

DANIEL'S VISION BY THE RIVER

This verse introduces us to the last of the recorded visions of the Prophet Daniel, the instruction imparted to him at this time being continued through chapters 11 and 12, to the close of the book. The third year of Cyrus was B. C. 534. Twenty-one years had consequently elapsed since Daniel's vision of the four beasts in the first year of Belshazzar, B. C. 555; nineteen years since the vision of the ram, he-goat, little horn, and twenty-three hundred days, of chapter 8, in the third year of Belshazzar, B. C. 553; and four years since the instruction given to Daniel respecting the seventy weeks, in the first year of Darius, B. C. 538, as recorded in chapter 9. On the overthrow of the kingdom of Babylon by the Medes and Persians, B. C. 538, Darius, through the courtesy of his nephew, Cyrus, was permitted to occupy the throne.

Daniel 10:1: "In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision."

Daniel 10 begins with a date—the third year of Cyrus (vs. 1). The Persians, under Cyrus, took over in Babylon in October of 539 B.C., so Cyrus's first full official year of rulership in Babylon would have begun in the spring of 538 B.C. according to Babylonian and Persian reckoning. Adding three years to 538 B.C. means that this revelation was given to Daniel in the Babylonian-Persian year that began in the spring of 536 B.C. and ended in the spring of 535 B.C. Dates may appear at first to add very little to the story, but they do give us a setting for other events that were happening in the world at the same time.

Daniel's final prophecy covers three chapters in the book—chapters 10, 11, and 12. Chapter 10 is the introduction or prologue, chapter 11 is the body of the prophecy, and chapter 12 is the conclusion or epilogue. All three belong together as shown by the fact that elements in chapter 10 reappear in chapter 12.

Chapter 11, the body of the prophecy, is the most detailed prophecy in Daniel's book. Previous prophecies have talked about kingdoms; chapter 11 now gets down to the details and talks about individual kings. No symbolic vision precedes this detailed explanation. It is an oral, didactic type of prophecy given directly from the angel Gabriel to

the prophet Daniel. The truth of the prophecy is sealed by the appearance of God Himself in chapter 10 and by His oath recorded in chapter 12.

According to the content of chapter 10, a local issue—probably the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem—forms part of the situation that is being dealt with. Chapter 11 takes the prophecy from the Persian present (according to Daniel's viewpoint) into the remote future when God would conclude the plan of salvation and set up His eternal kingdom. That event is described in the first four verses of chapter 12.

Daniel 10:2 "In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks."

Daniel tells us that a problem was going on at this time, but he does not tell us the nature of the problem. The date, however, gives us a clue. By the third year of Cyrus, the Jews had returned to Judea. In his first year, Cyrus gave the decree permitting them to return, and they had arrived in Jerusalem by the second year. So the problem bothering Daniel was not whether the Jews were going to return to their own land; that had already been accomplished. The problem must have concerned some trouble which the Jewish people had gotten themselves into after arriving in Jerusalem. The book of Ezra tells us that they did indeed find themselves in trouble.

Ezra 1 tells of the decree of Cyrus permitting the Jews to return to their land. Ezra 2 gives the list of those who went back. Ezra 3 tells some of the first things that they did when they arrived at the site of the destroyed temple and began to work. They erected the altar and began the sacrifices, but when they came to address building the temple itself, they ran into difficulty. The Samaritans came and wanted to help with the temple construction. These were the mixed descendants of those Israelites who had been left in the land after the Assyrian and Babylonian deportations and non-Jewish people who had been moved in from the east to occupy some of the old Israelite territory. They were polytheists and idolaters. The Jewish returnees, remembering the reason for their captivity, were afraid that the Samaritans would introduce these practices into the new temple, so they refused their offer to help with its reconstruction. That is where the problem arose.

Daniel 10:3: "I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled."

