like

lightning, and His eyes like lamps of fire (verse 6). He had arms and feet the color of polished brass and a voice like a multitude (verse 6). In Hebrew, the stone called beryl is *tarshish*. Although of uncertain identity, it may be the same as modern topaz, which has a golden luster.<sup>8</sup>

### **Proof that He was the preincarnate Christ**

The identity of the glorious Being described in Daniel 10 has long been debated. Some say that He is the preincarnate Christ, others that he is Michael, and others that he is another angel. Each of the leading possibilities has been advocated by good men. Except for the failure of many to distinguish the Being in verses 5–9 from the angel in verse 10, all devout Bible students would, in light of the following considerations, recognize that the former personage is the preincarnate Christ:

1. The glorified Christ manifested Himself to John when he was imprisoned on the isle of Patmos. John reported,

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send *it* unto the seven churches which are in Asia: unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14 His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire;

15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength.

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last.

Revelation 1:10–17

Christ displayed many of the attributes that Daniel saw in the manlike Ancient of Days (Daniel 7) or in the man clothed in linen (Daniel 10). A comparison of their portraits shows that all three august Beings are the same person.

<b>CHRIST IN REVELATION 1:10-17</b>	<b>MANLIKE ANCIENT OF DAYS IN DANIEL 7:9, 13</b>	<b>MAN CLOTHED IN LINEN IN DANIEL 10:5-6</b>
“one like unto the Son of man” (lit., “like a son of man” <sup>9</sup> )	“one like the Son of man” (lit., “like a son of man” <sup>10</sup> )	“a certain man”
“clothed with a garment down to the foot”	“garment . . . white as snow”	“clothed in linen”
“girt about the paps with a golden girdle”		“loins . . . girded with fine gold of Uphaz”
“his head and <i>his</i> hairs . . . white like wool, as white as snow”	“hair of his head like the pure wool”	
“eyes . . . as a flame of fire”		“eyes as lamps [torches <sup>11</sup> ] of fire”
“feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned [‘glowed’ <sup>12</sup> ] in a furnace”		“his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass”
“voice as the sound of many waters”		“voice of a multitude”
“in his right hand seven stars”		
“out of his mouth . . . a sharp twoedged sword”		
“countenance . . . as the sun shineth in his strength”		“face as the appearance of lightning”
		“body . . . like the beryl”

Although John’s portrait of Christ has some novel elements, the resemblance to the other two portraits is striking. The opening vision in the Book of Revelation seems intended to identify the One who twice appears behind a cloud of mystery in the Book of Daniel.

2. At the close of the vision recorded in Daniel 10–12, the man clothed in linen swore by God that the last half of the Tribulation would be limited to 3½ years (Daniel 12:7). Who alone has the privilege to swear? It is forbidden to man. Jesus said,

34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne:

35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

Matthew 5:34–37

Only God has the privilege to swear, and He swears only by Himself. Since Christ is the only person of the Trinity who has ever assumed human form, the man clothed in linen must be Christ.

An oath attached to a promise can be understood in three ways: (1) as certification that, come what may, the oath taker will certainly keep the promise, (2) as a demand that the higher person or thing named in the oath will bring the promise to fulfillment, or (3) as a wish or consent that this higher power will condemn the oath taker should he renege on the promise. The reasons that make swearing unlawful for any man also make it unlawful for any angel. An angel should not pretend that by his own power and resolve he can guarantee what will happen in the future. Moreover, he should not demand anything of his higher power, God. And he should not offer himself for condemnation under any circumstances, because God alone is the rightful Judge. Nor should he even wish for his own condemnation, because condemnation is not God's desire for any of His creatures.

### **Reaction of the men with Daniel**

Daniel reports that although the men with him could not see the vision, they sensed that they were in the presence of something extraordinary, in the realm of the supernatural. They shook with fear and fled to places of hiding (verse 7). The reaction of these men is reminiscent of a similar incident in the life of Paul. When he met the glorified Christ on the road to Damascus,

. . . The men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

Acts 9:7

Later, as he told an angry mob in Jerusalem the story of his conversion, Paul remembered,

And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

Acts 22:9

Paul evidently means that his companions heard a noise, but did not recognize it as a voice or understand what the voice was saying. Paul's experience matches Daniel's in several particulars.

