

# CAPITOL STUDIES

MARCH 20, 2024 • WEEK 11



## DANIEL: CHRIST'S CIVIL SERVANT IN BABYLON

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### *Verse of the Week*

Daniel 10:12

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

## Conflict in the Heavens



THE “STAR WARS” SAGA IS FAMILIAR TO MANY. Darth Vader, dressed in black, breathing heavily, is the personification of evil. He has sold his soul to “The Dark Side.” Opposite Vader are those who have resisted evil, turning their wills to the side of good, simply called “The Force.” One of them is Obi Wan Kenobi, dressed in a simple brown robe and hood. Both Vader and Kenobi have supernatural powers: one to control others for selfish and wicked purposes, the other to free people to do good. In the first *Star Wars* movie, they meet in a deadly duel in the space station commanded by Vader. Darth declares he is now lord and master of Obi. Obi responds, saying if Darth cuts him down, he will only come back stronger and more powerful than ever, and... that is what happens.<sup>1</sup> C.S. Lewis portrays the battle between the White Witch and Aslan in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Tolkien describes the battle between Sauron and the men of Middle Earth in *Lord of the Rings*. In each of these popular fantasies, good triumphs over evil, but not without a great fight.

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The movie ends, we turn off the TV, we close the book. We go on with life. What we don't realize is that a very real, very violent, very intense war is being fought between the forces of good and evil every day. From the time he was thrown out of heaven, Satan and his fallen angels have engaged in fierce battle with the armies of God. Satan has used every form of wickedness to destroy Jesus and His followers. Because we don't see the actual warfare, we tend to act as if it doesn't exist. But anyone can be pulled into the conflict. Paul warns us, "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8).<sup>2</sup> **Christian, you must "take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day" (Ephesians 6:13).**

## INTRODUCTION

Interest in the supernatural is on the rise. Books, games, television programs, movies, and online sites which used to be more subtle in their reference to witchcraft, sorcery, and devil worship now blatantly promote it. Sensationalism and exaggerations about the supernatural run wild. When the world's system attempts to communicate matters pertaining to Satan and his host of demons, the message is garbled. Still, there is a power that seems to hypnotically draw the naïve and foolish. As Christians, we must prepare and beware (Ephesians 6:10-18), lest we, too, are overcome and ensnared. The tenth chapter of Daniel gives a glimpse into angelic warfare and the unseen war against the saints. We see that God's power within us is greater than Satan's power around us. "[G]reater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4b).

Daniel 10 is an interlude between prophecies. Possibly the most detailed and significant prophecies regarding end times are yet to come in chapters 11 and 12. In chapter 10, God prepares Daniel to receive this final revelation concerning Israel's future. The experience is so intense that Daniel needs an infusion of strength.

## I. A MESSAGE REVEALED

### A. Authenticity

*Daniel 10:1*

*In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar; and the message was true and one of great conflict, but he understood the message and had an understanding of the vision.<sup>2</sup>*

Daniel invariably includes dates, names, and places. Here he reminds us of his Babylonian name, Belteshazzar, to give further evidence of the fact that he writes this message. He was involved in administrative work until the first year of Cyrus' reign (Daniel 1:21). Now he is probably in semi-retirement at about 90 years of age (535 BC). It has been two years since Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to their homeland.



## B. Anguish

*Daniel 10:2-3*

*In those days, I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks. <sup>3</sup>I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all until the entire three weeks were completed.*

You would think that Daniel would be praising God for the Jews' right to return and maybe singing Psalm 126. But he is overcome with grief and has given himself to mourning for three weeks. The sorrows of the prophet may be derived from his knowledge that only a relatively small number of Jews have returned to their homeland. Undoubtedly, Daniel has heard of the hardship and opposition faced by the 40,000 or so who have returned to Palestine. (Consider the challenges still being faced by the Jews in the book of Nehemiah 90 years later.) Perhaps he is burdened that most Jews prefer staying in their comfortable homes and positions in Babylon rather than returning to Jerusalem. He is fasting. He has refrained from eating any pleasant food or refreshing himself with ointments, which would be a symbol of contentment.

