Conflict between World Monarchies, Daniel 10-12 pt.1

By Charles Feinberg

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This is the last of six studies in the Book of Daniel. It's on the conflict between world monarchies chapters 10 to 12. This series is by Dr. Charles Lee Feinberg professor of Old Testament and dean emeritus of Talbot Theological Seminary, La Mirada California.

Chapter 10. This chapter is in the nature of an introductory word to lead into the messages of chapters 11 and 12. In these chapters we shall again find an abundance of detail, which will carry us up to Messianic times and the Kingdom of the Messiah. In verse 1, in 121 in Daniel we were told the Daniel continued to the first year of Cyrus. But the statement isn't to be interpreted to mean that Daniel necessarily died then. One meaning is that he continued until that time in an official position he could have lived several years beyond that date. Indeed this passage takes us two years beyond that statement in verse, in chapter 1 verse 21. Now whether in an official capacity or not, Daniel never allowed his love and concern for God's people are held to wane. In fact the more time allotted to in private life the more the opportunity to be exercised on behalf of his people. It is just such exercise hearts and spirits that the Lord delights to communicate his purposes and programs. We read that his name was Belteshazzar. This serves to identify the author in spite of the fact that the Babylonian Empire had now been displaced by the Persian. The mention of the word as true means it would certainly be fulfilled and brought to pass even though Daniel himself might pass off the earthly scene, these pronouncements would be brought about.

Those who read these words could be assured of their certainty and truthfulness. Those to be a great warfare. This is the keynote of the following revelations to the prophet. They centered around the matter of a great warfare. They would speak not a peaceful and quiet times but of evils and hardships of war and he was meant to understand these things. In those days, he had understanding of the vision. This is stated in evident contrast to other occasions when he didn't comprehend the essence of what was being revealed. Here the prophet had full comprehension what the Spirit of the Lord was disclosing. The abundance of detail and the historical character of the narrative may account for the fact that there was little room left for doubt as to the actual meaning of the prophecy. This vision then took place two years after the exiles left Babylon and at the time when they had begun to experience something of the troublous times spoken of in chapter 9:25. Verses 2 and 3, the prophets concerned is not stated but it was doubtless the condition of his people about which he could have been informed. When it's mentioned three whole weeks these are literally 3 weeks of days abstaining from food and the use of oil or outward marks of grief. Fasting is not an indispensable Christian obligation, but an outward expression of sorrow and separation from ordinary worldly enjoyments in order to give oneself
the more fully to prayer. As in Acts 13:2, verse 4, at the end of his period of fasting in the first month he received the visions indicated. The month [inaudible] was suited to the purpose of considering Israel's calamity because of the feast of Passover they were reminded once again of the Egyptian bondage and liberation. Now the Hiddekel that's mentioned there is the Tigris. Our text gives the Akkadian name for it. Great River is usually applied rather to the Euphrates. There is no reason to believe that Daniel was there in a trance, but rather in waking reality.

Verses five, while he was engaged in deep thought and meditation lifted up his eyes and saw an angel again in the form of a man. Linen was the common apparel of priests and is found in the Bible as the regiment of angels, Revelation 15:6. It was customary in the east then, as it is now, to wear a girdle about the loins and this was here of the finest gold. Uphaz is mentioned only here in the Bible so nothing is known of its identity. Verse six, the angel is important because the description goes into detail. The beryl is a very hard mineral said to be identical with our Emerald except that the Emerald has a pure and richer color. Has a remarkable resemblance between the description here and that of the Savior as he appeared to John in Patmos revelation 13 to 16. His face was bright, his eyes were penetrating, his feet were bright his burnished metal, has polished metal. His voice was loud and powerful. The description is too majestic and exalted to be that of an ordinary angel. It's undoubtedly descriptive of the Angel of the Lord. The Angel of the Covenant the Lord Jesus Christ. Daniel alone, verse 7 saw the vision distinctly while the others heard that was terrified them and they fled. We're reminded somewhat of the experience of Paul on the way to Damascus. Verse 8 again he states that he saw the vision and did so alone, though he had previous revelations from God he was completely overcome by what he saw. There was no strength lifted and he grew pale with a deadly pallor.