1. Both men agree that Christ's presence is attended by a great light.

2. They agree also that when Christ appears to a single person amidst a group of others, the others cannot see Him or receive His words.
3. They agree that the effect upon the others is to induce great fear.

### **Typical meaning of the incident**

Daniel is a type of the church. His last vision foreshadowed in many respects that future day when the church will meet Christ.

1. As Christ came suddenly and took Daniel by surprise, so, when He comes to gather the church, He will arrive unexpectedly, like a thief in the night (Matthew 24:42–44; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; Revelation 16:15).

2. Daniel had for many weeks been earnestly petitioning God to remedy the indifference of those professing to be His people. Similarly, worthiness to see Christ at His appearing will be demonstrated by faithfulness in prayer.

Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

Luke 21:36

3. When Christ came to Daniel, only Daniel could see Him. So also when Christ returns for the church, only the church will see Him and bask in His glory.

4. Great fear seized the men with Daniel. Likewise, all those excluded from the company gathered into Christ's presence will

15 . . . [hide] themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;  
16 And . . . [will say] to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

Revelation 6:15–16

### **Progressive revelation**

The meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in the second year of his reign was revealed to Daniel "in a night vision" (Daniel 2:19). In other words, the Lord used one dream to explain another.

In the first year of Belshazzar, Daniel saw the four beasts representing kingdoms of the earth "in a dream and visions of his head upon his bed" (Daniel 7:1). He recalls that after the dream had run its course,

15 I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of *my* body, and the visions of my head troubled me.

16 I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things.

Daniel 7:15–16

Apparently, he saw the angels after he had wakened from sleep. Since he refers to them offhandedly, making no remark upon their appearance, it is probable that they looked like ordinary men. Talking with them did not affect him adversely.

His vision two years later, in the third year of Belshazzar, was a more unsettling experience. He says nothing about his circumstances beforehand, but confides that afterward he fainted and spent several days in bed (Daniel 8:1–2, 27). So, the vision likely came to him at his home when he was fully awake. Later, when Gabriel approached him to interpret the vision, Daniel reacted fearfully, fell on his face, and lost consciousness (Daniel 8:17–18). The cause of his acute weakness was neither the vision nor the angel, but the divine glory of Christ, who was standing nearby. Although Daniel could not see Him, he could hear His voice and sense His presence.

Daniel's last vision, shortly before his death, also came to him when he was fully awake. He was standing by the river Hiddekel in the company of other men. Then he saw not only three of the beings in Christ's entourage, but also Christ Himself (Daniel 10–12).

Daniel's visions are therefore a progression from mere dreams to an encounter with the living Christ. This progression afforded him an ever-expanding view of the spiritual realm. The many wonderful revelations granted to Daniel were undoubtedly a reward for his life of steady faith and obedience.

## *The Angelic Helper*

*verses 8–11, 15–19*

8 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.

9 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.

10 And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and *upon* the palms of my hands.

11 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. . . .

15 And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb.

16 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.

17 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.

18 Then there came again and touched me *one* like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me,

19 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.

### Daniel's acute weakness

Christ's purpose in appearing to Daniel was not to do him harm. Yet the sight of divine glory was so shocking to Daniel's sinful flesh that, as he reports, "There remained no strength in me: for my comeliness ['splendor'<sup>13</sup>—that is, everything in his appearance and position that excited admiration] was turned in me into corruption ['destruction'<sup>14</sup>], and I retained no strength" (verse 8). One effect of the vision was to make Daniel painfully aware that such glory as he could boast was really vile-ness. Another was to drain away his vitality, leaving him unconscious with his face in the dust (verse 9). Only with angelic help could he rise to his hands and knees. The Hebrew text says, "A hand touched me and set me shaking on my knees and the palms of my hands" (verse 10).<sup>15</sup> After he struggled to his feet, his body trembled with weakness and fear (verse 11).

Judging that Daniel was now ready to hear the long, important message he was sent to deliver, the angel began to speak. But when he finished his formal salutation and paused for Daniel's reply, Daniel dropped his head and stood speechless (verse 15). Any of us in the angel's place would probably have been slightly annoyed, but the angel was of a kindly sort. After assuring Daniel that he was well loved, he gently urged him to fear not, gave him his blessing, and twice encouraged him to be strong (verse 19).