Daniel also abstained from self-anointment. He emphasized the

completeness of this abstinence by the added use of the infinitive absolute, saying literally, “anointing myself, I did not anoint myself.” The custom was to anoint oneself daily, the oil being applied to exposed skin that might be burned by the sun (Ps. 104:15). Anointing was a sign of joy (Prov. 27:9), and it was normally discontinued in the time of mourning, as here with Daniel (cf. 2 Sam. 12:20; 14:2). These acts of self-discipline were continued by Daniel for three full weeks. Such acts of themselves do not solicit the favor of God, but they constitute suitable exercises which, if sincere, encourage, and give demonstration of, the proper attitude of heart which does.

How deep was Daniel’s desire for light and understanding is shown by his willingness to fast for three full weeks. He would probably have fasted longer had the angel not come when he did in answer to his prayer.

This does not mean that he abstained completely from food, for God doesn’t want His people to injure themselves. Fasting is not an exercise to awaken God, or to attract His attention, or to arouse His sympathy. Self-inflicted suffering does us no good. Daniel ate sufficient food to sustain his health and his life during these three weeks. By abstaining from “pleasant bread” and “flesh” and “wine,” Daniel avoided rich foods, sweets, and the kind of overeating that benumbs the body, mind, and nerves.

There are many who eat so much and such a rich variety of food that their minds are blocked and stupefied. Spiritual truths make no impression on them. Jesus has warned us of the danger in these last days of overeating, and eating the wrong kind of foods (Luke 21:34). By his fasting, Daniel put himself in the best possible physical condition in order to understand with a clear mind what the Lord would teach him. Wise people long have said that abstemiousness in diet is rewarded with mental and moral vigor.

Daniel fasts for three weeks. Biblical tradition usually required only three days for the act of repentance (Ex. 19:10-15; Esther 4:16). Such is the intensity of his prayer that Daniel multiplies it by seven. Later Jewish tradition will retain the “three weeks” unit to commemorate the various tragedies that befell the Jewish people, especially the destruction of the Temple. This period of mourning, also called *beyn hametzarim* (literally “between the straits,” meaning “in distress”) takes place from the seventeenth of Tammuz to the ninth of Av (July-August).

Daniel's prayer and fast takes place, however, in the first month of the year, Nisan, that is, precisely during the time of Passover and of the unleavened bread. He seems to allude to that fact as he feels the need to specify that "no meat or wine touched my lips" (Dan. 10:2), which would have been expected in the ritual meals of Passover. Jewish commentators have wondered about this irregularity that makes Daniel transgress the commandments of eating the lamb and the four cups of wine. They justify Daniel's decision, however, on the grounds that the interruption of the Temple's construction warranted such a response.

Daniel 10:4: "And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel."

The overall passage makes clear that this day immediately followed the three weeks of mourning (cf. vv. 12-14), which means that the first day of mourning had been the third of this first month (Nisan). Since the fourteenth of Nisan was the day of Passover, followed by the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (15th to 21st, Ex. 12:14-18), both feasts had just nicely been completed by this twenty-fourth day. Probably the special time of the year had been a factor in bringing Daniel to choose it as the time for this fasting and prayer.

The Hebrew name of the river is *Hiddakel*, after the ancient Babylonian *Idigla*. The Greeks gave it the modern name *Tigris*, though modern Arabs still call it *Diglah*. Because it is the Euphrates that flowed through ancient Babylon, and not the Tigris, Daniel was away from the capital at the time of this revelation.

Daniel 10:5: "Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz."

Gabriel we have seen before. He appeared to Daniel to give him the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27. He also appeared to Daniel at the time of the vision of Daniel 8:1-12 in order to give to him the interpretation of that symbolic vision. Gabriel is mentioned there as the one whom Daniel had seen "in the earlier vision" (Daniel 9:21), thus connecting the two prophecies of Daniel 8 and 9. Likewise, chapters 10 and 11 are connected to chapters 8 and 9 by Daniel's statement that after receiving the explanation given in chapter 11, he had understanding of the previous vision (Daniel 10:1). Although Gabriel is not named in chapter 10 or 11, his position next to Michael makes him the logical candidate for the angel that brought this message to the prophet (Daniel 10:13, 20). Thus these three prophecies are tied together by

their common presenter and interpreter, Gabriel. He appeared after the symbolic vision of chapter 8 to explain it to Daniel, and he appeared to present the prophecies of chapters 9 and 11 without any immediately preceding vision. One could almost refer to chapters 8-12 as the book of the Revelations of Gabriel, just as the Apocalypse is referred to as the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. We find Gabriel again in the New Testament. He not only gave the prophecy of chapter 9, he also came to announce the completion of one of its major segments when he announced the forthcoming birth of the forerunner of Jesus, John the Baptist (Luke 1:1, 19).