## II. THE SON OF MAN REVEALED

### A. The Vision of Glory

*Daniel 10:4-6*

*On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I was by the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris, <sup>5</sup>I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen, whose waist was girded with a belt of pure gold of Uphaz. <sup>6</sup>His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult.*

While Daniel is sitting on the bank of the Tigris River, “a **certain man** clothed in linen” appears. Though the identity of the heavenly visitor is not specifically stated, his description is almost identical to the description of Christ in Revelation 1:13-16:

1. The linen speaks of Christ's perfect righteousness, His absolute sinless humanity, His purity.
2. The golden belt is an emblem of Christ's deity, majesty, and glory. It also signifies His permanence, preciousness, and purity. The word “girded” denotes His sovereignty, strength, position, and rights.
3. His body is like beryl. Gems symbolize Christ's glory, beauty of person, and grace.
4. His face appears like lightning. This could well speak of His great power or His glorious appearance—perhaps a reference to the Shekhinah glory (Matthew 17:2).





5. His eyes are like lamps of fire or flaming torches, signifying His omniscience, His discernment, His penetrating insight, and His intolerance of sin (Revelation 2:18).
6. The burnished brass is symbolic of judgment and strength.
7. Words like the sound of “tumult” (multitude) are the thundering voice of God or the voice of heaven.

An Old Testament revelation of Christ in His preincarnate form like this is sometimes called a Christophany (an appearance of Christ). Daniel’s reaction to this man is similar to John’s reaction in Revelation 1:17 and seems to confirm this as a Christophany.

## B. The Presence of God

*Daniel 10:7-9*

*Now I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, while the men who were with me did not see the vision; nevertheless, a great dread fell on them, and they ran away to hide themselves. <sup>8</sup>So I was left alone and saw this great vision; yet no strength was left in me, for my natural color turned to a deathly pallor, and I retained no strength. <sup>9</sup>But I heard the sound of his words; and as soon as I heard the sound of his words, I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.*

All of Daniel’s strength leaves him, and he is on his face alone before God as he faints away. Daniel’s companions hide themselves in terror. It is a fearful thing to stand in the presence of a holy God. Daniel responds in awe and humility. Our world today seems to have little consciousness of the holiness of God. Even Christians do not have the fear of the Lord that was manifested among God’s people in years past.

## III. THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE REVEALED

### A. The Emissary

*Daniel 10:10-11*

*Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. <sup>11</sup>He said to me, “O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you.” And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling.*

Daniel trembles as a hand touches him. The Lord of Glory is not the subject of verses 10-13, as He was in verses 4-9. Instead, a servant angel of the Lord here ministers to Daniel, helping him to a crouching position, assuring him of divine favor, and encouraging him to get to his feet. Most commentators believe this angel is Gabriel because he uses similar terminology here and in Daniel 9:23, calling Daniel a man of “high esteem” (greatly beloved), and he gets Daniel to stand to his feet as Gabriel did in Daniel 8:18. Other Scripture portions also identify Gabriel as God’s messenger angel.



## B. The Adversary

*Daniel 10:12-13*

*Then he said to me, “Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words.”<sup>13</sup> But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia.”*

This portion of Scripture clearly emphasizes the spiritual powers behind earthly nations and rulers. Three are mentioned in this chapter: the prince of the kingdom of Persia (v. 13), the prince of Greece (v. 20), and Michael, your [Israel’s] prince (vv. 13, 21).

Fearful Daniel listens while the angel explains the reason for the delay in answering prayer. He had begun his journey to earth 21 days earlier. This was at the same time Daniel had abandoned himself to grief and prayer. The angel was intercepted en route by the prince of Persia and was not able to continue his flight earthward. Michael, the archangel, came to his defense and helped him get to Daniel. Gabriel was about to disclose to Daniel what would occur to the kingdom of Persia (Daniel 11:2), but Satan’s demon angel in charge of Persia did not want that information to leak out—hence the conflict. The prince of Persia stood against Gabriel for twenty-one days. Here the veil between the physical and spiritual world is lifted momentarily. Only rarely does the Word of God take us behind the scenes of world events to the invisible world of spirits. This is the unseen battlefield before our eyes. Another such battle is portrayed in Revelation 12:7, where Michael and his angels war against the dragon and his angels. Whenever Michael appears in Scripture, he is pictured as fighting in defense of the people of Israel.

