

ON THE LORD'S SIDE

Daniel 10:1 - 11:35

There is a great interest in the occult and the spirit world today. People who scoff at the gospel of Jesus Christ readily accept horoscopes and the idea of extra-terrestrial beings. Sophisticated scientists reject the Bible's validity and embrace the doctrine of time plus chance as the explanation for the existence of everything.

Well, there are spiritual forces at work in the world and the Book of Daniel mentions them a number of times.

The visions in Daniel tend to increase in length and in complexity. Each vision enlarges on the earlier visions. Now in the last three chapters, the last vision makes up the longest section of the entire book.

In Daniel Chapters 10, 11, and 12 we are told about the cosmic warfare that the angels of God wage with the hosts of darkness. Human leaders become agents of evil spirits to oppress the people of God.

Chapter 10 is the prologue to Chapter 11 and Chapter 12 is its epilogue.

Chapter 10 tells how the vision came to Daniel. Daniel had been mourning over the trials of his people. In Chapter 9, Daniel prays and confesses his sin and the sin of his people.

1. DANIEL'S VISION

10:1-9

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.

²In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks. ³I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks. ⁴On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river (that is, the Tigris) ⁵I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. ⁶His 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. ⁷And 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. ⁸So 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. ⁹Then 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

In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia would be 535/534 B.C.
If Daniel was 16 when he was taken to Babylon, he would now be 85 years old.

In order to get the background of Daniel 10 look at Ezra 1:1-4.

Ezra 1:1-4

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying,

2 Thus says Cyrus king of Persia:

All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. 3 Who is among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel (He is God), which is in Jerusalem. 4 And whoever is left in any place where he dwells, let the men of his place help him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, besides the freewill offerings for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.

This places the vision one or two years after the first group of exiles had returned to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel, the Persian-appointed governor of Judah; and Joshua the high priest. They arrived in the summer of 536 B.C. and by autumn had cleared the temple area and resumed the daily sacrifices, and by the following spring had laid the foundation of the temple. Then the work stopped for 15 years! God sent Haggai to instruct the remnant to resume the work.

Haggai 1:1-15

In the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying, 2 "Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, saying: 'This people says, "The time has not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built.'"

3 Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, 4 "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?" 5 Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts:" Consider your ways!

6 "You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but do not have enough; You drink, but you are not filled with drink; You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; And he who earns wages, Earns wages to put into a bag with holes."

7 Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways! 8 Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified," says the LORD. 9 "You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?" says the LORD of hosts.

"Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house.

10 Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. 11 For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands."

12 Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him; and the people feared the presence of the LORD. 13 Then Haggai, the LORD's messenger, spoke the LORD's message to the people, saying, "I am with you, says the LORD."

14 So the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, 15 on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of King Darius.

So 15 years will pass but, “Meanwhile back at the ranch.”

Daniel may have been mourning and fasting because of the harassment by the renegade Jews who were hindering the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 4:1-5).

Ezra 4:1-5

Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the descendants of the captivity were building the temple of the LORD God of Israel, 2 they came to Zerubbabel and the heads of the fathers' houses, and said to them, "Let us build with you, for we seek your God as you do; and we have sacrificed to Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us here." 3 But Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the rest of the heads of the fathers' houses of Israel said to them, "You may do nothing with us to build a house for our God; but we alone will build to the LORD God of Israel, as King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us." 4 Then the people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah. They troubled them in building, 5 and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

Who was the "man" (Dan 10:5)? Either he was Gabriel or it is an occasion of a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ (Cf. Rev 1). The best argument for him being an angel is the fact that he was hindered by the evil spirit (Dan 10:13) of Persia.

This vision, while not seen by Daniel's companions, caused them to flee and Daniel to faint!

Daniel had been mourning and praying for three weeks when on the 24th day of Nisan, the first month of the year, as he stood by the great river, the Hiddekel [Tigris], that he saw an angel.