Clothed in linen: White linen symbolized purity; it was worn, for instance, by the priests (Ex. 28:42; Lev. 6:10; 16:4), by Jeremiah as prophet (Jer. 13:1), and by angels (Rev. 15:6). *Girded with gold of Uphaz:* A cloth girdle, varying from two to six inches in width, was customarily worn about the waist. The girdle here was of gold (*ketem*, a poetical word, meaning “precious”), likely signifying that it was woven with gold thread and perhaps covered with gold studding. “Uphaz,” used one other time in Scripture (Jer. 10:9) remains unidentified. It may be the same as “Ophir” (1 Kings 9:28; Job 22:24; 28:16; Isa. 13:12).

Daniel 10:6: “His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.”

His body like the Tarshish stone: From the clothing of the person, the description now turns to the person himself. The word for “tarshish stone” is *tarshish*. This is the name of a region at the south of Spain, the Tartessus of the Greeks and Romans, from which came the chrysolite, a gem often identified with the modern topaz. It is described as having a yellow and gold luster, quartzlike in structure, and exceedingly beautiful. The exposed parts of this person’s body displayed such an appearance (cf. Ezek. 1:16; 10:9). *His face like the appearance of lightning:* Reference is likely to brilliance, like that of lightning. *His eyes like lamps of fire:* In the midst of the brilliant face glowed yet more brightly the eyes of this person, resembling burning lamps or torches (*lappid*, from a root meaning “to flame, shine”), signifying penetrating insight. *Arms. . . feet . . . gleam of polished brass:* The word for “gleam” (‘en) is literally “eye,” and “polished” (*qalal*) is “enlightened” (cf. Ezek. 1:7 for the same phrase). “Arms” and “feet” were those parts of the body which could be seen extending,

respectively, below the sleeves and the bottom hem of the linen garments worn. These have already been described as being “like the Tarshish stone,” but here additionally as gleaming (like the flash of the eye) in brightness. *Sound ...voice of a multitude*: The word for “sound” and “voice” is the same, *qol*, meaning “voice.” As this person began to speak, his voice carried the quality of a vast crowd speaking in unison: strong, deep, and authoritative.

Taken together, the full description shows this person, though human in form, to have been most awesome in appearance. The intention of this manner of appearance was likely to impress Daniel with the heavenly origin of this one and his full authority to say what soon follows. The ensuing verses show the high degree to which this impression was made.

Daniel 10:7: “And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.”

I, Daniel, alone saw: Though others accompanied Daniel, only he saw the awesome being. Perhaps God somehow “clouded” the vision of the companions, making the striking heavenly person invisible to them. Likely they were pagan in belief and, accordingly, were considered unfit subjects to view so glorious a person. *A great trembling*: These companions, however, were made aware that Daniel saw something unusual; in fact, to the extent that they were made to tremble, evidently in fright. What so affected them, apparently, was Daniel’s own fearful change of manner and appearance, as indicated by the following verses.

They fled to hide themselves. This reads, literally, “they fled in hiding themselves.” The thought is that they wanted to hide, and fled for the purpose of doing so. Their actions provide a strong commentary on the degree of change they witnessed in Daniel.

Daniel 10:8: “Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.”