If Christ's presence so overwhelmed a man He loved, a man to whom He appeared out of a benevolent motive, a man who was given special grace to look upon His glory, what would the effect of Christ's presence be upon an enemy! If the friend of Christ fell impotent at His feet, what will happen to the Antichrist when he meets Christ ablaze with righteous anger!

And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume [*analisko*<sup>16</sup>] with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.

2 Thessalonians 2:8

Another text explicates the meaning of *analisko*.

And when his disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume [*analisko*<sup>17</sup>] them, even as Elias did?

Luke 9:54

Paul's dire prophecy that the Lord will "consume" the Antichrist therefore implies that He will destroy him by fire.

### **Proof that everything Daniel heard was spoken by the same angel**

After recovering his speech, Daniel protested that he was too weak to carry on a conversation with the angel (verse 17). The expression "talk with [*im*,' which indeed means 'with'<sup>18</sup>]" (verse 17) reveals Daniel's belief that he was addressing the angel who had just talked to him. Thus, on the basis of Daniel's informed opinion, we can identify "one like the similitude of the sons of men" (verse 16) with the speaker in verses 11–14.

This speaker had said that he was sent to show Daniel future things, but that while on his way, he met an enemy, the prince of Persia, whose opposition he overcame only with the help of Michael (verses 12–13). Later, when "one like the appearance of a man" (verse 18) spoke to Daniel, he said that he would soon "return to fight with the prince of Persia" (verse 20). We thereby discover that the speaker in verses 19–21 is also the same as the initial speaker.

It is clear that from verse 10 to the end of the chapter, Daniel interacts with a single angelic being.

### **Proof that this angel was not deity**

The angel who spoke to Daniel was surely a being of great power. He could strengthen kings (Daniel 11:1) and grapple with high-ranking fallen angels (Daniel 10:13). But seven considerations establish that he was an angel subordinate to Christ rather than Christ Himself.

1. He lacked the gloriously supernatural appearance of the man clothed in linen. The phrases describing the angel who conversed with Daniel—"one like the similitude of the sons of men" (verse 16; literally, "in likeness as the sons of man"<sup>19</sup>) and "one like the appearance of a man" (verse 18; literally, "in appearance as a man"<sup>20</sup>)—recall earlier remarks about Gabriel (Daniel 8:15; 9:21).

2. The angel said, "I am now sent" (verse 11). In other words, he was under the authority of another.

3. Before giving the words of an angelic spokesman for God, each of the previous two visions in the Book of Daniel furnishes a preliminary glimpse of higher authority. In chapter 8, the voice of an unseen Being introduces and directs Gabriel. In chapter 9, Gabriel mentions a commandment that came forth. The pattern of these visions helped Daniel

understand that the supernatural being who engaged him in conversation was merely a servant of someone else.

It is reasonable to expect the same pattern in the last vision. And that is what we find if we assume that the Being of stunning glory was Christ and that the being who spoke to Daniel was Christ's angelic messenger. So understood, the last vision also notices first a sender and then someone sent.

4. The angel did not have divine power. He required Michael's assistance to escape from an evil angel, who had for twenty-one days kept him from pursuing his mission (verse 13).

5. On several previous occasions, the preincarnate Christ had been seen in the company of angels (Genesis 18; Zechariah 1:7-17).

6. The word "lord" (verse 17) is *adon*,<sup>21</sup> which is merely a term of deference like "sir." It is not one of the names reserved for God.<sup>22</sup>

7. The angel referred to God as another person (verse 12).

Two reasons support the conclusion that the angelic messenger was Gabriel.

1. Gabriel had been the spokesman who announced God's program in each of the two previous visions.

2. The angelic messenger who came with the man clothed in linen said,

Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, *even I*, stood to confirm and to strengthen him.

Daniel 11:1

The first year of Darius was the year when Gabriel brought the prophecy of the seventy weeks to Daniel (Daniel 9:1). Thus, the person speaking in Daniel 11:1 could be Gabriel, revealing the larger objectives in his previous visit. These were no doubt connected in some way with the prophecy he came to announce. Special intervention on Darius's behalf was perhaps necessary to assure that Jerusalem would indeed be rebuilt.

## *The Angel's Message*

*verses 12-14, 20-21*

12 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.

13 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.

14 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. . . .

20 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.