The Bible does not usually give us much description of angels but vs. 5-6 tell us a great deal about this one. We are not told who this angel is but I think it was Gabriel in chapter 9. The description of this angel is like Christ in Rev 1:13ff but in Daniel 10:13, Michael, who I believe is Christ, comes to help this angel.

Daniel's strength is gone and the men with him are terrified and flee [Dan 10:7-9].

¹⁰ And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. ¹¹ And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly loved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you." And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. ¹² Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. ¹³ The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, ¹⁴ and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come."

Even when the angel came to Daniel, touched him, and raised him up, he still stood trembling. "Do not be afraid." [12-14]

Notice that it was when Daniel started to pray that God sent His messenger to tell him of the future that we find revealed in chapter 11.

The "prince of the kingdom of Persia" is an evil and powerful spirit [not a mere mortal ruler]. This spirit being is opposed by "Michael, one of the chief princes."

From Revelation Spiritually Understood, by Charles D. Alexander:

WHO IS MICHAEL?

But who is this great personality who in imperial conquest leads the armies of heaven against the armies of hell? Who indeed, but the Prince of heaven Himself, Jesus the Son of God, who appears again and again in the holy record by a variety of names which denote His true identity and destiny, and the infinite glories and prerogatives of His office in the history of creation and redemption.

He is Emmanuel, God with us; He is the divine LOGOS or Wisdom, the expression of the Father's Being; His Name is WONDERFUL, the divine Enigma, in whom is manifest the Wisdom of God. He is the Second Adam, the Amen, the Ancient of Days, the Beloved, the Anointed, the Branch, the Cornerstone, the Light, the Life, and the Altogether Lovely. He is the Shiloh, the Seed, the Temple, the Sun of righteousness, the great Melchizedek - and much, much more that we have not space to record.

We must not therefore be stumbled to find that He is the Archangel Michael, mentioned but five times in Holy Scripture, and of these, three times in the Book of Daniel, once in Jude, and in Revelation. Michael appears however on numerous other occasions though not by His personal name but under the title “The Angel of the Lord”.

There is only one ‘archangel’ mentioned in the Bible, and this is Christ. He is the archangel because it is given to Him, as the Eternal Son, the head of all creation, to be known to the angels as their king - Michael, ‘likeness of God’. In borrowed angelic form he makes Himself known to that bright and glorious company, for even the angels cannot see God except as He assumes a borrowed resemblance.

The Incarnation is different. Christ never became an angel as such, but He truly became Man, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He will retain His visibility throughout all eternity as glorified Man, one in nature with us, in the same body which lay in the tomb, but a body glorified, even as ours shall be after the pattern of His own resurrection.

“Verily he took not on Him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham” - Hebrews 2:16.

Difficulties have been imagined as to the identification of Michael with Christ because of the words of the communicating angel to Daniel- “Michael, one of the chief princes” (Dan. 10:13), as though Michael were only one among several equals. A little consideration shows this to be not the case.

In Daniel it becomes clear that angelic personages are attached by the Sovereign Ruler of all things, to the various thrones and kingdoms of earth, as the executors of divine providence for the exaltation or ruin of those earthly powers. It appears also that Satan too has his ‘princes’ who are allocated to certain areas of rule. We given read that “an evil spirit from the Lord” was sent to trouble Saul the king (1 Sam. 16:14). This mysterious verse means that as a judgment upon the disobedient king who had finally given himself over to apostasy and rebellion against God, the Lord authorised Satan to enter the field and take control over the monarch. We need not be surprised at this, for even Paul the apostle speaks of some false teachers whom he had “delivered unto Satan that they might learn not to blaspheme” (1 Tim. 1:20). The Lord ‘sent evil angels’ among the rebellious Israelites in the wilderness (Ps. 78:49). Again, God ‘gives over to a reprobate mind’ those who ‘do not like to retain God in their knowledge’ (Romans 1:28). This is a rare glimpse into the spiritual warfare that is even now going on. The first two chapters of Job, while not an outright warfare, depict a scene where Satan and his angels appear before God.

