

THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL

In the Light of
PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE EVENTS

by

Louis T. Talbot, D.D., LL.D., F.R.G.S.
Chancellor of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles

Copyright @ 1940

CHAPTER TEN

THE CONFLICT IN THE HEAVENLIES

Foreshadowing the End of “**Spiritual Wickedness in High Places**” “**in the Latter Time**”

THE LAST vision which God gave to Daniel is recorded in the three closing chapters of the prophecy. To get a comprehensive view of the entire vision, we need to read these chapters, 10-12, as a unit, repeatedly, prayerfully. Perhaps this preliminary reading will be of most help to us in understanding the message as a whole if we keep in mind some such outline as the following: Chapter 10 records none of the prophetic portion of this last vision; but it tells in detail the circumstances under which the vision was given to Daniel, including a description of the angel and his conversation with the prophet. As we shall see, this strange conversation unfolds to us the conflict that takes place between God's holy angels and Satan's evil angels. In verse 14 the heavenly messenger gives Daniel the key to the vision, saying, “**Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people [Israel] in the latter days.**”

Chapter 11 begins the prophetic portion of this last vision which God gave to Daniel, presenting a foreview of Gentile dominion from the “**first year of Darius**” unto the battle of Armageddon and the return of Christ in glory. The chapter closes with the prediction that this “**wilful king**” “**shall come to his end, and none shall help him.**” And we know that it is the return of the Lord Jesus that will bring this to pass.

The first part of this chapter has to do with what is—to us—now ancient history; the latter half presents a life-sized portrait of the coming Antichrist and his cruel reign.

Chapter 12 completes the vision, adding yet other details about “**the Great Tribulation**” and the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth. It has been called a kind of epilogue to the entire Book of Daniel.

The prophecy of chapters 10-12 covers the same period as that of chapter eight, taking us from the time of the Persian and Grecian empires, even unto the end of the age. Historians have proved that the predictions of 11:1-35 have already been fulfilled, in the deeds of actual men who lived on earth many centuries ago.

But from 11:36-12:13 the vision takes us on to yet future events, all of which will be literally fulfilled after the church has been translated to be with the Lord.

We have seen in our study of this book that each chapter unfolds to us added details concerning the end of Gentile dominion and the events of “**the seventieth week**” of God's prophecy to Daniel concerning Israel. Likewise, in this last vision which God gave to His faithful prophet, we see a detailed description of the events that will take place prior to the time when the Stone “**cut out of the mountain without hands**” will fall upon the feet of the image and demolish it.

And now let us go back to chapter ten to see what the circumstances were, under which God gave this vision to Daniel.

The devil did everything in his power to prevent the Lord from letting His servant see and understand this prophecy.

He opposed the heavenly messenger in a prolonged and bitter conflict. It seems as if he marshaled the very forces of hell itself to prevent Daniel from receiving the vision of the coming “**man of sin,**” also called “**the little horn,**” “**the prince that shall come,**” “**the king of fierce countenance,**” “**the beast,**” “**the son of perdition,**” “**the lawless one,**” and “**the Antichrist.**” To this terrible creature Satan will give “**his throne, and great authority.**” And without doubt, he would prefer that men did not know of his wiles, of his coming reign in the person of “**the beast,**” and of his certain doom.

It was “**in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia**” that this prophecy “**was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar**” (v. 1).

In other words, it was two years after the decree of Cyrus had gone forth for the rebuilding of Jerusalem. The Jewish clock had begun to tick off “seventy sevens” of years. In order that the first forty-nine of these years might see the fulfillment of God's prophecy, He had put it into the heart of Cyrus to let the faithful Jewish remnant build again the city and the walls.

But something caused Daniel's heart to be very heavy, in spite of the fact that his beloved city was being restored. Let us read what he has told us in verses 2, 3:

DANIEL'S THREE WEEKS OF MOURNING

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

Why did Daniel mourn for “**three whole weeks**”? Doubtless he was distressed at the worldly-minded attitude of many Israelites in their adopted land. Only about 40,000 went with Nehemiah to the work of restoring Jerusalem. The others were content to remain in the Persian Empire, adopting heathen habits of life, possibly seeking wealth and ease.

Daniel himself must have been about ninety years of age, too old to help in the work of rebuilding his beloved city. Doubtless he would have been one of the first to return, had he been a young man.