I was left alone: The flight of the men left Daniel conveniently alone. This was to the good, that Daniel might concentrate more fully on what God was permitting him to experience. *Great appearance*: The word for “appearance” is *mar’eh*, properly used because what Daniel saw consisted only in the appearance of this grand person. It was “great” because of who the person was and the importance of what he was to say. *No strength*: Daniel experienced such a strong emo-

tional reaction that his strength left him, apparently just as when he had seen Gabriel in the second vision (8:17, 18, 27). Loss of strength in the presence of the supernatural indicates a recognition of dependency, unworthiness, and the absence of a sense of self-sufficiency (cf. Judg. 6:22; Job 42:5, 6; Isa. 6:5). *My comeliness... to disfigurement*: The word for “comeliness” (*hod*) means “majesty, splendor, beauty.” Whatever lent such qualities to Daniel’s normal expression now was changed. The word for “disfigurement” (*mashh’t*) is from the root verb *shallot*, “to corrupt, destroy.” The word suggests a death-like paleness, combined with a grotesque wrenching of facial features. Daniel’s sense of unworthiness was great.

Daniel 10:9: “Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.”

I heard the voice: In his state of emotional shock, with his companions now having fled, Daniel heard the majestic person begin to speak. The prior description, that the voice sounded “like the voice of a multitude,” would have been in view of this time of speaking. The person’s words, recorded in verse eleven and following, seem to have been given only after Daniel’s recovery from the faint into which he had fallen, which means that they were not those mentioned at this initiating time. It may be that Daniel, in his condition of shock, did not even understand the first words, for which reason the reference here is only to the “voice” (*qol*). *I fell upon my face in a faint*: The sound of the messenger now speaking brought yet greater emotional disturbance to Daniel, causing him to fall in a faint. The same basic word (*nirdam*) is used here as in 8:18 and, like then, seems to refer to the unconscious state of a faint, because he fell upon his face, so that his face was touching the ground. The angel must somehow have protected him from injuring himself.

Daniel 10:10: “And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands.”

A hand touched me: Further, as in the second vision, the angel touched Daniel to arouse him. Since such a touch would have had to be by an actual, corporeal hand, this appearance was that of an actual, corporeal person, not merely one of a vision. *Set me trembling*: The word used (root, *naw*, “to move to and fro”) is in the hiphil, meaning “to cause one to move to and fro.” The thought is that as the angel brought Daniel back to consciousness, with ability to rise to a kneeling position, Daniel did so only to an unsteady condition, so

that he tottered back and forth, trembling, on hands and knees. His strength was restored still only in part.

Daniel 10:11: "And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling."

A man greatly beloved: This is the same expression as in 9:23 (which see). Showing God's remarkable favor towards Daniel, the expression is used again as a way of reassuring this trembling servant, so that he might fully recover more quickly from his state of weakness. *Give heed:* The word used (root, *bin*, "to perceive, understand") is a hiphil imperative. The thought pertains to becoming mentally alert. The admonition was needed to bring Daniel to the point of trying to throw off his dazed condition, so that he could properly understand the angel's words. *Stand upright:* Literally this reads, "stand upon your standing," the same expression as in 8:18 (which see). For Daniel to force himself to stand erect would help in bringing his mind to the necessary conscious attention. *I have been sent to you:* The thought is that Daniel should recognize the favor being extended by the sending of the heavenly messenger to him, and accordingly exert greater effort to bringing himself to a state of alertness. Thus far, Daniel's recognition of this had only resulted in his fainting, which to a point was commendable; but now he should go beyond this and rouse himself to hear all that the angel had to say. *I arose trembling:* The angel's words did penetrate Daniel's consciousness, and he attempted to obey. He rose to his feet, but was still unsteady. The degree of difficulty he experienced in regaining his composure shows the extent to which he had been emotionally distraught.

Daniel 10:12: "Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words."

