

### DANIEL

#### Week 29, chapter 10

Today we begin what is the last segment of the Book of Daniel. Chapters 10 through 12 probably would have been better presented if they were one long chapter in our Bibles (as it was in the original) and not divided into the 3 as we find them today, because it can confuse matters more than they need to be.

To be clear: chapters 10 -12 are one long oracle, and the happenings are one long continuation. The best way to think of Daniel chapter 10 (in light of the way that Christian scholars divided up the Book of Daniel many centuries ago) is as an introduction to Daniel's final vision. So Chapter 10 introduces the context for the vision, and the vision itself is contained in chapters 11 and 12.

Perhaps the most important thing for us to understand is that this vision of Daniel is directly connected to the vision he received back in chapter 8. Chapters 10 -12 are essentially a progressive revelation of the vision Daniel was given in chapter 8. So I think considering the enormous amount of information contained in the Book of Daniel, as well as its complexity and mystery, we ought to take the time to re-read chapter 8 before we read chapter 10; that way the connection becomes obvious.

So open your Bibles to Daniel chapter 8.

#### **READ DANIEL CHAPTER 8 all**

I'm sure that has jogged your memories as we read about the times that are future to Daniel. And using the symbolism of a shaggy male goat and a ram with two horns, a vision of a confrontation between two of the four predicted gentile world kingdoms is explained. And in a nutshell it is that the ram with 2 horns is the Media-Persian Empire, and the shaggy male goat is the Greek Empire, which defeats the Media-Persian Empire.

Recall that first Nebuchadnezzar, and then later Daniel, had dreams and visions about a series of 4 gentile world empires. Nebuchadnezzar's dream (in which Daniel played the role of an interpreter) illustrated these 4 world empires in the form of a statue of a man, and the statue was made of 4 metals: gold, silver, bronze, and iron. The head of the statue was gold, and that represented the then-current world kingdom that Nebuchadnezzar was ruling over: Babylon. The chest and arms of silver represented the next world kingdom that would replace his: Media-Persia. The bronze trunk and thighs symbolized Greece, which would overthrow the Media-Persian Empire. And the legs of iron pointed towards Rome, which conquered the Greek Empire.

Daniel had his own vision that symbolized exactly the same thing, only instead of a statue of a man the symbolism was of a series of 4 strange creatures. The first creature was like a lion, and that was Babylon (the existing world kingdom at the time of his vision). The next creature was like a bear, which symbolized Media-Persia. Following that was a creature like a leopard, and it represented the Greek Empire. And the final creature was unlike any beast Daniel had ever seen; it was vicious, terrifying and ferocious and it symbolized the Roman Empire.

To be clear: the vision of Daniel chapter 8 occurred while the Babylonian Empire was still in power. But the vision of Daniel chapters 10 through 12 occurred AFTER the Babylonian Empire was defeated, and now the Media-Persian Empire ruled. The head of gold had given way to the arms and chest of silver. The lion had been defeated by the bear. So as chapter 10 opens Daniel was now living in the time of the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of the prophecy of the succession of 4 world empires.

And now before we read chapter 10, let's also remember that Daniel has already been given a general outline of the far future by the angel Gabriel in the vision of the 70 weeks in chapter 9. Or, as seems to be the more likely case, the 70 weeks means 490 years. During this 490 period a series of 6 goals were to be accomplished, and the end result of these 6 goals is redemption. The 6 goals were: 1) To restrain rebellion, 2) to complete the sin offering, 3) to make atonement for our perverse human condition, 4) to establish everlasting righteousness, 5) to validate and preserve vision and prophet, and 6) to anoint the Holy of Holies into service.

We spent a lot of time in Chapter 9 discussing not only the inherent difficulties of interpreting its contents, but also fleshing out the most likely range of possibilities of its meaning. We did eliminate a couple of possibilities because history has proven them wrong. However just as our premise for studying chapter 9 was that we were at least partially dealing with unfulfilled prophecy, and therefore we need to be careful not to get too rigid in our conclusions, the same goes for chapters 10 through 12.

I hope that what you have learned to this point is that the Book of Daniel (at least what of it we studied so far), gives much less detail than what we might like. However there are a couple of important fundamentals that we take to the bank: 1) this is all about the steps God will take to achieve redemption, and what will happen in the process; and 2) the redemptive process is all about Israel and not the church. The church will benefit from it, but the process is a collaborative matter between God and Israel.