Verse 9, what he heard was so overpowering that he sank scentless senseless to the ground. Verse 10 through the agency of the angel he was able to recover himself somewhat, but notice that he was not yet able to stand erect. His strength was restored to him only gradually. Verse 11, the encouraging words helped him to stand upright, but he was not fully recovered from his fright and alarm. Verse 12 Daniel is again reassured, so he need not fear the presence of the glorious angel or think that his petitions were not heard. The prayer of Daniel was heard from the first day he offered it, but he couldn't receive the answers sooner for the reasons given in the next verses. This verse constitutes a great encouragement to those whose prayers are not answered immediately. The delay may be for causes totally unknown to us. Prayer can be heard at once and the answer delayed. In the Prophet's case the messenger bringing the answer was delayed. Daniel would have been cheered we're told in his days of fasting this service if he had known that an angel was on his way to him to comfort him and to communicate to him an answer from God. Often, if not always in our days of deepest anxiety and trouble, when our prayers seem not to penetrate the skies, when we meet with no response with the thing for which we pray seems to be withheld, when our friends remain unconverted, when irreligion abounds and prevails, when we seem to be doing no good and when calamity presses upon us we saw the arrangement which God had already made to answer the prayer and could see the messenger on the way. Our hearts would exalt and our tears would cease to flow.
Verse 13, we read of the Prince of the kingdom of Persia. Perhaps no single verse in the whole of the Scripture speaks more clearly than this very one upon the invisible powers which rule and influence nations were told. As far as the original language is concerned the phrase, the prince of the kingdom of Persia, might refer to a prince or prime minister ruling over the kingdom of Persia, but the language and circumstances of the passage are such that it is applicable to an angel being. An angelic being who presides over a state and influences its policy. Since an angel is speaking its most natural to infer that it was met by one of his own reign. The mention of the name of Michael, the Archangel strengthens that position. He withstood me, he was resisted and opposed and thus delayed on his way to convey the message to Daniel. In what manner this resistance was exercised were not told. It seems that in order to answer the prayers of Daniel with reference to Israel, it was necessary that some influence be brought to bear upon the kingdom of Persia, such as impressing the government to be agreeable to the restoration of the Jews to their own land. These obstacles that need removing must have given the prophet much concern and sorrow as he viewed Israel's condition during the time of his prayer and fasting. It was one in 20 days. This was the exact time that Daniel was praying and fasting and great salt exercise. It took all that time to overcome the opposition for the accomplishment of the plan of God for His people. Now Michael is mentioned, he's the first in rank among all the angels, but he has no sense divine. He's revealed as the patron of Daniel's people. Chapter 12 verse 1, he came to help me. The manner of this help isn't told us. It's implied that it was for the obtaining of more favorable policies relative to the condition of Israel from the Persian regime. It took supernatural power to dispose the leaders of the Persian kingdom to be favorably disposed to the Jewish exile and to remove some of the obstacles to their restoration to the land, remain there were told. The exact meaning is that he prevailed or gained the ascendancy over the opposing angel of Persia so as to influence the Persian authorities to favor Israel's return. By the help of Michael, the favors for the people of Israel was secured for which Daniel had been so earnestly praying and fasting. Our passage should teach us that there are numerous hindrances to our prayers that were totally unaware of. Therefore it is our duty to be patient and persevering realizing that God is hearer of prayer even when the answer to prayer is long delayed.

Verse 14, he says I'm calm after the opposition already spoken of and the long delay and for the latter days this phrase reminds us again that although the prophecy relates to things prevalent in the world in the days of Daniel, the final, the ultimate significance of what is given reaches onto the end of Israel's history and Messianic times. When the kingdom of Messiah shall be set upon earth. For many days, it's for many days yet, the events foretold extend far into the future, although Daniels petitions may have concerned themselves only with the condition of Israel in his days and the affairs that immediately concerned them God had a further purpose in mind. So the Angels disclosures include a more prolonged extended period of time. Answers to prayers are often such. They include much more than was originally seen or asked for. Verse 15, the prophet is again overcome by the truth which is revealed to him. Perhaps the conduct of Daniel now is not to be ascribed to fear that had been removed from him in 12, but to his reverence for the person who is majestically standing before him and to the gratitude he felt for the answer to his prayers. Verse 16, one in the likeness of the sons of men we read, this is an angel in the form of a man, some suppose it's Gabriel appearing in the form of a man, it may well
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be, but there's no reason why it may not be the same one who's been speaking to Daniel already. Now why the angel is not mentioned by name is not known. The prophet is delivered from his fear and addresses his statement to the angelic visitor. Daniel is not ascribing deity to the angel, but is using a term of respect. When we read of sorrows they are literally the writings of all woman in travail. Verse 17, Daniel acknowledges his own lowly humble condition in the presence of the angel. He considers himself incapable of speaking in the presence of one who had come from God. Since the prophet was only gradually recovering his strength, it was necessary that the angel come to strengthen him further. He is now prepared to receive the communications with a quiet Spirit. He's told fear not, there was no cause for fear from the person of the angel himself nor from the nature of the disclosures soon to be given to him. Words of encouragement are going to be given to him. Use to those who are timid or weak. Daniel was sufficiently strengthened now to hear the message.