Fear not, Daniel: Seeing Daniel still trembling, the angel stated directly that he had no reason to fear. The logic of his following words is that Daniel did not need to fear, because God had already shown favor toward him in having heard his words of petition, as early as twenty-one days before. *Set your heart to understand and to humble yourself:* To set one's heart is to exercise strong willpower to a planned end. Daniel had been fasting and praying as the result of a

fixed purpose. That purpose had been “to understand (root, *bin*) and to humble” himself. The word for “to humble yourself” (root, ‘*anah*, “to be bowed down, afflicted”) is in the hithpael (reflexive), giving the thought “to bow oneself down.” It carries the thought of self-chastening. Daniel had wanted to understand all that God had previously revealed to him and had been willing to give himself in this way for that purpose. *Your words were heard*: These words imply, as one might guess, that Daniel had been praying during his period of mourning, from the first of the twenty-one days, no doubt asking God for the understanding he desired. The relation of God’s response to the prayer and Daniel’s own sincerity in praying should not be missed. *I have come*: God not only showed Himself willing to answer Daniel’s prayer, but to do so by a personal appearance of this majestic angel. A personal representative had been sent, much as in chapter nine.

Daniel 10:13: “But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.”

We already know that there was a problem over which Daniel was mourning and fasting. It has been suggested that the problem concerning him was the rebuilding of the temple which had stopped due to the intervention of the Samaritans. Daniel had been fasting and mourning for three weeks. If God’s earthly servant was so concerned about this turn of events, why wasn’t God Himself doing something about it? He was, and Gabriel tells us so. During the same three-week period during which Daniel had been mourning and fasting, Gabriel and his superior, Michael the archangel, had been wrestling with the prince of Persia (10:12, 13). Thus the prince of Persia must have had something to do with causing the problem.

“Michael” means “He who is like God.” Jude tells us that he is the “archangel,” the chief angel (verse 9). Gabriel calls Him “one of the chief” angels or the first one. By reading 1 Thessalonians 4:16 we learn that the dead are raised from their graves by the voice of the “archangel.” John 5:28 tells us that it is the voice of *the Son of God* who calls them from their graves. Thus it is clear that Michael, the “archangel,” is really the Son of God (see also Daniel 12:1).

Most commentaries view the prince of Persia in Daniel 10 as the symbol of an evil angel who works as a national genius or supervising spirit for Persia. Thus the good angels, Michael and Gabriel, are pitted against him as they battle over the fate of God’s people. But

neither Satan nor any of his angels were a prince in the kingdom of Persia.

Since the chapter names the *king* of Persia we can readily identify who *the prince* of Persia was at this time. The prince of Persia would be Cambyses, the son of king Cyrus. When Cyrus died, Cambyses succeeded to the throne. Before that, he was the crown prince. Logically, he should be the prince of Persia mentioned in Daniel 10.

Why would Cambyses be mentioned here in Daniel 10? For two main reasons: (1) because of his political influence and power as prince; and (2) because he was very much in opposition to all foreign religious cults. As crown prince, Cambyses was very much involved in the affairs of the province of Babylon. Cyrus even elevated him to the rank of co-king or co-regent, just as Nabonidus had done with Belshazzar. Cambyses was an ardent Zoroastrian who worshiped the god Ahura Mazda. He had no tolerance for the cults of other gods. Historians have told us that he even destroyed the temples of some of those foreign gods, especially in Egypt. It undoubtedly was no accident that the Jews accomplished nothing toward rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem throughout the reign of Cambyses (530-522 B.C.). The neglect shown to the temple during that period would certainly be consonant with the policy of Cambyses. Even before his sole reign, Cambyses was of great influence in the province of Babylon to which Syria and Judah belonged. These provinces were known as Babylon and Beyond the River, meaning the Trans-Euphrates region. Not until the reorganization of the political structure of the empire by Darius I were Syria and Judah split off from the province of Babylon.

Thus if some counselors hired by the Samaritans came to Babylon and encountered Cambyses, he probably would have been happy to oblige them in their request. The Jews were not able to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem through the remainder of Cyrus's reign and during all the reign of Cambyses. Not until a new king, Darius I, came on the scene of action with a new policy were the Jews able to get something done about rebuilding the temple (see Ezra 4:5).