And just as important, the details in Daniel have, over the centuries, become mixed with various Christian denominational agendas and not just a little speculation to arrive at some firm conclusions that simply are not warranted. It's not that some parts of the resulting End Times doctrines we've heard about might not turn out to be true; it's only that it would be mostly by either luck or perhaps some kind of private insight given by God to an individual who developed his conclusions about how it would come about. So let's stick with what the Scriptures tell us, and let others rely on their speculation. I think we'll be the better for it and considerably more prepared for any eventuality as these prophecies begin to come about in what must be the near future.

Open your Bibles to Daniel chapter 10.

### **READ DANIEL CHAPTER 10 all**

The time of Daniel's vision is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the reign of Koresh King of Persia. Koresh is in English Cyrus, also known as Cyrus the Great. Some scholars say that this verse is at odds with the final few words of Daniel 1.

### **Daniel 1:18-21 CJB**

***18 When the time the king had set for them to be presented came, the chief officer presented them to N'vukhadnetzar;***

***19 and when the king spoke with them, none was found among all of them to compare with Dani'el, Hananyah, Misha'el and 'Azaryah. So they entered the king's service;***

***20 and in all matters requiring wisdom and understanding, whenever the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and exorcists in his entire kingdom.***

***21 So Dani'el remained there until the first year of King Koresh.***

Thus some academics say we have a problem: Daniel 10 says Daniel was in service to Koresh in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the king's reign, while Daniel 1 says it was only until the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Koresh's reign. But that is reading into the Scriptures something that is not there.

Chapter 1 clearly implies that Daniel's final year of formal employment would occur during the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the Persian King Koresh's reign. That is, essentially this was the final year that Daniel was in any kind of official service as an administrator. Chapter 10 says nothing about Daniel being in service to King Koresh. It only employs what is known as the Regnal dating system to explain the timing of Daniel's vision. The Regnal dating method was standard and customary inside and outside of the Bible to speak of dates in terms of when such and such a king was in power. So the best conclusion is that Daniel was now in his 2<sup>nd</sup> year of retirement as he was a pretty old man, probably in his 90's. He was a free agent, serving no one.

Another point of context is that Daniel served King Koresh up until the year the king gave the order to release the Jews to return to their homeland: that was the 1<sup>st</sup> year of this king's reign. Listen to the Book of Ezra chapter 1:

### **Ezra 1:1-4 CJB**

***CJB Ezra 1:1 In the first year of Koresh king of Persia, in order for the word of ADONAI***

*prophesied by Yirmeyahu to be fulfilled, ADONAI stirred up the spirit of Koresh king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his whole kingdom, which he also put in writing, as follows:*

*<sup>2</sup> "Here is what Koresh king of Persia says: ADONAI, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms on earth; and he has charged me to build him a house in Yerushalayim, in Y'hudah.*

*<sup>3</sup> Whoever there is among you of all his people, may his God be with him! He may go up to Yerushalayim, in Y'hudah, and build the house of ADONAI the God of Isra'el, the God who is in Yerushalayim.*

*<sup>4</sup> Let every survivor, no matter where he lives, be helped by his neighbors with silver, gold, goods and animals, in addition to the voluntary offering for the house of God in Yerushalayim."*

So about 2 years have passed since we could properly say that the exile of the Jews to Babylon was over, and a few hundred, maybe a few thousand Jews had already found their way back to Judah and were working with Cyrus's blessings to rebuild the Temple and trying to make Jerusalem more livable. A good estimate then would be that the time of this event in Daniel is about 535 B.C., give or take a couple of years. Also note that it would be logical that since in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Cyrus's rule he freed the Jews to go home, this freedom would extend to Daniel being released from serving the king. After all, Daniel's service had always been involuntary; he was forcibly carried off to Babylon and placed into service to the Empire because of his skills, not because he applied for the job. But his reputation was so outstanding that each successive king insisted on retaining him. With Cyrus's decree in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of his reign, the Jews were freed and that would have included Daniel. It's just that Daniel chose to remain in Babylon (as did the majority of Jews) rather than returning to Judah.