21 But I will shew 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.

### **Daniel's original petition**

The angel assured Daniel that he need not fear, for God had heard and answered his prayer as soon as he began to pray (verse 12). What was his prayer? As suggested earlier, the complaint of Daniel's heart throughout his protracted mourning (verse 2) had been the failure of most Jews to take advantage of the political climate favoring their return to Judah. While feeding his soul on the bitterness of this failure, perhaps he had also been pleading that God would intervene and stir up a greater company to return while there was yet time.

The angel commended Daniel for attempting, from the start of his self-imposed affliction, to understand, and to chasten himself before God (verse 12). That is, Daniel had sought to understand why the migration back to Judah had been so feeble, and he had examined and chastened himself in case he had in any way blocked a fuller realization of God's purposes.

### **Evil principalities**

The angel reported that although he had set off on his mission as soon as Daniel began to pray, he had been held back by opposition from the prince of Persia, who was powerful and resolute enough to withstand him for twenty-one days (verses 12–13). Only with the help of Michael, "one of the chief princes," was the messenger able to escape and complete his mission (verses 13–14). After leaving Daniel, the messenger would return to fight the same prince of Persia, and then, after the messenger had "gone forth" (literally, "gone out"<sup>23</sup>—presumably, out of this world into the heavenly realm), the prince of Greece would come (verse 20).

To whom does the angel refer when he speaks of the princes of Persia and Greece? Since both are personal antagonists of God's messenger, they must be fallen angels. Moreover, they must be fallen angels of princely rank, each with power over an entire earthly kingdom. The New Testament affirms that demons are not an ungoverned host, but a host organized according to a hierarchical plan. At the top is Satan himself, and under Satan is an array of principalities.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

Ephesians 6:12

The primary task of each prince in the realm of darkness is no doubt to manipulate the affairs of an earthly kingdom so as to promote the interests of Satan and to thwart the interests of God.

Although Satan and his minions are incapable of defeating any counsel of God, they can certainly cause trouble. In particular, they can forestall answers to prayer. As observed earlier, acceptable prayer gains an immediate audience and response at the throne of God. In keeping with this fundamental principle, the angel affirmed, “For from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard” (Daniel 10:12). Yet Satanic opposition derailed the answer twenty-one days before it could reach the man who prayed. The angelic struggle unveiled here in the Book of Daniel shows why answers to prayers may come only after some delay. As good angels seek to implement heavenly decrees, they may be contested by evil powers. Depending on the forces committed to each side, the delay may be brief or may extend to days, weeks, or even longer.

On the occasion remembered in chapter 9, the answer to Daniel’s prayer reached him quickly. He had been praying perhaps only a few minutes or hours when Gabriel arrived. Evidently, Gabriel had traveled unmolested. Indeed, the comment that Gabriel had been “caused to fly swiftly” (Daniel 9:21) suggests that he had raced as fast as possible across the vast distance between heaven and earth. But on the occasion remembered in chapter 10, evil powers entangled God’s messenger in a stiff fight, and the answer to Daniel’s prayer was extremely slow.

It is interesting to speculate (and we must call it speculation) why the delay was so different on these two occasions. On the earlier occasion, the angel may have carried a divine safe conduct, which even his enemies were obliged to honor. Delivering the message to Daniel was perhaps first on his agenda, before other tasks, such as any initiatives to strengthen Darius. On the later occasion, the angel’s agenda may have set other tasks ahead of going to Daniel. Because Daniel’s prayer had doubtless included a plea that more Jews would return to their homeland, God may have ordered His messenger to engage and repel the evil forces that were seeking to overthrow government policies encouraging the repatriation of exiles.

Upon reaching Daniel, the angel gave him a glimpse of warfare in the spiritual realm so that he might understand why only a small minority of his people had gone back to Judah. The apathy in the hearts of the Jews—the apathy that he, a godly man, found so incomprehensible—was due not solely to human causes. It had also a diabolical cause. Satan and his legions have great power to influence the minds of men. They

vigorously battled against the restoration of Judah not only by trying to overthrow Cyrus's edict, but also by whispering in every Jewish ear a multitude of reasons against going back. The tepid response to the edict was, in large measure, a result of their activity.

### **The purposes of Satan**

The last vision of Daniel uncovers Satan's main objective at six points in history.