Behind the scene of action, however, unseen forces were at work. The powers of heaven were being brought to bear upon the stubborn Persian prince as the angels of God worked to bring about His will. Despite heavenly efforts, however, the choice still resides with man, and as far as we can tell, Cambyses never did yield to these influences. It should also be noted that he came to a sad end, a

probable suicide on his way back to Persia from Egypt. He fell upon his sword and died from the wound. Some said it was an accident while others said it was a suicide. In either event, Cambyses came to a sad end, and part of that sad picture includes his evident opposition to the true God of the Jews.

Daniel 10:14: "Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days."

Now I have come: The angel had now arrived after the delay, with Daniel quite ignorant concerning the struggle that had ensued. Little do the people of God at any time realize what contention may go on concerning them among higher powers. *In the latter days:* The angel directly set forth the purpose of his coming; namely, to tell Daniel what would happen to Israel "in the latter days." Probably Daniel had been praying and thinking mainly about days in Israel's near future, but the angel was saying that his words would concern, not only near days, but those far ahead. Daniel thus was to learn and be made to understand far more than for what he had asked.

The expression, "the vision is yet for many days," reaching far into the future, and embracing what should befall the people of God even in the latter days, shows conclusively that the days given in that vision, namely, the 2300, cannot mean literal days, but must be days of years.

Michael is mentioned by name only in Daniel 10 and 12. In Daniel 10, He is involved in a local, limited problem. In Daniel 12, He is involved, as we will see, in a final and universal conflict, the conclusion of the battle between good and evil. Wherever found, all the Michael passages in the Bible have this characteristic: they involve conflict, and Michael is portrayed as the leader in the battle on the side of God. Thus the pictures of Michael in Daniel 10 and 12 make a kind of envelope around the prophecy of Daniel 11. Michael is introduced in Daniel 10 in connection with the controversy taking place in the prophet's own time (10:13, 21). The final picture of Michael appears at the end of time in the final controversy (12:1). In all of these cases, He protects the people of God. So He did in the sixth century B.C., and so He will do at the end of time.

From the controversy swirling around Michael versus Cambyses, Gabriel goes on to carry Daniel through the prophetic future down to the time when Michael will appear on the scene of action one final time as the plan of salvation draws to its close and Michael takes His

people home. That prophetic future narrated by Gabriel is the subject of Daniel 11.

Daniel 10:15: "And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb."

While he was speaking: While the angel was continuing to speak, Daniel did what is now described, thus causing an interruption. *I turned my face toward the ground:* The thought is not, then, that Daniel kept his face turned downward all the while the angel was speaking, but that he began to do this after first looking at the one addressing him. Clearly, a renewed sense of weakness flooded upon him at this point. *Was dumb:* The word used (root, *'alam*, "to bind") is in the niphal form (passive) and means literally "was bound," here in the sense of not being able to speak. Because Daniel had not spoken at all since the first appearance of the angel, it may be that he had been dumb from the time of that appearance. The renewed sense of weakness that came on him at this point, however, prompted the action, now to be described, which removed the condition.

Daniel 10:16: "And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength."

One of the most marked characteristics manifested by Daniel, was the tender solicitude he felt for his people. Having come now to clearly comprehend that the vision portended long ages of oppression and suffering for the church, he was so affected by the view, that his strength departed from him, his breath ceased, and the power of speech was gone. The vision, of verse 16, doubtless refers to the former vision of chapter 8.

One like the sons of men: Literally, "as the likeness of the sons of mankind." The thought is simply, "one who appeared like a human being." Daniel's cloudy mind was in a state of trouble. Looking down at the ground, he would not have been able to see the angel move to touch his lips; and the touch, being human in kind. *Touched my lips:* This was to give Daniel the ability to speak again, imparting special strength (cf. Ex. 4:10-12; Isa. 6:6, 7). *I . . . spoke:* As soon as Daniel received this strength, he began to use it, stating why he was acting as he was. *My Lord, because of the vision:* "My lord" is a term of respect. The word for "vision" is *mar'eh*, meaning literally "appearance," and refers to the grand angel's appearance. *My pains have come:* The word for "pains" carries the thought of *twisting* or

writhing, and is used, for instance, in reference to the pangs of childbirth (1 Sam. 4:19; Isa. 13:8; 21:3). The word for “have come” (root, *hapak*, “to turn, overturn”) is in the niphal (passive) and carries a similar connotation of *twisting or overturning*. Both together signify intense pain, brought upon Daniel by the extreme emotional disturbance he felt.