Daniel 10 verse 1 says that a "word" was revealed to Daniel. The term "word" is *dabbar* in Hebrew; and the term "revealed" is *galah* in Hebrew. *Dabbar* is the same Hebrew word used back in the Book of Exodus to denote what we call the 10 Commandments. That is, the Hebrew word for commandment is *mitzvot*, however the Bible calls those 10 instructions given to Moses on Mt. Sinai *dabar*, word, not *mitzvot*, commandments. So Biblically speaking there is no such thing as the 10 Commandments; it's a Christian misnomer. Rather this is called The 10 Words. So we can see that when the Bible uses the term "word", the meaning leans towards the presenting of a divine oracle or message as opposed to the giving of a regulation or a commandment.

*Galah* means revelation; but the word for vision is *chazon*. What we find then is that *chazon* is not used in this passage. So what is happening here in chapter 10 is not a dream that Daniel is having while he is asleep, and it also isn't a vision (a *chazon*) in the sense of a conscious or semi-conscious inspiration like Daniel had in his first 2 visions. Rather the proceedings of chapters 10 – 12 was a fully awake actual happening that even involved a very real glimpse

into the spiritual realm. So we see a progression during Daniel's life of how it is that God was able to communicate with him.

We've spoken before that it is a Biblical principle that a dream is the most inferior form of receiving revelation from God. Next up from that is a semi or fully conscious vision that takes place in the mind, and then finally the greatest is a real and tangible event that actually connects with the physical world. For example, when Paul was on the road to Damascus and had his encounter with a risen Christ, it was not in a dream, and it was not a vision, it was a real event on a tangible physical level. And what we see in the Book of Daniel is that this progression of how God communicated with Daniel moved from interpreting another's dream, to having his own dream, to seeing a vision, to experiencing a real event and it must have coincided with Daniel's progressive spiritual growth. And this is something that we ought to pay attention to because the principle still holds true today. God will communicate with us on progressively more conscious and tangible levels generally in line with the progress of our own spiritual maturity. And I think that this is something that Believers kind of inherently understand even if it is hard to explain.

The next thing we learn is what the core subject of the vision is: and most versions say that it is speaking of a "great war". However this meaning isn't so certain. The Hebrew word is **tzava** and it can mean a number of things. When we use the phrase The Lord of Hosts, we are translating the Hebrew phrase **Adonai Tzava'ot**. So **tzava** usually has more the sense of being a host (a large number) of spiritual warriors, or at times of heavenly stars, than it does a human army. But that is not to say that it can't or at times doesn't mean an army of humans, perhaps like here in Daniel. And **tzava** also can indicate warfare in general, spiritual or human. In fact there is yet another legitimate use of the word **tzava** as meaning a time of going forth. So various Bibles will say "great power", or "appointed time", or "great conflict", or "great warfare". I think that the remainder of the oracle that continues through chapters 11 and 12 makes it pretty clear that this oracle to Daniel focuses on both spiritual and human warfare, and so I feel pretty confident that the core subject speaks of war. But I want you to be aware of the other possibilities.

In verse 2 Daniel explains that he had been in mourning for 3 weeks; also he had been fasting by not eating meat or any of the special foods that in his lofty position he ate regularly. That is, he ate very plainly during this 21 days; he didn't quit eating altogether. It also mentions that he didn't anoint himself; this is not a religious practice he's referring to. Rather, a better translation would be that he didn't use any ointment during that time. People in that era, if they were well off enough, used moisturizing and soothing lotions and oils on their skin as a luxury because they lived in a dry climate and because it smelled good. So as a sign of mourning, he didn't indulge in this luxury.

Verse 4 explains something important; it was on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the 1<sup>st</sup> month of the year when this oracle from God came to Daniel. Although it is not mentioned, as students of the Torah we ought to recognize that this event is referring to the month of Nisan, which is when the series of 3 spring biblical feasts occurs. Beginning on Nisan 14<sup>th</sup> and going through the 22<sup>nd</sup>, is Passover, Matza, and Firstfruits. So did his fasting have to do directly with the 3 feasts? No, I don't believe so. I think it was either coincidental or perhaps mildly symbolic. And partly this is

because Passover, Matza and Firstfruits are not meant as a time of mourning. So what was he “mourning” about? We’ll make that connection in just a few more verses.

