

Daniel's Last and Greatest Vision (Part 1)

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[0 : 00] I'm not going to read the text because actually this text is quite long.

! This last segment of the book of Daniel, it runs from chapter 10, verse 10, verse 10, verse And so we're not going to read the entire thing, not even going to read, at least at the beginning, that part of the passage that we're going to be looking at tonight.

But we have come in our study of Daniel, even though we have three more chapters to go, we have come to the prophet's final vision, final vision of four visions he has had.

And so this is the last one. It's a segment of the book that, again, will take us all the way to the end of it, the end of the book of Daniel, though it's going to take us a little while to get there.

So don't think you see the light at the end of the tunnel. We haven't quite seen the light at the end of the tunnel yet. You know, three chapters is a pretty good chunk of the book. And this is what I want to call Daniel's last and greatest vision.

[1 : 26] His last and greatest vision. And I call it that primarily because, first of all, it was his last vision. I mean, it was. I mean, Daniel's a very old man now.

And this is going to put a period to the book, really pretty close to a period to his life. And this is his last vision. So his last vision.

But second of all, I said greatest vision because it was Daniel's greatest vision because of who he saw in this vision, the person he saw.

Now, at the beginning of this vision, and we'll be looking at this tonight, Daniel saw the Lord. He saw the Lord of glory. He saw the second person of the Holy Trinity here in this chapter at the beginning of the vision.

Well, one might say it's part of the vision. But when I say vision, I'm kind of using that as a synonym for prophecy because the vision is a prophecy.

[2 : 29] But even before we get to the prophecy itself, Daniel has a visitation from God the Son, second person of the Trinity, a pre-incarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we'll get to that as we go along here. All right. So, as I said, the passage that contains this vision consists of the final three chapters of the book of Daniel.

And we can divide it very neatly into three portions, almost to the chapter divisions, although the second portion of the kind of second part of this three-part conclusion of the book really will go on into the final chapter.

But here's how we could define it or describe it. First of all, we have Daniel's preparation, preparation before receiving the vision.

So, what we're going to be looking at tonight and a little bit next Wednesday is the preparation.

Daniel has to be prepared, go through kind of a preparation process, to receive this final vision, final vision of his life.

[3 : 42] And that's chapter 10. And then, second, the vision itself. The vision itself in chapter 11, and it kind of goes on into chapter 12, a few verses there.

And third and finally, some specific instructions, some instructions given to Daniel concerning the vision. And that would be the balance of chapter 12.

And so, this is what we're going to be looking at over the next several Wednesday nights. All right. So, we'll start on the first one tonight. And I've named it, I've described it, I'm going to name it this way, Daniel's supernatural preparation.

Daniel's supernatural preparation. And the first thing that we learn about this, and this is pretty much the formula for all of Daniel's visions that he's had, all four of them.

We're going to learn about the setting, the setting of the vision. The setting is important. And we can compare the setting for this fourth and final vision with the previous three visions.

[4 : 56] Now, there are a few important details given about the setting. Number one, the timing. The timing of the vision.

And verse one, first part of verse one says, In the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia. Cyrus being the king of the Medo-Persian Empire. The Medo-Persian Empire that took control of, became the superpower of the world after they conquered the Babylonian Empire.

All right. So, we're now in, of course, into the Medo-Persian Empire, and the king is Cyrus. Cyrus, king of Persia. All right. So, this is when the vision came to Daniel.

Now, it's interesting. Each of the four visions given to Daniel really started in chapter 7. Chapter 7 through to the end of the book, that's the last major division of the book of Daniel.

And it consists of the four visions that God gave Daniel. And so, each of the four visions given to Daniel is dated. These visions are dated for us.

[6 : 06] And actually, we can almost to the year pinpoint when these visions came to Daniel, took place. And, of course, this is significant because the visions involve prophecy, prophetic events, prophecy concerning events, future events, that will occur hundreds of years after Daniel.

And so, for each of these visions to be dated verifies that these are bona fide prophecies. That these didn't, you know, it wasn't some person living after the fact who wrote these things down. These are prophecies, visions, prophetic visions given to Daniel years, hundreds of years in many cases. In fact, this last one, several thousand years before they take place.

All right. So, and we can just kind of look at it. Chapter 7, remember the vision of the four beasts, the four great beasts that came out of the sea. That was the first of the visions. Visions in chapter 7 begins this way in the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon.

So, that dates it. We can pinpoint the exact date. I didn't jot it down here, but we're talking 500-something B.C.

[7 : 32] We studied this back when we looked at the vision. So, that dates it, this first vision. And then when we get to chapter 8, the vision of the ram and the goat. Remember that one? And it begins, chapter 8 begins, in the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar.

So, there it dates it, pinpoints the timing of when this vision came to Daniel. Chapter 9, prophecy of the 70 weeks, which we finished studying last time, however long ago that was.

But that vision, or chapter 9, begins this way in the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus. And so, that dates it, pinpoints it.