Verse 20, the angels question has point in view of what was stated in verse 14. He did call Daniels attention to the general significance of the disclosure about to be given. Now will I return after he's fully given the messages with which he was entrusted because he proceeds to deliver to him the predictions for the latter days. He's going to fight with the Prince of Persia. Apparently the difficulty with the prince of the kingdom of Persia was not entirely subtle. So there was need to set the matter right with finality. There were still reasons in existence in Persia which could tend to frustrate the plans already mentioned. Those need therefore for these factors to be counteracted and opposed so that the exiles could be safely returned to their land as well as provided with the necessary means for the rebuilding of the city and temple. He says, "I go forth" the thought is that he would return to Persia and so direct and so admitted stir affairs there that the cause and welfare of the Jews would be promoted and the needed protection and provision would be made for their sake. When he does go forth affairs will be on a different footing for the king of Greece would appear and the cause of the Jews would be favored. The truth conveys is this, "Till the king of Greece appears there are matters which require the direct intervention of heaven in the affairs of Israel, but when the king of Greece would come, he himself would be kindly disposed toward the Jews and the political condition." There's no question that the king of Greece spoken of here has in the next chapter is Alexander the Great. It's a matter of historical record that Alexander favored the Jews, so whatever they had reason to fear of the Persian administration of affairs was now removed with a Grecian monarch. In verse 21, the writing of truth has doubtless refers to the divine decrees in the matter. These are seen as inscribed in a book in the keeping of God himself in which are recorded all future events. The angel came to unveil some other truth in that volume to disclose a series of events of vital interest to Israel and the world. There is none, we read. No one was disposed to help them in the matter. There were great forces arrayed against God's purposes in behalf of Israel as so often. Michael your prince the efforts of the Angel were aided by Michael who helped to counteract the evil forces arrayed against God's people.

Michael is the guardian and patron of Israel. He has special concern for them, he is their protector in time of trouble or persecution. This is an important truth to recognize on the part of the world and not given its full force even by believers. Now friends, this chapter has a significant contribution to make concerning heavenly and unseen forces as they are related to the
affairs and governments of men on earth. The way it was drawn aside just a bit and we learned what powers exist that hid up movements adverse to God's people in the world, things of earth are of interest to angelic beings. It's the battleground of the forces of evil against the powers of good. As Daniel was exhorted to patients so were we, for the Lord tests and disciplines the faith of his children. This chapter is a wonderful encouragement to perseverance and prayer. Genuine prayer is heard of God at once, though the answer may be delayed in reaching us. Prayer delayed as been said many times is not prayer denied. Pray on with confidence and the promises and faithfulness of our blessed God. Finally it's pleasant to know that governments, rulers, and affairs of earth are all under the wise and able care of God. He restrains where needed, encourages where it is required, and ultimately brings glory to his name and good for his own.

We are still in this last section on conflict between world monarchies and after the introduction in chapter 10. We shall see that conflict, those conflicts themselves in Chapter 11. Now the material in Chapter 11 is a part of the things which the angels said were recorded in the writing of truth. The disclosures made here cover a large section of history relative to Israel in ancient times. About two centuries, as well as important periods in future world history. Events are ultimately carried down to the end of all things. First there sketched the succession of kings in Persia down to the mighty conflicts with the Grecian power. Then there would appear on the scene of world power a ruler from the area of Greece that noticed the condition of the Empire after the decline of the Grecian power. Next the history outlines the conflicts between two parts of the old Grecian empire namely between Egypt and Syria so important on the world scene today. The king of the South, that's Egypt and the king of the north that's Syria. Much detail is given in this chapter is a marvel of divine inspiration. Someone has said, "The leading events are traced as accurately, they are traced as accurately as would be a summary of the history made out after the transactions had occurred." And finally the chapter treats that length the character and doings of one of the kings of the Kingdom of the North. Antiochus Epiphanies looks on to the main religious leader in the end time, the Antichrist.