Daniel was standing on the banks of a river that most translators agree is the Tigris; however that is in doubt. The word “Tigris” doesn’t appear in these verses; rather it is the word **Hiddekel** and this word indicates one of the ancient rivers that coursed from the Land of Eden and headed towards Assyria. Therefore some think it is referring to the Tigris, but others say it is the Euphrates. Nevertheless, Daniel was physically present on the banks of a great river for some reason that is not explained. Apparently he was suspecting nothing, expecting nothing, when suddenly he looks up and there is a man dressed in linen (meaning a white garment typical of what priests wore), and he was also wearing a belt or a sash made of Ufaz gold. Ufaz gold simply means it was the finest gold; there is no known place called Ufaz, so perhaps it is simply a word that was coined to indicate its superior quality.

A belt in that era was not used like it is today, as a means to hold up our pants. Rather the belt was made of cloth, and it went around the waist at least a couple of times. Its purpose was as a place to stuff one corner of the long tunic that went to the ground and was standard dress for males and females. One would use the belt as a place to tuck in the bottom part of the garment to provide more freedom in movement. It is probably more or less the same thing as the common Biblical phrase of “girding up your loins” before going into battle. Tucking the bottom of your skirt into your belt was for the purpose of springing into action, and the action can range from warfare to merely walking more comfortably. But this “man” with the belt that Daniel saw was no mere human being; so the term man (**ish**) is only meant figuratively. The description we get sounds a lot like the description we get of God in Ezekiel; a body like beryl, a face like lightning, eyes like fire, speech like the roar of a crowd.

Therefore it is common among Christians to say that this man had to be God. And since this person is described as a man, therefore it must be the 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the Trinity: Christ. I can’t say that this is wrong with any unmovable conviction. But I have real doubts and don’t subscribe to this viewpoint because it is based mainly on the Roman Catholic version of the Trinity, which has become adopted by most of the Protestant branches of the church. So I think there is a tendency to read the Doctrine of the Trinity back into this story. Thus as we read along, those who insist that this must be Christ also insist that at least 2 and probably 3 different beings were present with Daniel. We’ll discuss that shortly.

Before we get there, however, let’s back up to verse 7. Daniel clearly sees this vision or apparition but the men who are with him do not. Yet they felt it; they sensed an awesome presence of something powerful and supernatural. They couldn’t identify it and it so terrified them. Was it good or was it malevolent? It was much like that when Paul went to Damascus and the Lord interrupted his journey; there were men with him who heard the ascended Messiah’s voice (or at least a noise) suddenly coming from the sky, but they didn’t see the flash of light that blinded Paul, and they apparently couldn’t discern what the voice was saying.

The men with Daniel retreated in haste when this feeling of terror overcame them, and Daniel was left standing there alone. Why didn’t Daniel flee, too? Because he had similar

supernatural experiences before and no doubt knew that a meeting with a divine presence was underway (no matter how uncomfortable it was). Nonetheless, this is something one never gets used to; he was so overwhelmed and filled with anxiety that his face became contorted under the stress. His knees buckled and his body shook uncontrollably. When the voice began to instruct him, his instinct was to immediately fall to the ground and assume the position of submission and worship. What happens next is, for me, an indication that the being that he saw was not Christ. The being gently touches him (so this is more than an apparition), and he says to Daniel: "Daniel you are a greatly loved man. Now pay attention to the words I am saying to you and stand upright; for it is to you THAT I HAVE BEEN SENT". God doesn't "dispatch" Himself as a messenger. And when someone lays prostrate before God (properly so), He doesn't tell them to stand up and confront Him face to face.

Verse 12 then gives us some information that relates back to verse 2. The being says that from the moment Daniel began to pray his words were heard by God, and this being came because of what was said. However (he says in verse 13) he was held up for 21 days by the prince of the kingdom of Persia.