And then now here in chapter 10, begins this way, Daniel's last and greatest vision, remember, in the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia. All right, so, very clear. And there's a clear pattern here, by the way, that the visions appear in two groups of two.

Two groups of two. I don't know if you caught that as I was mentioning this, but there's a pattern here. The first and third years of Belshazzar, so those are the first two visions.

[8 : 48] First and third year of Belshazzar, king of the Babylonian Empire. And then the third and fourth vision occurred in the first and third years of Cyrus, king of the Medo-Persian Empire.

And by the way, I would remind you that, as we studied several weeks ago, that Darius and Cyrus were one and the same person. So, there's a pattern there.

Now, the year, I can give you this year, for this vision, the year would be 536, between 536 and 535 B.C., somewhere in that area.

And that means that this occurred two years after Gabriel's appearance to Daniel in chapter 9 and the prophecy concerning the 70 weeks.

So, two years after that, obviously, the first and third. Two years after that, and also occurred just shortly after, by the way, if we put this in the historical context, it occurred shortly after the first return of the Jewish exiles back to the land of Palestine, that Cyrus had given them permission to return.

[10 : 05] So, he's given them permission, and they have already gone back to the land when this vision came to Daniel. And so, someone might ask the question, well, why didn't Daniel go with them?

Well, because he was probably 85 or more years old. Now, 85 is pretty old, even today. And, you know, think about taking a walk, you know, for quite a few miles.

Well, he just wasn't up to it. So, he did not go back with them. He likely remained in Babylon after the first of the Israelites returned to the land.

And, by the way, we can also pinpoint this, just kind of put it all in chronological order. This vision came around, it was around this time when this vision came, either shortly before or shortly after, that Daniel had his experience in the lion's den.

So, remember, the events that unfold in the book of Daniel, in the first part of it, the historical part of it, you know, and then you compare those historical events with the visions in the last half of the book, it didn't come in chronological order.

[11 : 22] However, those visions occurred in and around these historical events that are recorded for us in the first part of the book. So, this is happening, I think, probably shortly after Daniel's experience in the lion's den.

Now, further information is given about the timing in verse 4. So, we can skip to verse 4. However, the vision came to Daniel around the time of the Passover.

The time of Passover. And we know that because of the time of the dates that are given in verse 4, where it says, now on the 24th day of the first month.

Now, it doesn't name the month, but we know that is the month of Nisan. The first month on the Jewish calendar. So, on the 24th day of Nisan, that's when this vision came.

Now, we know from verses 2, 3, and then a little bit later in verse 12, that Daniel had been praying. We'll talk about that more in a little bit.

[12 : 27] So, all throughout this time period, in fact, for three weeks solid, actually, Daniel had been praying. He started praying before Passover. And he kept on praying all the way through Passover.

And then, after Passover is when this vision came. He'd been praying and fasting for three weeks. Now, it's interesting.

I think it's significant that he started his season of prayer. And he prayed all the way through the Passover. And so, why was he in such an intense season of prayer?

Because I think of what the Passover reminded him of. And what it reminded him of in connection with what was taking place at that very time with the people of Israel going back to the land of Palestine.

Passover, what was it, a celebration of? Deliverance out of Egypt, right? And they were delivered out and brought to their land.

[13 : 35] And that's what Passover was a celebration of. And now, Israel has, in a sense, been delivered or released from their Babylonian, first Babylonian and then Persian captivity.

Because they've been given permission, they've been released from that captivity to return to their land, the land of Israel. That seems pretty reasonable that Daniel's thoughts were directed, and his prayers were directed toward that, those two captivities and those two important events.

All right, so that gives us kind of reference to the timing. Number two, the one trusted with the vision. And we already know who he was, but there's something a little extra said about him here, though it's very subtle.

Verse one, the second part of it, a message was revealed to Daniel. All right, so the message was trusted to him. But he goes on to say, whose name was called Belteshazzar.

Now, why would he add that bit of information? Or rather, maybe I should put it this way, why would the Holy Spirit inspire him to add that little bit of information? I mean, how important is that?

[14 : 57] We can go back to the beginning of the book, and we can study again how he came by that name, how that name was given to him, came out of the captivity.

And all of the Hebrew boys, young men who were brought into Nebuchadnezzar's household, were given Babylonian names. And Daniel's name was Belteshazzar.

Belteshazzar. And I think that Daniel included his Babylonian name to establish for the reader that he was indeed that very same one, that very same Daniel, in the first part of the book, spoken of earlier in the book.

He is the same Belteshazzar who was given that name over 70 years before when he was taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar.

And so how important is that? Well, I think it's important because this reference would dispel the claim by today many theological liberals that this last part of the book of Daniel was written by someone other than Daniel who lived, you know, centuries later and that dispels it.

[16 : 21] Because Daniel is saying, I'm writing this and I, Daniel, I'm the same one that was taken into captivity when I was probably 14 years old, given the name Belteshazzar.

And it's the same one. And here I am writing. I've been given this vision and I'm writing this down. And so I'm the one. So I think it pinpoints the validity of the real author of this portion of the book of Daniel.

