Daniel 10 – The Vision of Daniel With the "Man Dressed in Linen"

Hebrew¹ – Modified Translation of NAS95

Dan. 10:1 In the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia, a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar. The message was true and one of great conflict, and he gained an understanding of the message and an understanding of the vision.²

Cyrus the Great³ –

Third year of Cyrus' rule over Babylon

With actually Darius the Mede in Babylon

559-529 B.C. 536 B.C.

Dan. 10:2 In those days, I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks.⁴

Dan. 10:3 I did not eat any tasty food. Nor did meat or wine enter my mouth. I also did not use any ointment at all until the entire three weeks were completed.

Dan. 10:4 On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I was by the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris,⁵

Dan. 10:5 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.⁶

Dan. 10:6 His body also was like beryl. His face had the appearance of lightning. His eyes were like flaming torches. His arms and feet were like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words were like the sound of a tumult.⁷

Dan. 10:7 Now I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, while the men who were with me did not see the vision. Instead, a great dread fell on them, and they ran away to hide themselves.⁸

¹ Daniel 1:1-2:4 is written in Hebrew, along with 8:1-12:13. The rest of Daniel, 2:5-7:28 is written in Aramaic.

² Verse 1 is an introductory and summary statement of the message/vision and its interpretation in chapters 10:2-12:13. Daniel is most likely referring to the third year of Cyrus' ruling over Babylon as the king of Persia. Consequently, this conversation with the "man dressed in linen" takes place in 536 B.C., after Cyrus had conquered Babylon in 539 B.C.

³ Babylonian Persian (Mede) Greek Syrian Greek Egyptian Greek Roman Middle East Messianic

⁴ With the words "In those days... (בַּיֶּבֶׂי בֹּ (ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις), Daniel begins telling the story of eventually his receiving the vision/dream and then coming to an understanding of it from the "certain man dressed in linen."

We find out here that Daniel has "been mourning for three entire weeks," probably over the current situation of his fellow Jews and him, that they are exiles in Babylon and long to go back to Israel and Jerusalem.

⁵ The 24th of Nisan, the first month of the Jewish calendar, means that this is just ten days after Passover and two days after the end of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The city of Babylon is on the Euphrates River, so that Daniel has traveled north with several men (cf. v 7) to the Tigris River on the other side of the Mesopotamian Valley. He says that he sees "certain man dressed in linen," and he is clothed with a "belt of pure gold from Uphaz," whose location is unknown.

⁶ Is this man an angelos (messenger) of Yahweh, i.e., a theophany? Cf. Exodus 3:2, אַרְ בְּלָּאָרְ (ἄγγελος κυρίου). Probably not, because this "man" says in v. 13 that he was inhibited from acting by "the prince of the kingdom of Persia." Therefore, he is more likely a conventional angel who perpetually inhabits the heavenly realm so to speak, and he is appearing in this vision/dream which God is giving to Daniel.

This is the like the vision of Jesus who appeared to John in Revelation 1:12-15, "Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters."

⁷ Beryl is a transparent, pale green, blue, or yellow mineral consisting of beryllium and aluminum.

⁸ The Expositor's Bible Commentary says of this verse, "One who sees a heavenly being must be spiritually alert. And so Daniel was left to face this awesome messenger of God." But what in the text requires that the responsibility for

Dan. 10:8 Consequently, I was left alone to see this great vision. Yet, no strength was left in me, while my natural color turned to a deathly pallor. Thus, I retained no strength.

Dan. 10:9 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.

Dan. 10:10 Then, behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees.⁹

Dan. 10:11 He said to me, "Daniel, man of high regard, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, because I have now been sent to you." When he had spoken this statement to me, I stood up trembling.¹⁰

Dan. 10:12 Then, he said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, because, from the first day that you set your heart on understanding and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words.¹¹

Dan. 10:13 "However, the prince of the kingdom of Persia was standing opposite me for twenty-one days. Then, behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I had been left there with the kings of Persia.¹²

being able to see a miraculous dream from God be put on the shoulders of human beings? For example, when the apostle Paul on the road to Damascus sees Jesus and heard his words, which was not a dream, his companions could only hear Jesus' voice but saw nothing (Acts 9:7, "The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one" (οἱ δὲ ἄνδρες οἱ συνοδεύοντες αὐτῷ εἰστήκεισαν ἐννεοί, ἀκούοντες μὲν τῆς φωνῆς, μηδένα δὲ θεωροῦντες)). Was this because Paul, as a man hell-bent on destroying Christianity, was more "spiritually alert" than his companions because he had been fasting and praying, which enabled him not only to see Jesus but also to hear and understand what he was telling him? Obviously not.