The Apostle Paul reminded the churches that Satan is “the prince of the power of the air.” The airways above earth seem to be the special theater of his activity (Ephesians 2:1-3). God’s Word gives us reason to think that demonic intelligences are behind the scenes seeking to influence world powers. Paul calls them “rulers of the darkness of this world” (Ephesians 6:12 KJV)—literally, world-rulers of darkness.

## IV. THE FUTURE REVEALED

### A. The Encouragement

*Daniel 10:14-19*

*“Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future.”<sup>15</sup> When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless.<sup>16</sup> And behold, one who resembled a human being was touching my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke and said to him who was standing before me, “O my lord, as a result of the vision anguish has come upon me, and I have retained no strength.<sup>17</sup> For how can such a servant of*





*my lord talk with such as my lord? As for me, there remains just now no strength in me, nor has any breath been left in me.”<sup>18</sup> Then this one with human appearance touched me again and strengthened me.<sup>19</sup> He said, “O man of high esteem, do not be afraid. Peace be with you; take courage and be courageous!” Now as soon as he spoke to me, I received strength and said, “May my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.”*

The angel has come to share with Daniel what will befall his people in the latter days, and this message is almost too much to bear. The impact of Gabriel’s message strips Daniel of his strength, and he must be revived to receive details of the end-time events surrounding his people (Israel).

Gabriel commands Daniel to “take courage and be courageous,” meaning “be strong and very strong.” Gabriel touches Daniel and addresses him as the man greatly beloved, as he did before in verses 10 and 11. The work of calming, consoling, and caring for God’s people is certainly a work of angels. They are ministering spirits sent to minister to God’s own people. (See Luke 1:30; Acts 27:23-24; Hebrews 1:14.) Daniel comes to know what it is to be strengthened by God’s might in his inner man.

This lesson substantiates the truth of the promise of Isaiah 40:29: “He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power.” (See also Psalm 27:1; Philippians 4:13; Ephesians 3:16; Romans 5:6.) How does H do this? “For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways” (Psalm 91:11). “The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him and rescues them. O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!” (Psalm 34:7).

## B. The Truth

*Daniel 10:20-21*

*Then he said, “Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come.<sup>21</sup> However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince.”*

Gabriel expects another assault from the demon prince of Persia and will return to this fight. He also intimates that he will have to fight with the principality responsible to influence the Greek government, the prince of Greece. But, before Gabriel leaves, he tells Daniel “what is inscribed in the writing of truth [the Bible].” The events that will come to pass are already written in the decrees of God, and therefore, they are sure and final. This Book of Truth “contains the course of history for the nations and the Hebrews as God’s people.”<sup>3</sup> The course of events cannot be altered. These momentous future events will unfold in the last two chapters of this book of Daniel. Stay tuned!



## CONCLUSION

**Human governments can be subject to demonic manipulation.** Daniel 10 is the first reference to the fact that the empires of earth are influenced by satanic personalities in the demon (fallen angel) world. Satan has assigned certain fallen angels to political activities among the nations in order that his program might be carried out in an organized and systematic way. The devil is not omnipotent nor omnipresent, so he depends upon his demons to help him carry out his plans. Without doubt, whenever governing bodies meet to determine policy, Satan has his emissaries on hand trying to influence their thinking. He does his utmost to get those in leadership, in particular, to play into his hands.

We need to pray for those in authority (1 Timothy 2:1-2), for they are continually bombarded by the powers of darkness. They are under attack. Many references in the Word of God indicate a mighty conflict raging behind the scenes in our world events, a conflict between the forces of good and evil (Jude 9; Revelation 12:7).

**What can we learn through this delay in prayer?** Perhaps a spiritual battle *is* being waged: “God’s reasons for delaying answers to prayers are not always clear. Many times, God permits believers to wait for their prayer answers in order to teach them valuable lessons (e.g. spiritual commitment, patience, faith). There are also times when God fully intends to respond affirmatively to a request, but in His wisdom delays because He knows that the proper time has not yet come.”<sup>4</sup>

The devil is diligent; he minds his business and is wide awake in this apathetic, indifferent age. We should not be amazed at the presence of the unseen forces around us, but **we ought to be driven to persistent, biblical prayer** for our nation and for the countries of the world.<sup>5</sup>

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm” (Ephesians 6:12-13).

**Let us be encouraged by the great invincible might within us, for Our God is a Mighty God!**

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