

Daniel 10:15-11:6 – The Book of Truth

Chapter 10 gives a lengthy introduction to Daniel's last recorded vision. In the vision, Daniel saw a man who was described in powerful, impressive, and glowing terms. While some believe "the man" was a vision of God the Father or Christ, others understand "the man" to be a mighty angel who reflected the glory of the One who sent him. The vision took a heavy toll on Daniel. After mourning for three weeks, the vision made Daniel weak, sleepy, and caused him to tremble. The messenger revealed that when we pray, there may be spiritual warfare going on of which we are not aware.

Read Daniel 10:15-21.

In verse 15, how did Daniel react when he heard the words of the messenger? (10:15)

In verse 16, is "one in the likeness of the children of man" another being or one already introduced? "Children" in the plural can refer to male and female offspring. "Man" here is a word which is generally a gender neutral term, "a human being". The word "man" in verse 5, is a word that is gender specific and refers to a man, or male. A number of commentaries don't seem to want to address the question of how many different beings appeared in chapter 10. Some say this was Gabriel. Daniel had seen Gabriel before (8:16, 9:21), so why didn't he mention him by name? This being touched Daniel's lips so that Daniel was "unmuted". What did Daniel say? (10:16-17)

In verse 18, who was the one who touched Daniel? Was it the one from verse 10, the one from verse 16 or someone else? Notice that in verse 20, this one said that he would return to fight against the prince of Persia. The one speaking in verse 13 fought against the prince of Persia before coming to Daniel. (10:18)

In verse 19, what did the messenger say to Daniel? How did Daniel react to the message? (10:19)

In verse 20, the messenger asked Daniel if he knew why the messenger had come to him. The answer seems to have been given in verse 21. What would the messenger do after leaving Daniel? Who was the prince of Greece? What is the significance of the mention of Greece? What was the messenger going to tell Daniel? The mention of Michael contending by the side of this messenger goes back to verse 13. (10:20-21)

Read Daniel 11:1-6.

Verse 1 seems to be a continuation of 10:21. In verse 1, what had the messenger done in the first year of Darius the Mede? Did the messenger strengthen Michael or Darius? Some say that Darius was the one strengthened. E. J. Young believed that Michael was the one strengthened. (11:1)

In verse 2, the messenger said that he would show Daniel the truth. This may refer back to “the book of truth” in 10:21. Verse 2 was a short summary of the Medo-Persian empire. What was said about this empire? There were multiple kings of Persia. Verse 2 does not contain an exhaustive list. Who was the “fourth” king? Most identify this king with Xerxes I, son of Darius the Great, who invaded Greece in 480 BC. The Greeks did not immediately retaliate, but the previous invasion by Xerxes was one of the motivations of the Greek invasion of Medo-Persia. (11:2)

In verses 3-4, who was the mighty king? We may at first think that he was a Persian king, but given all the information it is apparent to most that the king was the well known Greek king, Alexander the Great. He invaded and conquered Medo-Persia. He conquered many lands. He died at a fairly young age. Instead of his offspring succeeding him, his generals grabbed control of different areas of Alexander’s empire. (11:3-4)

The four major kingdoms which emerged from Alexander’s kingdom were Macedon (Greece), Asia Minor, Egypt (Ptolemaic), and the Seleucid. The Seleucid empire included Syria, Mesopotamia, Babylonia, Media and Persia. (11:4)

The rest of the chapter is about two of the four Greek kingdoms. The kings of the north were the kings of the Seleucid empire. The kings of the south were the kings of the Ptolemaic empire which covered Egypt. The chapter reads like a summary of the history of these two empires but without specific names. The reason these two empires received the focus of the chapter is that Judea was caught in the middle of these two empires. Both kingdoms had an effect on Israel. The biggest effect, in a very negative way, was by one of the Seleucid kings. In verse 5, most understand the king of the south who became strong was Ptolemy Soter. Most understand the prince who became stronger to be Seleucus Nicator. He became king of the Seleucid empire which covered a lot more territory than the Ptolemaic kingdom. (11:5)

Verse 6 jumps ahead in history. To which alliance was verse 6 referring? Most understand this alliance as the following. Ptolemy Philadelphus gave his daughter Bernice in marriage to Antiochus Theus. The idea was that Berenice’s son would become ruler of the Seleucid empire. When Ptolemy Philadelphus died two years later, Antiochus Theus took back his previous wife, Laodice. She poisoned Antiochus Theus and was behind the murder of Berenice and her son. This made sure that the Seleucid empire would not be ruled by someone with Ptolemaic blood. (11:6)