The more reasonable conclusion here in Daniel 10 is that God sovereignly chose to write His story of the creation at this point in such a way that the other men became terrified and left the area so that only Daniel saw the vision and dream.

⁹ The hand of the "certain man dressed in linen," so that Daniel woke up and saw this vision of the angelic being. ¹⁰ Again, the Expositor's Bible Commentary says, "But observe that Daniel's privileged status as one especially precious to God resulted from his complete absorption in the will and glory of the Lord to whom he had yielded his heart. His was the whole-souled devotion of a Paul or a Moses." Thus, it interprets the statement of the man as praise of Daniel for being so spiritually alert and attuned to God that He responds to Daniel by using him.

¹¹ The Expositor's Bible Commentary writes, "These verses give us a fascinating insight into the supernatural forces involved when a believer engages in protracted and earnest prayer. Though James 5:16 tells us that 'prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective,' we may not realize the mighty forces that are unleashed when we really devote ourselves to intercession before the throne of grace."

Instead, a more reasonable interpretation is that God had supernaturally determined that Daniel would spend three weeks appealing to Him in line with His promises for Israel, and now it is time not only to begin to fulfill the promise of the Jews' return to the land, but also to give Daniel a peek into the future of their distant and far distant history. Besides, this is a vision, and God is revealing this supernatural being to Daniel.

¹² The Expositor's Bible Commentary writes, "The powers of evil apparently have the capacity to bring about hindrances and delays, even of the delivery of the answers to believers whose requests God is minded to answer. God's response was immediate, so far as his intention was concerned. But 'the prince of the Persian kingdom' (v.13)—apparently the satanic agent assigned to the sponsorship and control of the Persian realm—put up a determined opposition to the actual delivery of the divine answer. While God can, of course, override the united resistance of all the forces of hell if he chooses to do so, he accords to demons certain limited powers of obstruction and rebellion somewhat like those he allows humans. In both cases the exercise of free will in opposition to the Lord of heaven is permitted by him when he sees fit."

This perspective by the commentary is typical of Christians, who view God as existing basically on the same level as created beings, but only maybe a little higher. Therefore, for them, God is not the sole and transcendent author of all of created reality at every moment of time. He is its Creator at the beginning and intervenes in its history only at certain chosen moments. Otherwise, the creation proceeds along its own path according to the free-will choices of those who

Dan. 10:14 "I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the last of the days, because the vision pertains to days yet to come." 13

Dan. 10:15 When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless.

Dan. 10:16 But, behold, the 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.¹⁴

Dan. 10:17 "For how can a servant, my Lord, this person, speak with my Lord, this person? As for me, there remains just now no strength in me. Nor has any breath been left in me." 15

have the ability to act independently of God.

Instead, I think that the Bible presents a completely different perspective, whereby God is the absolute, sovereign origin at every moment of every aspect and detail of the creation, including the typical misunderstandings of Christians, as He writes the story that He has planned and purposed from before He brought the creation into existence and started writing the story.

In the light of this, how is it best to understand what the man is saying in v. 13? The key is to continue interpreting what is happening to Daniel as a vision that God is causing him to see. I think that this angelic being is saying simply that "the prince of the kingdom of Persia," who is ultimately God's archenemy, Satan, was influencing the course of events surrounding Daniel while "one of the chief princes" of God, the angel Michael (בְּיִבְּאָלֵי ="Who is like God?"), whose responsibility is to align himself with the Jews (see verses below), and the "man dressed in line" were opposing him. The implication also is that in spite of how "good" Persia was to the Jews, e.g., Cyrus the Great's decree that they return and rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, nevertheless it was primarily characterized by Satanic forces, just as all empires, kingdoms, countries, and nations are characterized—until Jesus returns and establishes the first stage of the Kingdom of God on earth with the restored Kingdom of Israel centered in Jerusalem.

Daniel 12:1 "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued."

Jude 9 But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war...