God's glory was the ruling passion of his life, and it is little wonder that his heart was heavy as he saw the lack of enthusiasm on the part of his people, in their apathetic state of mind. He could eat **“no pleasant bread”**; nor did he anoint himself until the end of the three weeks. Possibly he was distressed also because Satan was trying to thwart the rebuilding of Jerusalem. We know that the enemy opposed the Jews at every turn, by craft, by ridicule, by discouragement, and by open opposition. It was no easy task that was set before them. And Daniel's heart was heavy—whatever the immediate cause.

My Christian friend, have you ever been burdened because of the broken state of the church, as Daniel was burdened for the indifference of his people toward the things of God? Does the lack of zeal for Christ among professing Christians send you to your knees in prayer? The closer we live to the heart of God, the easier it is for us to understand and appreciate the feelings which possessed Daniel. During these three weeks—twenty-one days—he not only fasted and mourned, but he prayed, yet with no apparent answer to his prayer. Finally his perseverance was rewarded; for, after three weeks, the answer came.

THE APPEARANCE OF THE ANGEL

“And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel [‘Hiddekel’ is the ancient name for the ‘Tigris’]; 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 . . .” (vv. 4, 5).

Thus Daniel began to describe the angel, which appeared to him in the form of a man, glorious and wonderful to behold. This was not a dream; for Daniel was actually by the side of the River Hiddekel when the angel from heaven appeared unto him.

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 (v. 6).

The heavenly being described here was evidently one of the holy angels, possibly one **“of the highest order.”** We believe this was not a manifestation of God in angelic form, because in the verses which follow we read that Satan's evil angel withstood this holy messenger of God for **“one and twenty days”**— the very period of time, during which Daniel was in mourning and fasting and prayer. If this heavenly being had been God Himself, then Satan's emissary could not have hindered him; for God is all-powerful. And the holy angel said to Daniel that Michael had gone to **“help”** him.

Again, when God appeared in angelic form to the Old Testament saints, the Scriptures usually refer to Him as **“the angel of the Lord,”** not **“an angel.”**

Many times “**the angel of the Lord**” did appear to men before God was “**made flesh, and dwelt among us**” (John 1:14) in the form of His only begotten Son. Such appearances have been called by Bible students “*theophanies*” or “*Christophanies*.”

However, it seems very clear that the holy angel who showed his glorious presence to Daniel was one of God's ministers, sent to enlighten and encourage His faithful prophet.

Having seen this messenger from God, Daniel wrote further in verses 7-10, saying:

And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness [literally, 'vigor'] was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground. And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands.

In deep humility Daniel had prostrated himself upon his face. Then at the touch of the angel, he sat upon his knees and upon the palms of his hands. And finally, after words of reassurance and encouragement, he “stood trembling”; for the angel had said unto him (v. 11)—

“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,” Daniel continued, **“I stood trembling.”**

It must have been wonderful for Daniel to hear the message from heaven, that he was “**greatly beloved**.” In our former lessons we have spoken of this God-given term of affection; and again in verse 19 of this chapter the angel addressed the prophet, saying, “**O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong.**” God loves you, my friend. And if you are seeking to honor Him in your life as Daniel did, you are “**greatly beloved**” in heaven.

WHY THE ANSWER TO DANIEL'S PRAYER WAS DELAYED

From the very day when Daniel set himself to prayer and fasting and mourning, God had sent the angel to give him this vision. We have already seen that the purpose of the angelic ministry was to make Daniel “**understand**” what should befall his people, “**in the latter days**” (v. 14). “**For yet,**” the angel said, “**the vision is for many days**”; that is, it was to extend far into the future, from Daniel's time.

In our reading of the entire vision, even to the end of the book, we have already seen that God was showing Daniel what was to come to pass concerning Israel up to the time when Christ's kingdom will be established on earth.

But why was the angelic messenger three whole weeks in reaching Daniel's side? The answer to this question is found in verses 12 and 13:

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 [i.e., 'because of thy prayers']. 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.

When God sent His angel in answer to Daniel's prayer, **“the prince of the kingdom of Persia”** withstood him **“one and twenty days,”** the full three weeks of Daniel's continued prayer, as we have already observed.

Israel was subject to Persia at that time; verse 1 tells us that Cyrus was king when the vision was given to Daniel.