1. In the first year of Darius, a good angel came to support him (Daniel 11:1). Why Darius needed help is not stated. That year was perhaps when Daniel's enemies plotted to remove him from Darius's circle of advisers. Hence, the angel's work of confirming and strengthening Darius may have consisted mainly of protecting Daniel in the lions' den. After Daniel was restored to power and his enemies were put out of the way, Darius was a strong ally of Daniel and the Jewish cause (Daniel 6:26–28). Darius may have been a key instigator of Cyrus's decree encouraging the Jews to depart from exile.

2. Two years later, good and bad angels were still warring to control the policies of the Persian government (Daniel 10:13, 20). The forces of Satan were doubtless attempting to undo official toleration of Jewish life and religion, to overturn the decrees ending Jewish captivity, and to obstruct the efforts of repatriates to rebuild their homeland. Later in the Persian period, Satan succeeded through his human instrument Haman in moving the king to issue a decree authorizing the extermination of the Jews, but the threat was turned aside by Mordecai, the man of God (Esther 3:1–10:3). Still later, when Nehemiah began to rebuild the defenses of Jerusalem, evil powers incited Sanballat and Tobiah (chieftains of settlements bordering on Judah<sup>24</sup>) to hinder his work by a variety of threats and stratagems, yet with God's help the work was finished (Nehemiah 2:11–6:16).

3. At an unspecified time later in history, the prince of Greece would replace the prince of Persia as leading champion of Satan's interests (Daniel 10:20). The implication is that Satan engineered the downfall of Persia and the rise of Greece. Perhaps he became irritated with Persia's unwillingness to assert strong authority over the reemerging nation of Judah. By drawing the Middle East into a Greek Empire, he not only tightened external control over the Jews, but he also infected the whole region with the degenerate culture of the Greeks. He thought that by exposing the wealthier class of Jews to this culture, renowned for high attainment in art, philosophy, and manners, he could lure them away from their Biblical heritage. Also, he thought that by imbuing Judah's neighbors with a culture that was highly contemptuous and intolerant of Jewish religion, he could more easily rouse them to passionate persecution of the Jews.

4. At a still later time, Satan would squeeze the nation of Judah between two stronger nations, a southern kingdom and a northern kingdom (Daniel 11:5–20). Driven by mutual rivalry, these continually vied for control of the smaller nation lying helplessly between them. Satan must have believed that by keeping the Jews under the domination of foreigners hostile to the Jewish way of life, he could make the Jews abandon their peculiar customs. He wanted eventually to destroy their national identity.

5. Near the end of the Grecian period, Satan would give the northern kingdom to a ruthless monarch who would repress the Jews with great ferocity (Daniel 11:21–35). That monarch was Antiochus Epiphanes. Through Antiochus, Satan tried to eradicate the Jewish religion.

6. Often in history, Satan has been able to fan acts of violence against the Jews. They have been victims of persecution, pogroms, and, as under Hitler, attempted genocide. But never has Satan victimized them to the extent that he will during the Tribulation. His agent of murder and terror will be the Antichrist (Daniel 11:36–12:1). Sometime during the Tribulation, the Antichrist will make himself leader of the Jews (Daniel 11:45). Then later, after his resurrection, he will bring greater distress upon them than they have known ever before in all their long experience as a despised and persecuted people (Daniel 12:1).

Before Christ came, the ultimate objective of Satan’s maneuverings was to prevent His coming. Satan did all he could to cut off the Jews or to render them unfit to produce Christ. Now that Christ has come and defeated Satan at the cross (Colossians 2:14–15; Hebrews 2:14), Satan’s objectives have shifted ground, but he has lost none of his hatred for the Jews. Since God desires to save a Jewish remnant, Satan has resolved to destroy the whole nation, so that none will remain who might be saved.

## **The identity of Michael**

The last vision of Daniel introduces Michael (verse 13). Some commentators have argued that Michael, whose name means, “who is of God,”<sup>25</sup> or, “Who is like God?”<sup>26</sup> is the disguised person of Christ. Yet, much evidence certifies that Michael is a nondivine being, within the order of angels.

1. The angelic messenger called him “one of the chief princes” (verse 13), implying that there are others of equal rank. Who they might be is beyond our knowledge. Scripture does not choose to name any other chief princes. This same messenger, presumably Gabriel, seems to stand even higher, since he spoke of Michael as the one who “holdeth [literally, ‘shows himself courageous’<sup>27</sup>] with me” (verse 21)—in other

words, “who loyally fights alongside me.” Perhaps the most that can be inferred from this wording is that the messenger is not of inferior rank.

