



*The Most High  
God rules over  
the kingdoms of  
the world and  
appoints anyone  
he desires to  
rule over them.*

*(Dan 5:21b NLT)*

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# Introduction to Daniel Chapters 10-12

- These three chapters (10-12) form a ***unit***, the longest unit in the entire book, and they basically contain ***one*** vision.
- Up to this point the visions have ***each*** been handled in ***one*** chapter.
- ***Now*** there is a ***lengthy*** vision, presented in chapter 11, to which a ***preface*** (chapter 10) and a ***postscript*** (chapter 12) have been added.
- Chapter 10, which we will begin looking at today, tells how the vision ***came*** to Daniel.
- Daniel had been ***mourning*** for the trials God had shown were going to come upon his people, and he had sought ***assurance*** from God that they would not be destroyed by the particularly intense persecution that the last part of the preceding vision described.
- In addition to these ***future*** concerns, Daniel may have ***also*** been troubled by more ***immediate*** concerns.



# Introduction to Daniel Chapters 10-12

- This *last* vision was given to Daniel in the third year of the reign of Cyrus in Babylon in 535/534 B.C., just a few years before Daniel's death.
- This places the vision one to two years *after* the first group of Jewish exiles had returned to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel, the Persian-appointed governor of Judah.
- This first group of exiles arrived in Jerusalem in the summer of 536 B.C.
- By autumn they had cleared the temple area and resumed the daily sacrifices, and by the following spring they had laid the *foundation* of the temple.
- But then the work *stopped*.
- It stopped for *fifteen years* until God sent Haggai, one of the minor prophets, to instruct the remnant to *resume* the work, which they *did*.
- By the time Daniel received this last vision, he may have *heard* of the cessation of the work in Jerusalem and been *alarmed* by it.

# Introduction to Daniel Chapters 10-12

- Chapter 10 gives insight into Daniel's concern for his people and for the work being done so far away in Jerusalem.
- It contains important lessons about prayer.
- Chiefly, however, chapter 10 “pulls back the curtain” (so to speak) on the spiritual warfare that we know from other passages is being waged around the work of God.
- The chapter begins by saying that the message Daniel received “*concerned a great war*” – a war which is described in ***great detail*** in chapter 11.
- But before this ***earthly*** war is described, we are given a glimpse of an ***earlier*** war that was going on in ***heaven***.

# Vision of the Heavenly Being (10:1-9)

*10:1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel (who was called Belteshazzar). Its message was true and it concerned a great war. The understanding of the message came to him in a vision. <sup>2</sup> At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. <sup>3</sup> I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over. <sup>4</sup> On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris...*

# Vision of the Heavenly Being (10:1-9)

*10:5 I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist. <sup>6</sup> His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude. <sup>7</sup> I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; the men with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. <sup>8</sup> So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. <sup>9</sup> Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground. (NIV)*



*10:1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar. And the word was true, and it was a great conflict. And he understood the word and had understanding of the vision. (ESV)*

- **Each** of the four visions given to Daniel in chapters 7–12 is ***dated*** by Daniel ***in the text***.
- **Here** we're told that Daniel's final "*revelation*" came in the "*third year of Cyrus king of Persia*."
- Daniel's visions can be grouped into **two** groups of **two**:
  - Chapter 7 – In the *first* year of *Belshazzar* (553 BC) – Age 67
  - Chapter 8 – In the *third* year of *Belshazzar* (550 BC) – Age 70
  - Chapter 9 – In the *first* year of *Cyrus* (538/537 BC) – Age 82
  - Chapters 10-12 – In the *third* year of *Cyrus* (535/534 BC) – Age 85
- As I mentioned in the Introduction, Cyrus's "*third year*", when this last vision was received, would have been a short while ***after*** the first return of the Jewish exiles to Palestine.
- This is ***about*** the time that the lions' den incident took place, though it's not certain if that incident occurred shortly ***before*** or ***after*** this vision.

*10:1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named **Belteshazzar**. And the word was true, and it was a great conflict. And he understood the word and had understanding of the vision. (ESV)*

- This first verse is a general statement that forms an **introduction** to the vision, which perhaps explains why it's written in the third person.
- Daniel interjects his Babylonian name, "**Belteshazzar**," apparently to emphasize that he was indeed the **same** individual spoken of **earlier** in the book.
- After all, he was now about eighty-five years of age, and it had been about **seventy years** since he had been taken into captivity.
- Yet Daniel was still alive and serving the Lord.
- Probably Daniel's advanced years and responsibilities in Babylon prevented him from making the long and arduous journey to his homeland with the other Jewish returnees.
- The respected statesman may also have felt that he could be of greater service to his people in **Babylon** than in **Palestine**.