“The prince of the kingdom of Persia” was not Cyrus; he was an evil angel, evidently appointed by Satan to seek to influence Cyrus against the people of God. Had this king not issued a decree, permitting Israel to return to Palestine, and to rebuild the city and the walls? Satan did not like that! He has ever fought against God's ancient people, as well as against Gentiles who love Him. It is important that we get the meaning of this passage clearly in mind, that this **“prince of Persia”** was an evil angel.

Later in the chapter we read also of **“the prince of Grecia,”** another Satan-sent, wicked angel.

In the closing words of this chapter God tells us that Michael is Israel's **“prince.”**

We have mentioned this fact before, and shall read again, in Daniel 12:1, of his ministry on behalf of the Jews. It was Michael, whose name means *“Who is like God?”* who contended with the devil about the body of Moses (Jude 9); and Moses was one of the greatest men the nation of Israel ever produced. Doubtless Moses and Elijah will be **“the two witnesses”** to God before Israel during **“the Great Tribulation”** period (Revelation 11:3-12); and Satan sought to destroy Moses' body, in order to thwart this purpose of God in that coming day. But Michael won that conflict with Satan; for we read in Deuteronomy 34:5, 6 that God buried Moses! Yet the incident reveals to us something of the power of the devil; for even the archangel Michael dared not rebuke him, but said, **“The Lord rebuke thee.”**

It is Michael, Israel's **“prince,”** who will lead **“his angels”** against Satan and **“his angels”** in the bitter persecution against Israel during **“the time of Jacob's trouble.”** As a result of this **“war in heaven,”** Satan and his hosts will be cast down to earth. They shall not prevail; neither will there be found for them a **“place . . . any more in heaven.”** When **“that old dragon . . . which deceiveth the whole world”** is **“cast out into the earth,”** he will be filled with fury, **“having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time”** (Revelation 12:7-12). Then he will no longer be permitted to have access to God to accuse His people; **“for the accuser of our brethren . . . which accused them before our God day and night”** will be cast out of the heavenlies. We remember these clear teachings of Scripture, as we remember that Michael, Israel's **“prince,”** contended with Satan over the body of Moses, and will contend for Israel during the darkest hour of her history.

As we keep these things in mind, we can understand why this holy archangel went to the help of the heaven-sent messenger, who was withheld by “**the prince of Persia,**” when on his way to Daniel.

THE POWER OF DEMONS

From such passages of God's Word, we realize also something of the power of Satan's hosts.

It would seem that, under the leadership of the devil, these fallen creatures are organized into a great army, among whom there are ranks and degrees of power. We know, of course, that it is their business to thwart the plans of God. It seems evident that Satan has his powerful demons delegated to influence the leaders of the nations against God and His Christ, as well as against His believing children.

As we realize how Satan's messengers oppose even God's holy angels, our hearts are solemnized at the thought of our own helplessness against these demons, apart from divine aid. Moreover, this illustration of the power of Satan as he sent “**the prince of Persia**” to oppose God's messenger should cause every ruler to fly to God for wisdom and strength against these unseen foes.

Cyrus' heart had been turned in favor toward Daniel's people, yet this wicked angel withstood all that had to do with Israel's welfare. Likewise, rulers may be benevolent and wise, as worldly wisdom goes, yet if they do not look to God for help, they unwittingly become tools in the hands of “**the rulers of the darkness of this world,**” whose leader is Satan, “**the god of this world**” (II Corinthians 4:4).

“THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD”

Paul tells us plainly, in Ephesians 6:11-17, how the Christian may overcome this enemy of our souls. Note especially verses 11 and 12:

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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.

If Satan and his demons were “**flesh and blood,**” we might kill them with implements of human warfare. But we are unequally matched against these forces of evil—“**Spiritual wickedness in high places.**”

That is why we need Jesus. That is why we need His blessed Holy Spirit to fight this wily one for us. We need “**the whole armour of God**”—our “**loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness,**” our “**feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.**” We need “**the shield of faith . . . the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.**”

Again, let us note particularly what Paul said here, as he was guided by the Holy Spirit.

