

Daniel 10:10-14

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The angel revives Daniel and tells him he has come to give Daniel a message from God in answer to Daniel's prayers. A demon had prevented the angel for three weeks from reaching Daniel. The angel's message is about Israel and the future.

After fainting and falling flat on his face, *Daniel* is revived. He writes, *behold, a hand touched him and set him on his hands and knees*, though he is still *trembling* from fear. The visitor apparently picked him up by the collar and set him on his hands and knees. He speaks to *Daniel* again, attempting to comfort and revive him, *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*. The man identifies himself as a messenger who has been sent to *Daniel*, telling him that *Daniel* is held in *high esteem*. The angel appears not to want to address the man of *high esteem* while prostrated or kneeling. Rather he wants the honored man to *stand upright*, and see the angel eye to eye. This makes it clear that *Daniel* is being honored by the angel's presence. To this point *Daniel* only feels dread. The angel is trying to coax *Daniel* to progress from being on all fours to *stand upright* on his two feet and converse on equal footing.

With these words encouraging *Daniel*, he stands up, though still *trembling*. We can imagine him standing, but wobbling. The messenger continues, *Do not be afraid, Daniel*. He explains that *from the first day that Daniel set his heart on understanding and on humbling himself before God, his words were heard*. This heavenly messenger, an angel, has *come in response to Daniel's words*. Evidently, *Daniel* had been praying to gain *understanding* during his scheduled three week fasting and mourning period (v. 2 & 3). At the end of chapter 8 *Daniel* stated:

“And I, *Daniel*, was overcome and lay sick for some days. Then I rose and went about the king's business, but I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it.”
(Daniel 8:27)

It is probable that *Daniel* was praying to gain *understanding* of the visions he had seen previously, that no one understood.

Just as in Chapter 9, *Daniel's words* were heard by *God*, and *God* immediately sent an answer (Daniel 9:23). In that instance, *God's messenger* arrived with an answer before *Daniel* had even finished his prayer. Yet here in Chapter 10, *Daniel* notes that he has been in *mourning* and fasting for three weeks. We can presume *Daniel* also prayed, since the angel said he *was heard*.

The angel addresses the delay of *God's* response. *God* had sent the angel right away to speak to *Daniel*, as soon as *Daniel set his heart on understanding* by entering a three-week period of fasting and prayer. But something blocked his arrival for a time. It is a curious, rare passage that gives us a glimpse of the spiritual wars waged beyond our sight. This angel tells *Daniel* that *the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding him for twenty-one days*, the duration of

Daniel's mourning. Daniel's *mourning* could be connected with his repentance and sorrow over Israel's unfaithfulness (Daniel 9:1-19).

The messenger was prevented from reaching *Daniel* for these three weeks because of the resistance from the *prince of Persia*. It is clear that this is a spiritual force, since it contended with the angel dispatched to give *Daniel understanding*. It is also clear this spiritual entity had great power, since he is called a *prince*. Intriguingly, he is called the *prince of Persia*. As we saw in 10:1, Cyrus is the human king of Persia at this time. Yet there is a spiritual *prince* that also appears to have authority over *Persia*. *Persia* was the most powerful earthly empire at the time. We know this *prince* had power and that it was opposed to God's will because it deterred the angel from reaching *Daniel* for the full three weeks of Daniel's time of *mourning* and fasting.

It seems likely, since this spiritual power opposed God's will and God's messenger that it was a demon. "Demons" are former angels who rebelled against *God* and continue to rebel. The Bible regularly speaks of demons, angels, and Satan. We are told by the Apostle Paul that the war that believers are engaged in is not actually against other people, but against evil spiritual powers, "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" (Ephesians 6:12). Jesus Himself identifies Satan as "the ruler of the world" for the time being (John 14:30).