2. The Book of Jude explicitly identifies Michael as a high-ranking angel. It calls him an “archangel” (Jude 9), a term evidently equivalent to “chief prince.” The common view that the seven angels who stand before God (Revelation 8:2) are all archangels is, of course, speculative and impossible to verify, but perhaps correct.

3. Michael is not Satan’s equal either in power or authority.

Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

Jude 9

In other words, Michael was able to prevail only by securing the Lord’s help. Clearly, then, Michael is not the Lord.

### **The latter days**

The angelic messenger said to Daniel that he had come to reveal what would happen in “the latter days” (verse 14). The expression “the latter days” is *acharith hayyamim*,<sup>28</sup> which occurs not only here, but also in Daniel 2, in the prologue to Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream.<sup>29</sup>

But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. . . .

Daniel 2:28

Since the dream recorded in chapter 2 and the vision recorded in chapters 10–12 are both surveys of Jewish experience from Daniel’s time until the consummation, the expression “the latter days” must mean simply “the days later than now.” Hence, in Daniel’s last vision, the messenger’s declaration of purpose might be paraphrased, “Now I am come to make you understand what will befall your people in the future.”

The next statement appears in the KJV as, “For yet the vision *is* for *many* days” (verse 14). The true sense, however, is conveyed by the translation, “For the vision is yet for these days,”<sup>30</sup> that is, “for the future.” The angel was alerting Daniel that he should not expect direct answers to all his questions. The angel would not explain the disappointing response to Cyrus’s edict. He would not show whether more Jews would yet return from exile. Indeed, he would say nothing about the restoration of Judah. Rather, by probing into the future, he would demonstrate that history follows a divine plan. Daniel would learn that all his questions converge upon the single answer that God is in control.

## The Scripture of Truth

The angelic messenger declared that he took his message from the Scripture of Truth (verse 21). What is the Scripture of Truth? There are three conceivable possibilities.

1. The source is the Bible, the Word of God to man. The Bible strongly affirms of itself that it is an eternal book.

For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.  
Psalm 119:89

Many have understood this verse to mean that the Bible known to mankind is the mundane realization of a book that has always existed in heaven, just as the tabernacle of Moses was, in some sense, an earthly copy of a heavenly prototype (Hebrews 9:11, 21–24). The comparison is not exact, however. The earthly tabernacle was imperfect, whereas the Bible, in the form originally inscribed by its authors, is without fault or error of any kind.

The old adage that the Bible is an eternal book is partly correct and partly incorrect. The Bible indeed existed from eternity past, but it existed only in the mind of God, not as a book or a writing. Nothing existed before Creation except God Himself. To assert that before Creation, an impersonal object was eternally coexistent with God would be idolatrous.

Although often used to show that the Bible itself has always existed, the text quoted above (Psalm 119:89) is not looking backward into eternity past. Rather, it is affirming that the Word of God will endure into eternity future. As Isaiah said,

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.  
Isaiah 40:8

There are a multitude of other texts with similar import (Matthew 5:18; 24:35; 1 Peter 1:25).

Nothing in the passage at hand encourages us to believe that the Scripture of Truth was a prewritten Bible. The word “scripture” (verse 21) is *kethab*,<sup>31</sup> a not uncommon word in the Old Testament, usually translated “writing” or “register.”<sup>32</sup> In none of its nearly thirty occurrences elsewhere does it refer to a portion of the Bible.<sup>33</sup> In Daniel 5, the kindred Aramaic word designates the writing on the wall.<sup>34</sup>

Nevertheless, to suppose that the Scripture of Truth was a prewritten Bible would be tenable if the angel had not said, “I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth” (verse 21). He spoke as though he had not yet begun to quote this writing. Before starting his recitation, he digressed for a moment to fill in more of the background (Daniel 10:21–11:1). Then he stated, “And now will I shew thee the

truth” (Daniel 11:2). In other words, “And now I will begin to quote the Scripture of Truth.” His last word of introduction was “behold” (Daniel 11:2). The Scripture of Truth is the long utterance beginning at his next word (Daniel 11:2–12:3). But if this writing commences at Daniel 11:2, how can it be a prewritten Bible, since the Bible embraces the whole Book of Daniel, including everything preceding Daniel 11:2?