13 The "man dressed in linen" says that he is relating to Daniel what will happen to the Jewish people "in the last of the days." The Hebrew phrase for these words is בַּאַבְוֹרֶית בַּיְבֶּיְם, while the Septuagint uses ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν, both of which mean as I have translated it, "in the last of the days." Daniel's ancestor, Jacob, uses the same phrase in Genesis 49:1, "Then Jacob summoned his sons and said, 'Assemble yourselves that I may tell you what will befall you in the last of the days" בַּאַבְוֹרֶית בַּיְבֶּיִם = in the last of the days) (ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν). The Jews have always been told that there will be an end to the present age and that they will play an important role in this end. In other words, God's goal for the present age is for it to come to an end, in order to provide a transition to the millennial kingdom of Revelation 20 and then to the eternal earth and Kingdom of God of Revelation 21. In Jacob's statements to his sons, clearly Judah will play the most important role within Israel to the extent that he will rule over the rest of them. We know that the final, individual ruler will be the Davidic King of the eternal Kingdom of God, Jesus of Nazareth, as the final and complete Messiah/Anointed One from the tribe of Judah, who will usher in the age so that the people of Israel will become the most powerful nation in all human history.

Thus, the man is telling Daniel that the message that he received from God three weeks ago is information mainly about the future of the Jewish people, leading right up to the end of the present realm (and Jesus' return). This is why it makes sense that Daniel 11:36ff. in the next chapter transitions from Antiochus IV Epiphanes in the 2nd century B.C. to the Man of Lawlessness, whom the apostle Paul mentions in 2 Thessalonians 2 and who is still future to us and will live just before Jesus' return.

¹⁴ I think that this is the same "man dressed in linen" in the vision who now touches Daniel's lips, resulting in his speaking to him. Daniel explicitly indicates that fear, anguish, and sadness have so overwhelmed him that he has no strength to speak.

¹⁵ The Hebrew syntax is difficult, but I think that the Septuagint helps, "How is the child able to speak with his Lord?" It seems that Daniel is viewing this "man" as certainly an important being, even perhaps an *angelos* of Yahweh, a theophany. Daniel calls him "my Lord." And He is wondering how such a weak and sinful person as himself can speak with such an important person as this apparition in front of him. Of course, even God's appearing and speaking with

East and India.

Dan. 10:18 Then, the one with human appearance touched me again and strengthened me. 16

Dan. 10:19 He said, "O man of high esteem, do not be afraid. Shalom to you. Take courage and be courageous!" As soon as he spoke to me, I received strength and said, "May my Lord speak, for you have strengthened me." 17

Dan. 10:20 Then he said, "Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia. I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come.¹⁸

Dan. 10:21 "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.¹⁹

sinful human beings has occurred before in OT history, and Daniel must be aware of this, the same way that he was aware of what Jeremiah had written about the return of the Jews from the Babylonian exile (cf. Daniel 9:2). Nevertheless, Daniel is experiencing first-hand what it is for an angelic being to appear to and speak to a sinful human being who deserves God's wrath and condemnation, and he cannot help himself but say, "How is this even possible?" Because of both the impression that Daniel has gotten so far from the original message mentioned in v. 1 and the angel's willingness to speak to him here, Daniel admits that this experience has all but sapped him of his strength.

16 This supernatural person once again touches Daniel to assure and strengthen him in his weakened condition.

17 The "man dressed in linen" has touched, spoken, and encouraged Daniel. Daniel then encourages him to speak and

provide him with the message that is intended for him.

18 This "man" indicates that he opposes the forces of evil that originate with Satan and that are influencing the Persian Empire—as they do all empires, kingdoms, countries, and nations. His "fight" is with the supernatural forces and not with human beings. And he says that "the prince of Greece is about to come," who is most likely the same satanic being, even Satan himself, who will influence Alexander the Great and his spread of the Greek Empire into the Middle

And here we have a specific reference to both Persia ($\nabla_{x}^{n} = \nabla_{x}^{n} = \nabla_{x}^{n}$

He also says that it is Michael, obviously a created angel of God, who as "your prince," i.e., the supernatural angel on the side of the Jews ("your" is plural in the Hebrew text), helps him to oppose the forces of evil at work in the Persian Empire—and in all empires, kingdoms, nations, countries, and human political entities.