3. DANIEL STRENGTHENED

10:15-21

¹⁵ When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and was mute. ¹⁶ And behold, one in the likeness of the children of man touched my lips. Then I opened my mouth and spoke. I said to him who stood before me, "O my lord, by reason of the vision pains have come upon me, and I retain no strength. ¹⁷ How can my lord's servant talk with my lord? For now no strength remains in me, and no breath is left in me."

¹⁸ Again one having the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me. ¹⁹ And he said, "O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage." And as he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me." ²⁰ Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come. ²¹ But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince.

Notice the deep humility of Daniel in the presence of God and His holy angels.

We can't begin to understand the events of history until we see the influence of spirits, both good and evil.

There is no explanation for Cyrus' decree except for God turning his heart. There was no political or religious basis for Cyrus to care about the temple in Jerusalem!

Daniel 11:1-45

Daniel 11 is the longest and most detailed prophecy in the book. Daniel deals with specific points of ancient history [ancient to us but future to Daniel].

4. NORTH AND SOUTH CONFLICT

11:1-19

And as for me, in the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to confirm and strengthen him. ²And now I will show you the truth. Behold, three more kings shall arise in Persia, and a fourth shall be far richer than all of them. And when he has become strong through his riches, he shall stir up all against the kingdom of Greece. ³Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion and do as he wills. ⁴And as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not to his posterity, nor according to the authority with which he ruled, for his kingdom shall be plucked up and go to others besides these.

⁵Then the king of the south shall be strong, but one of his princes shall be stronger than he and shall rule, and his authority shall be a great authority. ⁶After some years they shall make an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement. But she shall not retain the strength of her arm, and he and his arm shall not endure, but she shall be given up, and her attendants, he who fathered her, and he who supported her in those times.

⁷And from a branch from her roots one shall arise in his place. He shall come against the army and enter the fortress of the king of the north, and he shall deal with them and shall prevail. ⁸He shall also carry off to Egypt their gods with their metal images and their precious vessels of silver and gold, and for some years he shall refrain from attacking the king of the north. ⁹Then the latter shall come into the realm of the king of the south but shall return to his own land.

¹⁰His sons shall wage war and assemble a multitude of great forces, which shall keep coming and overflow and pass through, and again shall carry the war as far as his fortress. ¹¹Then the king of the south, moved with rage, shall come out and fight with the king of the north. And he shall raise a great multitude, but it shall be given into his hand. ¹²And when the multitude is taken away, his heart shall be exalted, and he shall cast down tens of thousands, but he shall not prevail. ¹³For the king of the north shall again raise a multitude, greater than the first. And after some years* he shall come on with a great army and abundant supplies.

¹⁴In those times many shall rise against the king of the south, and the violent among your own people shall lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they shall fail. ¹⁵Then the king of the north shall come and throw up siegeworks and take a well-fortified city. And the forces of the south shall not stand, or even his best troops, for there shall be no strength to stand. ¹⁶But he who comes against him shall do as he wills, and none shall stand before him. And he shall stand in the glorious land, with destruction in his hand. ¹⁷He shall set his face to come with the strength of his whole kingdom, and he shall bring terms of an agreement and perform them. He shall give him the daughter of women to destroy the kingdom, but it shall not stand or be to his advantage. ¹⁸Afterward he shall turn his face to the coastlands and shall capture many of them, but a commander shall put an end to his insolence. Indeed, he shall turn his insolence back upon him. ¹⁹Then he shall turn his face back toward the fortresses of his own land, but he shall stumble and fall, and shall not be found.

There are three parts to this prophecy:

First, a history of the near east from the time of Daniel up to the appearance of Antiochus Epiphanes, who's coming has already been prophesied. There is a thumbnail sketch of the Persian and Greek empires (1-4). And then a recounting of some of the events between the kings of Syria and Egypt (5-19);

Second, the career of Antiochus Epiphanes (20-35);

Thirdly, more details about Antiochus Epiphanes, the early history of the Roman Empire, or more about Antichrist (36-45).