2. The source is the Book of Days. The Bible tells of several books that God keeps. One is the Book of Life (Revelation 20:15). Another is the Book of Days.

. . . And on Your book all of them were written; the days they were formed and (was) not one among them.

Psalm 139:16<sup>35</sup>

The obscurities vanish in a more interpretive translation.

. . . And in Thy book they were all written, The days that were ordained *for me*, When as yet there was not one of them.

Psalm 139:16<sup>36</sup>

It appears that God has a book giving a complete account of what will happen in the future. But the exhaustive Book of Days, if indeed a literal book, cannot be the book the angel intends when he speaks of the Scripture of Truth. As displayed in Daniel 11 and 12, the Scripture of Truth is not nearly detailed enough to be a specimen of the Book of Days.

3. The source is a heavenly decree. The name “scripture of truth” implies that whatever this document says must surely come to pass. Thus, the document is probably a decree issued by either God or His angelic high council.

The Book of Daniel might be called the Book of Decrees. It reports several decrees of temporal monarchs (Daniel 2:13; 3:4–6; 3:29; 4:1–3; 6:25–27), as well as several decrees from the throne of God, including the decree of the watchers against Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:17), the decree in response to Daniel’s prayer for the welfare of his people (Daniel 9:23), and the coming decree to rebuild Jerusalem (Daniel 9:25). It is therefore fitting that this book should close with a heavenly decree outlining the future history of the Jews.

### **Michael’s lonely stand**

Before embarking on his overview of future events, the angel lamented that none but Michael “holdeth with me in these things” (verse 21). The field of reference was undoubtedly restricted to angels of princely rank whose primary sphere of activity was the earth. Among these angels, only Michael “your prince”—that is, the prince of Israel (Daniel 12:1)—was loyal to God. The rest—the prince of Persia, the prince of Greece, and the princes over all the remaining kingdoms—were

loyal to Satan. It is evident why, after taking Jesus to a high mountain and showing Him the kingdoms of the world, Satan boasted,

6 . . . All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

7 If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

Luke 4:6-7

Moreover, it is evident why Jesus called Satan “the prince of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30).

# Notes

## Chapter Ten

- <sup>1</sup>Parker and Dubberstein, 29.
- <sup>2</sup>Brown et al., 293.
- <sup>3</sup>R. Young, 976.
- <sup>4</sup>Ibid., 47.
- <sup>5</sup>Green, 3:2066. Green retains “thing” and translates *tsaba* as “conflict.”
- <sup>6</sup>Stevenson, 50.
- <sup>7</sup>Green, 3:2066.
- <sup>8</sup>Wood, 268.
- <sup>9</sup>Vincent, 2:427; Berry, 857.
- <sup>10</sup>E. Young, *Commentary*, 154.
- <sup>11</sup>Green, 3:2066; Brown et al., 542.
- <sup>12</sup>Berry, 857; Arndt and Gingrich, 738.
- <sup>13</sup>Wood, 270; Unger and White, 395.
- <sup>14</sup>Brown et al., 1008.
- <sup>15</sup>Green, 3:2067.
- <sup>16</sup>R. Young, 200.
- <sup>17</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup>Green, 3:2068; Brown et al., 767.
- <sup>19</sup>Wood, 275; Green, 3:2067–2068.
- <sup>20</sup>Wood, 276; Green, 3:2068.
- <sup>21</sup>R. Young, 617.
- <sup>22</sup>Unger and White, 228–229.
- <sup>23</sup>Green, 3:2068; Brown et al., 422–424.
- <sup>24</sup>J. A. Thompson, 224–227.
- <sup>25</sup>Wood, 273.
- <sup>26</sup>Brown et al., 567.
- <sup>27</sup>Green, 3:2068.
- <sup>28</sup>Wood, 274; R. Young, 590.
- <sup>29</sup>Wood, 274.
- <sup>30</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>31</sup>R. Young, 844.
- <sup>32</sup>Stevenson, 21.
- <sup>33</sup>R. Young, 770, 801, 1078.
- <sup>34</sup>Ibid., 1078.
- <sup>35</sup>Green, 3:1523.
- <sup>36</sup>NASB.