He told us that these “**rulers of the darkness of this world,**” these who have to do with “**spiritual wickedness,**” that is, the wickedness of evil spirits, dwell “**in high places.**”

From the scriptures which we have already quoted in this lesson; from the record in Daniel of the conflict between “**the prince of Persia**” and the holy angel, assisted by Michael, we learn that Satan and his hosts dwell in the heavenlies; that Satan has access to God to accuse believers in Christ; that the realm of the air, as well as the earth, must be filled with the presence of these “**powers of darkness.**”

Indeed, Satan is called “**the prince of the power of the air**” (Ephesians 2:2). Thank God! It will not always be so! But somehow, in the permissive will of God, Satan and his demons dwell “**in high places.**”

During “**the Great Tribulation**” period, as we saw from Revelation 12:7-12, “**the great dragon . . . called the Devil, and Satan**” will be cast out into the earth, filled with wrath because he will know that “**he hath but a short time.**”

This tribulation period will not last long;

- Christ will return in glory to deliver His people;
- The beast and the false prophet will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20);
- Satan will be bound a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-3).

After the millennial reign of Christ on earth is past, Satan, too, will be “**cast into the lake of fire and brimstone . . . and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever**” (Revelation 20:10). No wonder he will be filled with great wrath when he is cast out of the heavenlies! No wonder he tries now to keep men from reading the Word of God, which tells us of these things! He does not want us to know his subtle wiles or his certain doom.

SATAN—OUR ACCUSER BEFORE GOD

It is a solemn thing to know that Satan accuses us before our Lord.

He knows that God is righteous and just, that “**the wages of sin is death**” (Romans 6:23), and that judgment must be executed upon the guilty sinner. Therefore, he entices the people of God to sin, and then wings his way into His divine presence, and accuses them before Him. Read Zechariah 3:1, 2 for an illustration of this fact. Read the story of Job for one of the clearest pictures of this solemn truth. In chapter 1, verses 6 and 7, we read:

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

Then it was that Satan accused Job to God, saying that he was serving the Lord for material gain and earthly pleasure. We know the familiar story, how God permitted Satan to try Job sorely, yet how Job's faith in his Lord did not waver.

Satan has not changed his tactics or his evil ways since the days of Job.

Peter tells us that he is our “**adversary . . . as a roaring lion**” walking about, “**seeking whom he may devour**” (I Peter 5:8).

CHRIST, “OUR ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER”

How hopeless and helpless our lot would be if it were not for the fact that we have “**an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous**”! (I John 2:1). John tells us of His intercessory work for us, saying,

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

The word “**advocate**” is the same as our word “*lawyer*.”

We all know what a lawyer is. He is a man skilled in the law. He takes a man's case, and appears before the judge to plead for the accused. Now it is impossible for a lawyer to defend his client with any degree of success unless he knows all about the case, and has the assurance that it is absolutely in his hands. But with all the facts before him, he can go before the judge and defend his client.

My friends, more than thirty years ago I put my case in the hands of the Son of God. He became my Advocate. He knows all about me, yet He loves me in spite of my sins. I am sorry to have to admit that, all too often, I have given Satan cause to accuse me before the God of heaven. But my Advocate sits at the right hand of “**the Majesty on high**.” And when Satan accuses me, “**Jesus Christ the righteous**” puts to rout the enemy of my soul.

To His Father He says, “**Yes; the accusations are true**.” Oh the more shame to us, that we should give cause for such accusations before the God who loves us! “**But**,” my Advocate continues—and we paraphrase the beautiful words— “**I was wounded for his transgressions; I was bruised for his iniquities; and by my stripes he is healed**.” (See Isaiah 53:5.)

Thus the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son and my Saviour, cleanses me from all sin.

May I ask you, my friend, whether or not you have put your case into the hands of the Son of God? Before you can ever know Him as your Advocate, you must know Him as your Saviour, for He intercedes at God's right hand only for those who have been born again by faith in His atoning work on Calvary's Cross. “**He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them**” (Hebrews 7:25). But those who would have Him intercede for them must come unto God by Him!

Would you like to know what kind of prayer our Advocate is offering on our behalf before the Father? Then turn to the seventeenth chapter of John. Read it, and you will love Him more and more. These words were spoken just before our Lord went to the cross.

No wonder Charles Wesley, as he meditated upon the work of his Great High Priest and Advocate with the Father, wrote the words of the hymn we love:

Arise, my soul, arise;
Shake off thy guilty fears;
The bleeding Sacrifice
In my behalf appears.
Before the throne my Surety stands;
My name is written on His hands.

He ever lives above
For me to intercede,
His all-redeeming love
His precious blood to plead.
His blood atones for all our race,
And sprinkles now the throne of grace.