*10:1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar. And **the word was true**, and **it was a great conflict**. And he understood the word and had understanding of the vision. (ESV)*

- Although the vision was **extraordinary**, Daniel stressed that “*the word [given in the vision] was true.*”
- Furthermore, he says “*it was [written in reference to] a great conflict*”.
- This “*great conflict*” **could** refer to a great **earthly** war (or wars) that would occur in the future, or it **may** even describe the **spiritual** warfare going on between the forces of God and the forces of Satan.
- **Both** of these interpretations would suit the context well, for a conflict between **spiritual** forces is described in chapter 10, and great **earthly** wars are prophesied in chapter 11.
- Probably **all** the conflicts (or warfare) recorded in these last chapters are involved in this expression, whether conflicts between **nations** or **angels**.

*10:1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar. And the word was true, and it was a great conflict. And **he understood the word and had understanding of the vision.** (ESV)*

- In the final sentence of this verse we read, “*he understood the word and had understanding of the vision.*”
- This “*understanding*” came as an answer to Daniel’s prayers (cf. 10:12).
- Evidently Daniel was again praying for wisdom concerning the future of his people, the Jews.
- In the previous three visions God had already revealed ***much*** pertaining to Israel’s fate, but Daniel wanted to know ***more***.
- By now the Jewish captives had returned to Palestine, but their plight was precarious.
- Work on the temple was being opposed by the Samaritans, and, as I noted earlier, it is possible that the reconstruction had already been ***halted*** by the time Daniel was writing this (cf. Ezra 4:4-5, 24), which may have caused Daniel concern.

10:2 *In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks.* (ESV)

- “*In those days*” refers back to the date given in verse 1 (“*the third year of Cyrus*” (535/534 B.C.).
- “*mourning*” is a participle which in the Hebrew conveys the idea of **continually** mourning, or being in a **state** of mourning.
- The **reason** for Daniel’s mourning is not given here.
- Years later (around 430 B.C.) we are told in Nehemiah 1:4 that Nehemiah “*mourned*” (same Hebrew word) over the condition of the Jews who had returned to Palestine – and perhaps that is the cause of Daniel’s mourning here.
- Or perhaps this is a **carryover** from his **earlier** prayer of mourning for his sin and the sin of the people.
- His mourning involved prayer (cf. v. 12) and fasting (cf. v. 3; cf. also Matt 9:14–15).
- In the Hebrew, the phrase “*three weeks*” is literally “three sevens of days”.
- Daniel undoubtedly added the term “days” to prevent confusion with the “weeks of **years**” referenced in the previous chapter.



<sup>10:3</sup> *I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks.* (ESV)

- When Daniel received the revelation, he had been fasting for “*three weeks*” – he says: “*I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth.*”
- In Hebrew there is a conjunction between these two clauses which indicates that the “*delicacies*” omitted from Daniel’s diet were “*meat*” and “*wine*”.
- Daniel seems to have engaged in a ***partial*** fast, refraining from eating only ***certain*** foods, rather than refraining from eating ***all*** food for this three-week period.
- We can’t be sure, but he ***may*** have only eaten bread and water.
- “*nor did I anoint myself at all*” means that Daniel “neglected the usual niceties of personal grooming, such as fragrant oil on his hair or body.”
- Anointing the body with oil was a common practice among the Jews and other ancient peoples, its purpose being to soothe and refresh the skin and to protect against the heat.

*10:3 I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks. (ESV)*

- Fasting is a neglected discipline for most Christians today, but it was commonly practiced in biblical times.
- Almost all fasts recorded in the Bible were **voluntary**.
- Only one fast was **commanded** in the Old Testament law: once a year on the Day of Atonement the people of Israel were to “deny” themselves by fasting and mourning over their sins (Lev 16:29–31).
- Through fasting, we demonstrate sincerity by denying ourselves one of humanity’s strongest urges, that of satisfying hunger.
- Fasting is a personal matter between the us and God.
- Fasting is **voluntary** and **not required**.
- But, if giants of the faith like Moses, David, Esther, Daniel, Paul, and Jesus himself felt the need to fast, it would seem reasonable that modern saints should be willing to deny themselves in order to pray more earnestly for the furtherance of the kingdom of God in a world that lies in deep spiritual darkness.