And how can: Racked by pain and drained of all strength, Daniel asked how he could possibly be a participant in the revelational experience proposed by the angel. His word “speak” (root, *dabar*) is not in reference primarily to his own ability to pronounce words, for which he had now received renewed capacity, but to his ability to be a proper conversational participant, both hearing and responding appropriately. The force of his question is twofold: to state the reason for his distraught condition (namely, the greatness of the person before him), and to indicate that he needed special strength if he was to fill the role in which he was now placed. The manner of address used was usual when the one addressed was of superior rank.

Daniel 10:17: “For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me.”

No strength... no breath: The repetition of this thought emphasizes the extent to which Daniel sensed his inability. The idea of “no breath” being left in him suggests that he found it even hard to breathe.

Daniel 10:18: “Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me.”

One with the appearance of a man: This expression differs slightly from that in verse sixteen, with “appearance” (*mar’eh*) being used in place of “likeness” (*d^emut*); but the thought is the same, and reference is yet to the same angel. *Touched me:* This is the third touch of the majestic person. This time it was to give strength, whereas the second had enabled Daniel to speak, and the first had enabled him to rise from the ground. God, of course, was the One who imparted the strength, using the angel merely as an instrument.

Daniel 10:19: “And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me.”

O man, greatly beloved: This is the third use of the expression (9:23; 10:11) and carries the same thought as before, for the purpose of encouragement. *Fear not, peace be with you:* The angel now replied

for the purpose of further strengthening the needy one before him. These first words were to remove his fear, so that emotional strength might replace it. Fear is the opposite of peace. The admonition not to fear had been given before (v. 12), but now was repeated with the addition of “peace be with you.” *Be strong, yes, be strong*: The same word is used twice (*Irzaq*) in an identical imperative form. Daniel was commanded very emphatically to be strong. When fear is replaced by peace, one can be strong. *While he spoke*: “As his speaking,” shows that Daniel’s strength returned while the angel’s words were being formed. *I did receive strength*: “I felt myself strengthened.” Apparently, Daniel’s strength returned by degrees, with the last impartation restoring him to the point where he could participate properly in the revelational experience. *Let my lord speak*: Daniel realized this renewed capacity and asked that the angel proceed. He recognized also who it was that had given the new strength.

Daniel 10:20: “Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come.”

The prophet is at length strengthened to hear, in full, the communication which the angel has to make. And Gabriel says, “Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee?” That is, do you now know to what end I have come? Do you understand my purpose, so that you will no more fear? He then announced his intention to return, as soon as his communication was completed, to fight with the king of Persia. The word, with, is in the Septuagint, meta, and signifies, not against, but in common with, along side of; that is, the angel of God would stand on the side of the Persian kingdom so long as it was in the providence of God that that kingdom should continue. But when I am gone forth, continues Gabriel, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. That is, when he withdraws his support from that kingdom, and the providence of God operates in behalf of another kingdom, the prince of Grecia shall come, and the Persian monarchy be overthrown.

Daniel 10:21: “But I will show thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.”

Gabriel then announced that none, God of course excepted, had an understanding with him in the matters he was about to communicate, except Michael, the prince. And after he had made them known to Daniel, then there were four beings in the universe with whom rested a knowledge of these important truths: Daniel, Gabriel, Christ, and

God. Four links in this chain of witnesses: the first, the highest Being in the universe; the last, a member of the human family! Verily the whole race is enobled by so noble a member. The fact here stated shows the propriety of the language of Rev. 1:1, where Jesus Christ is introduced, and Gabriel is spoken of as His angel. He was the angel who alone had knowledge with Christ, of these revelations which were to be made to his people.

The message he brings to Daniel is a secret. No one knows it but “Michael your prince”—Christ the Savior, God the Father, the angel, and poor Daniel. But what a glorious chain of revelation!