Five bleeding wounds He bears,
Received on Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers;
They strongly plead for me:
“Forgive him, O forgive,” they cry,
“Nor let that ransomed sinner die!”
My God is reconciled;

His pard'ning voice I hear;
He owns me for His child;
I can no longer fear.
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And, “Father, Abba, Father,” cry.

Not only do we have our Great High Priest to intercede for us before “**the throne of grace,**” but His holy angels are also our “**ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation**” (Hebrews 1:14).

Angels are created beings, and not the spirits of our departed loved ones, as many believe.

According to the teaching of the Word of God, we cannot sing that song which says, “I want to be an angel, and with the angels stand.” No human being will ever be an angel, good or bad. Angels are of a different order of creation.

Now they have more power than do we; in heaven we shall be in a position higher even than the angels—God's servants and ours,—for we are **“heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ”** (Romans 8:17).

When the Lord Jesus spoke of the **“angels”** of little children who **“do always behold the face”** of His Father in heaven (Matthew 18:10), He taught that, evidently from childhood, possibly from infancy, each of us has one or more guardian angels, especially concerned with the physical well-being of the one entrusted to the care of these **“ministering spirits.”**

It is impossible for us to know now how often we have been rescued from accidents and dangers of many kinds by these guardian angels, but this we know: **“The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them”** (Psalm 34:7). **“For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone”** (Psalm 91:11, 12).

The angels of God **“excel in strength . . . do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word”** (Psalm 103:20). They receive the spirits of departing saints (Luke 16:22). **“There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth”** (Luke 15:10).

Angels often appeared to the Old Testament saints, before the world saw the manifestation of God in human form, in the Person of the Lord Jesus, and before the world had the complete Word of God. But in this church age, since Christ has revealed to us the Father, and since we have the complete revelation of His will in His written Word, we do not need to see the angels of God. Believers are to walk by faith, not by sight.

When the Son of God returns to earth to reign in great glory, He will be accompanied by **“all the holy angels”** (Matthew 25:31). Then angelic beings will be visible upon the earth once more.

Now when the angel told Daniel of his three weeks' conflict with **“the prince of Persia”** and of Michael's help on behalf of Daniel and his people, God drew aside the veil, as it were, letting us see something of the mystery that surrounds the conflict in the heavenlies over the cause of righteousness.

We have paused to consider this passage in some detail, comparing it with related portions of Scripture which add more light upon the subject, because these things have to do with our daily conflict with **“the powers of darkness.”**

To know our danger from Satan and his demons, and to know our Source of strength, even our Advocate, **“Jesus Christ the righteous”**—to know Him and His provision for our need, is to be able to withstand the evil one in times of temptation.

And just as the heaven-sent messenger, aided by Michael, Israel's **“prince,”** won the victory over **“the powers of darkness”** in Daniel's day, so also in that yet future time, when the forces of evil will work in the earth as never before, God's holy angels will defeat Satan and all his demons. For **“in the latter time”** **“spiritual wickedness in high places”** must give way to all that is righteous and peaceable and just and holy and true—when Jesus comes again!

DANIEL STRENGTHENED FOR THE MESSAGE GOD WAS ABOUT TO GIVE HIM

The closing words of the chapter show us how God strengthened Daniel for the vision which was to follow. Surely he needed divine strength, for he was to hear a message that spoke of untold suffering for his poor, disobedient people. In humility he prostrated himself, his face “toward the ground,” and became dumb. But one “**like the similitude of the sons of men touched**” his lips, giving him spiritual utterance. Then Daniel spoke (vv. 16, 17), saying,

O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. For how can the servant of this my lord talk, with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me.

Again the angel touched Daniel and strengthened him, com-forting him with the reassuring, beautiful words of verse 19:

O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong.

Then Daniel, strengthened for the message, heard the angel say that afterwards he would return “**to fight with the prince of Persia,**” and later with “**the prince of Grecia.**”

Then the messenger from God said to the prophet in verse 21:

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.

In our next lesson we shall consider that part of the vision recorded in chapter eleven. But before we close this study, let us ask our own hearts if we, like Daniel, have let God speak to us, to prepare us for the message He has for us in His Word.

There is so much activity today, even among Christians; there is so much restlessness; there is so much coming and going, that it is difficult to find time for prayer and seeking the will of God.

Let us lay hold of the promise, “**Fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong.**” Then we shall be ready to “**hear what God the Lord will speak**” (Psalm 85:8).

~ end of chapter 10 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>