<sup>10:4</sup> On *the twenty-fourth day* of the *first month*, as I was standing on the bank of the great river (that is, the Tigris) (ESV)

- The “*first month*” of the Jewish year was Nisan (March–April), which means that Daniel had ***begun*** his time of prayer and fasting three weeks before “*the twenty-fourth day*”, that is, on the third of Nisan.
- The Jewish Passover was celebrated on the ***fourteenth*** of Nisan, immediately followed by the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which lasted for seven days (cf. Exod 12:14–18).
- Perhaps the season of the year had been a factor in Daniel’s decision to fast and pray.
- Passover was the time for remembering Israel’s deliverance from Egypt, and this may have turned Daniel’s thoughts toward the present deliverance and “exodus” of the Israelites from Babylon.



<sup>10:4</sup> *On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of **the great river** (that is, **the Tigris**)* (ESV)

- Daniel was beside “*the [great] Tigris*” river when a heavenly being appeared to him.
- For some reason he was away from Babylon, the capital.
- Daniel may have been in the area on official business, but since the prophet was involved in an extended period of prayer and fasting, he likely had left the capital ***in order to*** spend uninterrupted time with the Lord.
- The Tigris River originated several hundred miles to the north of Babylon and flowed through Babylonia to the Persian Gulf, passing within about twenty miles of the capital city.
- Consequently, Daniel may have been as close as twenty miles or as far as several hundred miles from the city of Babylon (although his age probably precluded lengthy travel).

<sup>10:5</sup> *I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. (ESV)*

- “*behold*” is an interjection and contains an element of excitement.
- Daniel was *amazed* at this heavenly being.
- Since this same heavenly being is presented in 12:6 as hovering in the air *above* the waters of the Tigris, that’s *probably* what he’s doing as Daniel sees him *here*.
- Daniel was standing on the river bank, and the phrase “*I lifted up my eyes and looked*” may also imply that this person was *above* the prophet.
- This heavenly being is called a “*man*” because he appeared in human form and was dressed in white “*linen*” garments.

<sup>10:5</sup> I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man *clothed in linen*, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. (ESV)

- Priests (cf. Exod 28:42; Lev 6:3, 10; 16:4) and the angel in Ezek 9:2–3, 11; 10:2, 6–7 (cf. Rev 15:6) are **also** said to have been dressed in white “*linen*” garments.
- However, it may not have been the **material** as much as its **white color** that was significant, since white is symbolic of **purity** (cf. Isaiah 1:18; Dan 11:35; 12:10).
- Saints in heaven are **also** described as wearing white robes (cf. Rev 3:5; 6:11; 7:9, 13), and **earlier** in this book (7:9) God **himself** was described as being clothed in white garments.
- So, the significance of being “*clothed in linen*” is that this heavenly being was **eminently holy**.



<sup>10:5</sup> *I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a **belt of fine gold** from Uphaz around his waist. (ESV)*

- This “*belt of fine gold*” may have been in the form of chain-links, hinged panels, or gold thread embroidery.
- A linen belt embroidered with gold thread is most likely.
- A golden belt was part of the costume of the wealthy and royal classes in the ancient Near East (cf. 1 Macc 10:89; 11:58).
- In this context, the symbolism may suggest that the one wearing it was a king or judge.

<sup>10:6</sup> His body was like *beryl*, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, *his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze*, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude. (ESV)

- The Hebrew word translated “*beryl*,” occurs a number of times in the Old Testament (e.g., Ezek 1:16; 10:9) and denotes some kind of gold-colored precious stone, although its exact identification is unclear.
- It has been variously translated as “*beryl*” (KJV, NKJV, NASB, NRSV, Montgomery), “*chrysolite*,” (NIV) or “*topaz*” (Goldingay).
- This gem is said to be a flashing stone, described by Pliny as “*a transparent stone with a refulgence like that of gold.*”
- A **yellow-colored** stone must have been intended because the term describes the body of the heavenly being as glowing like golden fire (cf. the later description “*his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze*”).