The first part covers vs. 1-19 and is a detailed history from the time of Daniel to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. This prophecy is so detailed that John Calvin writes 40 pages connecting what is known to be history to each of the references.

That is why the liberals want to put the writing of Daniel to the time of the Maccabees, about 165 A.D. They cannot accept that such details about history could have been written many hundreds of years before it happened.

The prophecy begins by speaking of three more kings of Persia, and then another who was far richer than the others. This presents no difficulty. The rich king is Xerxes, who reigned from 485 to 464 B.C. The kings who were before Xerxes and after the death of Cyrus were (1) Cambyses, 529 to 523 B.C.; (2) Gaumata, an imposter, 523 to 522 B.C.; and finally Darius the Great, who assassinated Gaumata and reigned from 522 to 485 B.C.

The significant thing about Xerxes' reign is that he crossed the Hellespont in an unsuccessful attempt to conquer Europe and was defeated by the Greeks.

Dardanelles

formerly *Hellespont*, Turkish *Çanakkale Boğazi*, narrow strait in northwestern Turkey, 38 mi (61 km) long, linking the Aegean Sea with the Sea of Marmara.

The Persians had tried to conquer Greece earlier under Darius the great and had been defeated at Marathon. In this second invasion the great navy of the Persians was defeated by the Greeks at Salamis (480 B.C.) and the main body of the Persian army (estimated at a million men) was forced back to Asia. The 100,000 man army left behind was crushed at the battle of Plataea the following year.

These invasions and attempted subjugation of Greece stuck in the Greek mind and were a major factor in the campaign of Alexander the Great against Persia in the years 334 to 331 B.C., more than a century later. This is what Dan 11:3 is about.

Verse 4 shows how the empire of Alexander was to be divided into four parts after his death, which has been prophesied in earlier visions.

Now a new item is included; that not one of the parts of this divided Greek empire would go to any one of Alexander's descendants. This is certainly not what would be expected. But it happened. All of Alexander's wives, children, and even distant relatives were murdered; the four parts going to the generals: Antipater, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus.

Seleucus ruled over Syria; Ptolemy over Egypt. From this point the vision concerns these two kingdoms, the two having the most direct bearing on the people of Israel.

Verses 5-20 are covered by Calvin in specific detail. Just one example should suffice to show the exactness of this prophecy.

In verses 6-9 is a prophecy of a "daughter of the king of the South" who makes an alliance with the "king of the North" but is unable to retain her place and is handed over together with those who supported her.

This woman's name was Bernice. She was the daughter of Ptolemy II [not the first Ptolemy who assumed the rule of Egypt after Alexander's death], and she married Antiochus Theos of Syria. It was a political marriage. Antiochus had to divorce his first wife to accomplish it. There was hatred and friction that no one could imagine. Bernice was poisoned, after which Antiochus remarried his first wife. Then Bernice was avenged by her brother, another Ptolemy, who attacked Syria and looted its temples. Josephus, who related this history, records that Ptolemy III returned to Egypt with 4,000 talents of gold, 40,000 talents of silver, and 2,500 objects that had been in the cities and temples of the northern kingdom. This is what verse 8 describes. Each of the details of this section of Daniel 11 has had a similarly precise fulfillment in history.

²⁰ "Then shall arise in his place one who shall send an exactor of tribute for the glory of the kingdom. But within a few days he shall be broken, neither in anger nor in battle. ²¹ In his place shall arise a contemptible person to whom royal majesty has not been given. He shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. ²² Armies shall be utterly swept away before him and broken, even the prince of the covenant. ²³ And from the time that an alliance is made with him he shall act deceitfully, and he shall become strong with a small people. ²⁴ Without warning he shall come into the richest parts of the province, and he shall do what neither his fathers nor his fathers' fathers have done, scattering among them plunder, spoil, and goods. He shall devise plans against strongholds, but only for a time. ²⁵ And he shall stir up his power and his heart against the king of the south with a great army. And the king of the south shall wage war with an exceedingly great and mighty army, but he shall not stand, for plots shall be devised against him. ²⁶ Even those who eat his food shall break him. His army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain. ²⁷ And as for the two kings, their hearts shall be bent on doing evil. They shall speak lies at the same table, but to no avail, for the end is yet to be at the time appointed. ²⁸ And he shall return to his land with great wealth, but his heart shall be set against the holy covenant. And he shall work his will and return to his own land.