In verse 1 we read that the angel, in the first year Darius, there is no direct word as to the matter in which the angel strengthened the King Darius the mead. It's undoubtedly in connection with his purpose to restore the Jews to their homeland from captivity and to grant them the necessary permission to rebuild their temple and sanctuary. The events of Chapter 9 are relevant here. The influence of God on his heart led the Persian king to send faulty edict to return and rebuild the temple. Cyrus, was the one through whom the decree came, but his uncle Darius was the source of this authority. To confirm and strengthen him, the decision of Darius was not fully made and that were unfavorable influences at work on him so the angel helped to confirm and stabilze him and his good purpose and plan in verse 2 we read of showing him the truth. The truth of things yet to transpire. The three kings of verse two were Cambyses, Pseudo Smerdis and Darius's despot's. The fourth is unquestionably Xerxes. Although there were other Persian kings after Xerxes, he's the one who stirred up the wrath of Greece in his invasion of that land and he's richer, true description of him. He inherited the wealth of the previous kings in their campaigns which were some of the most remunerative in history. Historians also inform us of the exorbitant taxes exacted from the people during the reigns of these kings. Xerxes the son and successor of Darius inherited all this wealth. He prepared for four years his expedition to Greece. He was
going to start up all, start up his kingdom into battle. He gathered equipped what was probably the largest army ever assembled. According to one writer, the army was made up of seven hundred thousand men of his own and three hundred thousand auxiliaries. Quite an army in those days. The mighty king of verse 3. Notice that the text doesn't state that this king would arise from Persia as a successor to the 4th King. From the next verses clearly that the reference is to Alexander the Great, he's the mighty king. In his letter to Darius he said, "Your ancestors entered into Macedonia and the other parts of Greece and did as damage when they had received no affront from us as the cause of it. And now I [inaudible] general of the Grecians provoked by you and desirous of avenging the injury done by the Persians have passed over into Asia." That's Alexander the Great, the son of Philip the second of Macedon and he's going to rule with great dominion. His kingdom was a large extended one. Such was the empire of Alexander in fact and he did according to his will his actions in ruling were arbitrary. That could be true of many monarchs, but in a particular sense of Alexander who is conquering great armies in vast areas felt that all were to be subordinate to him.

Josephus the historian claimed, that this passage was shown to Alexander by the Jewish high priest and was responsible for his favorable attitude toward the Jews that cannot be proved. We read in verse 4, when he shall stand up, that's to be understood at the height of his power when his influence was generally felt, it's gonna be broken. His kingdom didn't decline, no. Alexander's Kingdom didn't just pass away, it was divided in the midst of its strength by the sudden death of Alexander to the four winds of heaven into four parts, the four points of the compass and not to his posterity. It would be expected naturally the rule would pass on to his descendants, but no member of his family figures in the rulers who took over the kingdom after his untimely death and nor according to his dominion no successor of his ever had the power at his command which belonged originally to Alexander. Plucked up, it suddenly divided even for others besides these, it was to the exclusion of the lawful heirs for his two sons Hercules and Alexander were murdered and then, 5th verse we read of the king of the South. Now the angel leaves the general and overall history of the empire and he restricts himself to two parts of the Kingdom of the South and the Kingdom of the north. Now the directions of Scripture are all relative to Palestine so these areas would be Egypt and Syria with the dynasties of the Ptolemy and the Seleucus in view of these two lands, north and south would bordered on the land of promise are important would be significant in the future because their lands are adjacent to the Holy Land. How important they are even today. All the references to the king of the north and the king of the South are not pointing to the same kings, but different kings remember friend. Different kings in these dynasties between the kingdoms of Egypt and Syria, many battles were waged. Then we come after a long recital of individual kings with such accuracy and provision and precision in verse 36 of Chapter 11, we come to another individual.