<sup>10:6</sup> His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of *lightning*, his eyes like *flaming torches*, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the *sound of his words* like the sound of a multitude. (ESV)

- The face of this awesome being appeared as brilliant as a flash of “*lightning*,” and his eyes were like “*flaming torches*.” “*his arms*” and “*legs*” gleamed like “*burnished bronze*,” indicating that his body had a fiery appearance, like burning metal (cf. Ezek 1:27).
- When he spoke, “*the sound of his words*” thundered like “*the sound of a multitude*” of people.
- Who **was** this person?
- The majority of scholars identify him simply as the angel sent to deliver the message to Daniel.
- Some commentaries have suggested that this interpreting angel was Gabriel, who appeared to Daniel previously (cf. 8:16; 9:21).
- Yet other commentaries argue that this being could **not** have been Gabriel, for when Daniel met that angel in 9:21, he was not afraid whereas **here** he was overcome with fear and had to be revived three times.



*10:6 His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude. (ESV)*

- On the other hand, some have identified the “man dressed in linen” as none other than God himself, probably a preincarnate appearance of Christ himself.
- That this person was God seems to be the correct view not only because of the overwhelming effect of his presence on Daniel but because of the similar description of the theophany presented in Ezek 1:26–28 and the even closer parallel to the portrait of Christ in Rev 1:12–16.
- In 12:6 this “man in linen” also seems to have had knowledge that transcended that of the other angels, and in 12:7 he took a divine oath.
- An argument commonly raised against the equation of this person with deity is that the angel described in vv. 10–14 (just a few verses later) was clearly *inferior* to God.
- For example, this angel was “sent” to Daniel (v. 11) and required Michael’s help to fight against other angelic forces (v. 13).

*10:6 His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude. (ESV)*

- The solution to this problem is to understand that the “man dressed in linen” and the interpreting angel introduced in v. 10 are two different persons or beings.
- On this understanding, at least **four** holy angels appear in this vision:
  - The interpreting angel (10:10–14 and throughout chapters 10–12)
  - Michael (10:13, 21)
  - Two others (12:5)
- The “man dressed in linen” is unquestionably in charge (cf. 12:6–7).
- Therefore, the person described in 10:5–6 is a **theophany**, but the contents of the vision are related by the interpreting angel, who is introduced in v. 10.
- In the Book of Revelation there is a similar pattern.
- On occasion John encountered Christ himself (e.g., 1:12–20), whereas at other times he was instructed by an angel (e.g., 17:1–6).

*10:7 And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves. (ESV)*

- Of those present, **only** Daniel saw (*I, Daniel, alone saw the vision*) this heavenly person in the “vision”.
- The other men who were present with Daniel seem to have only **felt** a supernatural presence.
- We’re told here that “*a great trembling*” overwhelmed (“*fell upon*”) Daniel’s companions and as a result “*they fled to hide themselves.*”
- Paul had a similar experience when he met Christ on the Damascus Road (Acts 9:1–7).
- Only he saw Jesus, but the others with him felt the presence of the Lord and became speechless with fear.



<sup>10:8</sup> So I was *left alone* and saw this great vision, and no strength was left in me. My radiant appearance was fearfully changed, and I retained no strength. <sup>9</sup> Then I heard the sound of his words, and as I heard the sound of his words, I *fell on my face in deep sleep with my face to the ground*. (ESV)

- Daniel was “*left alone*” with this awesome being whose appearance drained him of all his strength.
- As the heavenly person spoke, Daniel was so overwhelmed with shock at hearing the voice of God that he “*fell on [his] face in deep sleep*” with his “*face to the ground*” (cf. John’s experience in Rev 1:17).
- God spoke, presumably, words of greeting to Daniel after which the prophet seems to have lapsed into a state of unconsciousness.
- Daniel’s severe reaction to the presence of this person confirms that this being was no mere angel.

# Class Discussion Time

- Daniel shows a great deal of concern for his people, ***mourning*** when things are not going well for them.
- In having this concern, do you think Daniel is modeling a concern that ***we*** should have in our day?
  - Concern for the people of our nation
  - Concern for the people of our church
- But notice Daniel doesn't ***just*** fret and mourn, he takes ***action***.
- His concern for his people motivates him to ***pray*** for them.
- Likewise, in the New Testament we are told to cast “***all [our] anxieties on him [God], because he cares for you.***” (1 Peter 5:7)
- Do your worries and concerns motivate you to pray and ask God to address your concerns?

# Class Discussion Time

- We saw in today's text that Daniel ***fasted*** as he prayed.
- In reference to Daniel's fasting, I quoted one of my commentaries who said: "*Fasting is a neglected discipline for most Christians today, but it was commonly practiced in biblical times.*"
- Do you agree with this statement?
- Have you ever fasted as a part of your prayer over something which you were deeply concerned about? If so, how did that go?