Elsewhere in the Bible, Paul explains that sinful living is Satan's agenda; our natural sinful state prior to faith in Christ is "according to the course of this world, according to the *prince* of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:1-2). Satan is part of the corruption of the world, going back to the Garden of Eden. He and his fellow fallen angels work in the world against the will of *God*. They have, presently, the power to influence leaders and nations, and to battle with *God's* angels. It seems there is a spiritual dimension that mirrors human political subdivisions, and impacts events. In Revelation 2:13, Pergamum, the capital of the Roman province of Asia, is said to contain "Satan's throne" (Revelation 2:13). Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2 indicate that God's design is to have humans replace Satan and have dominion over the earth, and silence Satan, who is the accuser (Revelation 12:10).

We are not told exactly how the *prince of Persia* delayed the messenger angel, but clearly this angel needed help before he could reach *Daniel* with *God's* response. The angel *had been left there with the kings of Persia*; he alone was in some sense trapped by the chief demons who worked to influence the Persian empire, when *Michael*, another angel, *came to help* the messenger. *Michael* is called *one of the chief princes*, an angel great in power who could outmatch the demonic forces holding the messenger back.

This same *Michael* is mentioned in the Book of Jude, where he rebukes Satan in the name of the Lord when disputing over the body of Moses (Jude 1:9) and in the book of Revelation, where he will lead other angels in a future battle to cast Satan (called 'the dragon') and his demons out of Heaven for good, "And there was war in heaven, *Michael* and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war" (Revelation 12:7). In verse 21, the messenger angel calls *Michael your prince*, which indicates *Michael* is the *prince* or captain over the Jewish

people. Michael is also *one of the chief princes*, so it appears God appointed one of His top angel captains to guard His people.

It seems the revealed vision was of great importance to the heavenly powers – to the powers of darkness to prevent it from being revealed, and to the forces supporting the people of God that it be revealed. This underscores the value of the revelation.

Michael came to help—he freed the messenger angel who had *been left there with the kings of Persia*. Perhaps the messenger angel was imprisoned on order of the spiritual *kings of Persia*. The word translated *prince* is often translated “captain.” The picture seems to be that a plurality of demonic *kings over Persia* sent their captain to capture the angelic messenger, and he was detained for three weeks in their presence, until *Michael* came and secured his release. Perhaps he rebuked them in the name of the Lord, as he did to Satan in disputing over the body of Moses.

The messenger then came directly to *Daniel*. He explains the purpose of his message: *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*. This is a direct answer to Daniel’s *heart*, to *gain understanding*, which transpires, as we are told in 10:2. The *understanding* Daniel sought was connected to his *people*, the Jewish nation.

We are not told whether Daniel’s continued prayers during the twenty one days played a direct role in Michael being sent to free the messenger. But it does seem that the messenger was freed just at the time Daniel had determined for his fasting and *mourning* to end.

Although the message pertains to *Daniel* and his *people*, Israel, it pertains to *the days yet future*, the *latter days* for Israel. We will see that all the events described in Chapter 11 were future to Daniel, but are now past history to us. Chapter 12 describes events that remain future, both to *Daniel* then, and to us now. Daniel had *understanding*, and certainty of Israel’s future wellbeing. We should have even more certainty, given that so many of these events have transpired just as predicted.

The vision of Chapter 9 ended with the “anointed one” (Messiah) being “cut off” after 69 “weeks” and a prince who destroys Jerusalem, who commits “abominations” and makes “desolate.” It seems reasonable that Daniel would be in *mourning* for *his people*, and their apparently dismal future. As we shall see in this vision that stretches from chapter 10 to the end of the book in chapter 12, this vision will predict an ending where justice prevails, and Daniel will rise again to play a meaningful part. It is perhaps the *understanding* Daniel was seeking, how these catastrophic events for *his people* could pave the way for a fulfillment of God’s great promises of blessing to Israel. It is doubtful *Daniel* would have *understood* all the political comings and goings that will be predicted. But it seems certain Daniel gained the *understanding* he was seeking that God would grant mercy to Israel (Daniel 9:19).

Biblical Text

10 Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. 11 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. 12 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. 13 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. 14 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*.”