Notice that Daniel fasted and mourned for 21 days, and that this angelic being was held up from coming to Daniel for 21 days. This was the SAME 21 days. That is, on day one, Daniel began praying; God heard and immediately dispatched this being with a word from the Lord. But this being was unable to get to Daniel for 21 days because he had to contend with this mysterious prince of Persia. So, Daniel had to wait and suffer for 3 weeks and of course had no idea that the heavenly messenger with God's answer was on his way. For all Daniel knew, God had not yet responded and didn't intend to. It reminds us of Job who had no idea why God seemingly abandoned him and allowed calamity after calamity to befall him. Only we find out later that God was aware and involved from the beginning. He was contending with Satan and Job was completely unaware that he was the object of their contention.

But why was Daniel in a state of mourning? The Hebrew Sages have an answer for this, and I suspect that they are correct. Some Christian commentators such as Dr. Kiel say that he was praying for the deliverance of the Jewish people; but that can't be because we have a number of direct Scripture references that tell us that in the first year of King Cyrus he freed the Jews and this event we're studying is happening 2 years later. Rather it is say the Jewish Sages that Daniel was heartbroken and devastated that the rebuilding of the Temple was being hindered to the point that the project had all but collapsed. The local residents, who had moved into Judah and the area of Jerusalem while the Jews were exiled, were the culprits; and apparently King Cyrus wasn't doing anything to stop these folks from causing trouble. The Temple was everything; for 70 years the Jews were left to wallow in their sins and uncleanness with no remedy because they had no Temple, no Altar, and therefore no operational Priesthood. The ultra-pious Daniel would have felt this loss the most. This ongoing conflict in Judah between the returning Jews and the locals was well known in the region and it was even recorded with some detail in the Book of Ezra.

***Ezra 4:1-5 CJB***

<sup>CJB</sup> **Ezra 4:1** *When the enemies of Y'hudah and Binyamin heard that the people from the exile were building a temple to ADONAI the God of Isra'el,*

<sup>2</sup> *they approached Z'rubavel and the heads of fathers' clans and said to them, "Let us build along with you; for we seek your God, just as you do; and we have been sacrificing to him since the time of Esar-Hadon king of Ashur, who brought us here."*

<sup>3</sup> *But Z'rubavel, Yeshua and the rest of the heads of fathers' clans in Isra'el answered them, "You and we have nothing in common that you should join us in building a house for our God. We will build by ourselves for ADONAI the God of Isra'el, as Koresh king of Persia ordered us to do."*

<sup>4</sup> *Then the people of the land began discouraging the people of Y'hudah, in order to make them afraid to build.*

<sup>5</sup> *They also bribed officials to frustrate their plan throughout the lifetime of Koresh king of Persia and on into the reign of Daryavesh king of Persia.*

Continuing in Daniel 10:13, this angelic being tells Daniel that the only way he was finally able to disengage from battle with the prince of Persia is that **Mikha'el**, one of the chief princes, came to help him. Essentially, **Mikha'el** came to relieve this unnamed angel from his battle so that he could go to Daniel with God's oracle. If you are paying attention, this ought to raise a lot of questions beginning with: Who or what is the prince of Persia? Liberal scholars say that this is some unnamed human King of Persia. But that makes no sense; a prince (a **sar** in Hebrew) is not just another name for a king (a **melech**). Further it is obvious that this being speaking to Daniel is a spiritual being and if he is fighting anyone, it is another spiritual being.

While we can't take too much from these few mysterious words, I can assert this with full confidence: we are talking about spiritual beings who are each assigned to assist certain nations. In our current situation one is to help Israel, and the other Persia. And yet there is a human physical interaction taking place as well, because the end of verse 13 says that this special angel whom **Mikha'el** relieved, was no longer needed there with the Kings of Persia.

So this brings up again our principle of the Reality of Duality: for everything that happens on earth there is a spiritual component. And by the way, we shouldn't assume that the spiritual prince over Persia is evil or a demon. This claim is often made by Christian commentators but there is no evidence for that. His assignment is to contend for Persia, and our unnamed angel's job is to contend for Israel. That doesn't necessarily make one a wicked angel. For one thing, God ordained that Persia should create a powerful gentile Empire that conquers Babylon. For another thing the current King of Persia, Cyrus the Great, was a friend to the Jewish people and he sincerely sought to right what he perceived as the wrongs that the Babylonians had done to the Jews by subjugating them and destroying their precious Temple of worship to their God YHWH.

Let's stop here and we'll pick up at this point next week.