We hold with most Christian interpreters all the way from Jerome the translator of a Bible into Latin. We hold with others that from this point on to the end of the chapter, from 11:36 on the end, we're no longer dealing with Antiochus Epiphanies, but with the one of whom was a picture or foreshadowing, namely the Antichrist. The details of this section can't properly referred to Antiochus, not just as God has throughout the Old Testament given definite signs and characteristics whereby the Messiah could be recognized. So in the Word of God he is made
clear the identity of the Antichrist. The history of the interpretation of this figure is interesting. Some say a different system, cults, governments, individuals have been accorded this title even Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin. No there will be a great political leader in the end time called the Roman Beast. The head of the [inaudible] Roman Empire will rule in Rome as a governmental leader, the little horn of Daniel 7, but in alliance with him. Notice an alliance with him, but living in Jerusalem would be the counterfeit Messiah or the Antichrist. The Antichrist will be a person not just some principle. It's true the Bible speaks of the spirit of Antichrist and wicked man, but that makes him nonetheless real than it makes Satan whose Spirit works in wicked men. Also he's going to be a religious leader, the Antichrist. The world's looking for somebody to speak the last word of authority in religious matter and since the world rejects God's word, it looks to man and so the atheism, pantheism, materialism, behaviorism, skepticism of our day are preparing the way for the coming of Antichrist. In the early part of this century, one of the advocates of a return to the people of Israel, the Palestine is reported to have said, "We're ready to own any man as our messiah who will establish us again in the land of our father." Oh my dear friends. True, there is a partial restoration of the people of the land, to their homeland, but with what uncertainty, instability, conflict, and fear it's been attended to this very hour and the prospect isn't rosy. There are trying difficulties ahead and that is going to do according to his will. Self-willed characterizes this figure. He's not God directed, he's not God prompted, he exults himself. That's his distinguishing feature, self-exaltation. Just as in second Thessalonians 2, this self-exaltation will not only deceive Israel, but apostate Christendom as well. He's going to be putting himself above everybody seek to displace even the idolatrous worship of the heathen. Marvelous things will speak against the God of Gods. His blasphemous statements against God will be unparalleled. He'll refuse any allegiance to God in heaven or any other deity, he'll come in his own name. John 5 we're told. Will God allow such defiance even for a brief period? Yes he will be allowed to prosper until the indignation, the time of the tribulation for the Earth will be finished. All will come to pass exactly as indicated.

When we read in verse 37 do not regard the God of his father's this expression as usual one in the old testament even in their prayer books. For the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of the Patriarchs, the God of Israel. The Antichrist, the false messiah will have no regard nor respect for the God of the fathers. Nor the desire of women, he'll have no room for that one whose preemptory the desire of women the Messiah himself. It was the fond hope and longing of Jewish women that they might be the channel for whom the Messiah would be born. The reason they the Antichrist has no respect for the desire of women is because he's going to seek to take that place himself, nor regard any God, he'll set himself above all forms of worship and magnify himself. He will sit in the temple of God claiming to be God himself. This one will be [inaudible] with satanic power. He'll be able to blind men's minds causing them to believe a delusion and a lie. He works science in confirmation of a lie. His purpose will be to counterfeit the Lord Jesus Christ, revelation 13:11. He'll be opposed to the Christian faith. He'll aim to displace the worship of God in all hearts relegating that to himself. If one doubts that this is possible a recent occurrence, not so many years ago in Russia will give point to what we have been saying. In a small town of Sviyazhsk near Kazan. It was held in Russia a ceremony for the unveiling of the statue of Judas Iscariot when the army and the people were drawn up in front of the great draped statue a red beard as Soviet leader gave the dedicatory speech. He said, the committee had
hesitated between three candidates for the statue. Lucifer, Cain, and Judas Iscariot. He said then on closer investigation it would seem that the views of Lucifer were not quite in accord with Soviet principles while I doubt that, and it was decided that Cain was only cynical, excuse me. It was decided that Cain was only semi mythical. Don't believe that either. So the statue was decreed for Judas. A girl then pulled the string and the assembled crowd saw plastic cast figure with its fists raised to heaven. The peasants who looked on with wonder crossed themselves in reverence as if before the statue of a great saint the Antichrist will attempt to efface from the minds of men the truth of God by claiming in all probability to give them something more advanced. You'll be opposed to Judaism also. The main purpose of the Antichrist is to lead men from trust and faith in God. What Cain started in the way of self-made man made religion, the Antichrist will complete with Satanic cunning and power. Just as Christ is head of the true church the Antichrist will have his false system under him. Mystery Babylon the Great, the mud of harlots and of the abominations of the whole earth and he honors the God of fortresses. Verse 38, the antichrist will put himself above all gods and objects of religious worship, but there is one person who we must respect. After all the Antichrist is a religious leader would be powerless to command men if he didn't have some military arm to carry out his policies and wishes he must pay tribute in homage to one who is designated as the God of fortresses.