²⁹ "At the time appointed he shall return and come into the south, but it shall not be this time as it was before. ³⁰ For ships of Kittim shall come against him, and he shall be afraid and withdraw, and shall turn back and be enraged and take action against the holy covenant. He shall turn back and pay attention to those who forsake the holy covenant. ³¹ Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate. ³² He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant, but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action. ³³ And the wise among the people shall make many understand, though for some days they shall stumble by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder. ³⁴ When they stumble, they shall receive a little help. And many shall join themselves to them with flattery, ³⁵ and some of the wise shall stumble, so that they may be refined, purified, and made white, until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time.

The "contemptible person" is Antiochus Epiphanes. Is it not amazing that the Bible would so perfectly describe a particular person over 300 years before he was born! Yet, how many years before Christ's virgin birth was it foretold?

Are we not involved in a spiritual war?

This contemptible person has already been mentioned as "another horn", in the vision of the ram and the goat in Daniel 8. In that vision he was identified as a ruler in the succession of Greek rulers going back to Alexander. Now he appears again in 11:20-35; and many details about his career are prophesied.

These verses teach that in the early years Antiochus Epiphanes would advance his career by deceit and intrigue, which is what he did. They speak of easy victories early on. The rulers of Egypt had become lax and corrupt, and there were occasions when the king of Egypt did not even attempt to resist Antiochus Epiphanes as he marched through the land. Antiochus Epiphanes came and went as he pleased. On one of these excursions, Antiochus Epiphanes was opposed by the ships and army of the expanding Roman Empire, and he was forced to turn back from Egypt greatly humiliated. What happened then is in verses 29-33.

As the account goes, Antiochus Epiphanes was on his way to invade Egypt again, no doubt expecting the easy victories he enjoyed earlier. But he was intercepted by the Roman fleet under the command of Popilius Laenas. Popilius was a stern man who demanded that the Greek general return to Palestine. Antiochus Epiphanes said he would consult his advisors. The Roman general knew what he had in mind. Antiochus Epiphanes wanted time to raise a larger army to repulse the Romans. Instead of granting him time, Popilius with characteristic Roman determination, drew a circle in the sand around Antiochus Epiphanes and ordered him to summon his advisors and deliberate on the spot. If he stepped out of the circle without having first having agreed to return to Palestine, the Roman officer said he would declare war. Antiochus Epiphanes backed down and went home. But he was furious as the text in Daniel says he would be.

What is the natural course of human nature when a person is humiliated, as Antiochus Epiphanes was, or forced to back down in a situation over which he has no control? The answer is that they usually take their anger out on someone else.

You have heard the story of the man who gets humiliated at work; goes home and slaps his wife; the wife beats the kid; the kid goes outside and kicks the dog.

This is what Antiochus Epiphanes did. He had been humiliated in front of his army. He could not proceed against Egypt. So he turned against the people of his own territory and poured out his fury there. He led 20,000 men against Jerusalem and abolished temple worship. Worse, by offering swine's flesh upon it, he desecrated the altar upon which the daily offerings were made to God. This is the "abomination that causes desolation" of verse 31. As a result, Antiochus Epiphanes became the symbol of everything the Jewish people hated, and a widespread, successful rebellion led by Judas Maccabees was the result.

Apparently verse 32 refers to the Maccabees and their followers.

These are some of the most remarkable prophecies in that they are easily verified. That, again, is why the Bible critics wish they were not written by Daniel but by some much later scribe.