And so a denial of the prophetic nature of this last part of Daniel is kind of just put aside by that. But on top of that, in addition to that, Jesus himself credited this prophecy to Daniel.

And he did so in Matthew 24, verse 15, where Jesus is referring to this vision of Daniel, vision of end times, coming of Antichrist and the things that are going to take place.

[17 : 26] He credited this vision to Daniel. He said, therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet.

So Jesus believed that Daniel was the one who, the very Daniel that was named Belteshazzar, the only Daniel he could have been referring to.

He believed that Daniel was the one who received that prophecy and received it centuries, a couple of millennia before it's going to take place.

And so Jesus believed that. I think it would be pretty serious business if we were to claim that Jesus believed that, but he was just wrong about it. I wouldn't want to be on that side and say, well, you know, all right, yeah, Jesus did say that, but he was just wrong.

He was just speaking out of his own ignorance. That's pretty serious business. All right, so we're talking about the setting of the vision, and now we're ready for a third thing about that, the testimony concerning the vision.

[18 : 35] Daniel's own testimony. Concerning the vision is pretty simple, pretty straightforward. In verse 1, third part of verse 1, Daniel said the message was true.

That's his testimony. It's true. This vision is true. It goes on in that verse, the remaining part of verse 1, but the appointed time was long, and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision.

So it's true. I understand it. I've been given understanding of the message and the vision, and all this is his testimony. Now, it's probably not all that important, but I just want to explain something here in case you are looking at a different translation, different version.

This portion, or at least a portion of this passage I just read, has been variously translated. So you see a marked difference between, say, the King James, New King James, and really between that and all the other more modern versions that have come down the pike.

And a lot of times you'll find differences in some phrases or some words, and some of it has to do with the particular manuscripts that the Bible translators used in translating the Bible.

[20 : 06] The King James used a certain grouping of manuscripts. It's called the Textus Receptus. And then the other versions used a different kind of grouping, and so there are some variances between some of those.

None of them have to do with doctrine. None of them have to do with historical events, you know, the truthfulness of Scripture. There are some differences in phrases and words and so forth, and that's what we have here.

So I've already read the New King James, and it says, but the appointed time was long. That's the phrase. So Daniel said the message was true, but the appointed time was long, which is a pretty vague phrase.

What in the world does that mean? The appointed time was long. King James and New King James, because they both, you know, their versions are derived from the same family of manuscripts, Bible manuscripts, ancient manuscripts.

So they both say the same thing. And I guess we could say, I mean, it's obviously, it means that the message of the vision pertained to the distant future.

[21 : 23] All right, so the fulfillment of this vision, the prophecy of this vision, pertains to the distant, a distant future time. All right? Then when you look at the New American Standard, ESV, some of you might have that, NIV, some of you might have that one, really nearly all the other versions say it this way, and it was one of great conflict.

Now, how do you get on the one hand that it says, but the appointed time was long, and then you have another set of versions that say, and it was one of great conflict.

All right, so the message is true, and it was one of great conflict, or war, which would point to a future war, or wars, either a great earthly war, or wars, or some conflict between spiritual forces, both of which, by the way, become part of the prophecy later on when we look at the prophecy.

Both of those are prophesied in chapter 10 and 11. But there's quite a difference between those two renderings, those two translations, and the difference in the two translations has to do with how one interprets a single word in the Hebrew text, and it's the word sabah, sabah, S-A-B-A, is how you would spell it in English, sabah, and it can mean, on the one hand, time of serving, a time of serving.

Probably what the King James translators are looking at. Point of time was long, a time of serving, or is it somewhere way out there.

[23 : 32] It can also mean army, sabah, can mean an army, or a war, or a conflict, or service. So, you can begin to maybe see that they took that one word and it has a bunch of different meanings or nuances depending on, you know, we even have words in our own English that take on different meaning depending on how we use it.

You know, and that's the case here. but we shouldn't worry about it because regardless of which version is correct, the idea is future.

It's future. It's out in the future. Fulfillment of this prophecy is way out there. Out there in the future. Some time in the future or the idea could mean at the time of some conflict out in the future.

Both are true. Now, which one's correct? I guess we'll just have to ask God and we get to heaven which one's correct because we don't have the original text.

Find out which one. But even at that, it's an interpretation of a word and it's always difficult to take a foreign language and bring it into English or any other language.

[24 : 54] And you have to assume some things and so forth and so these translators did that.

Alright, now, Daniel's understanding of the vision came as a result of his prayers.

That's part of this time of preparation. And we've seen this before in the chapter, in fact, in the last two visions that Daniel had, they came as after or as a result of a season of prayer.

Daniel's very concerned about certain issues and in his prayer time at the end of that time, God answered his prayers and gave him a vision as an answer to his prayers.

So that's the idea here. That's what happened. So his understanding of the vision, even the receiving of the vision, came as a result of his prayers and we know that from verse 12.

Let me just read it to you. From the first day that you set your heart, this is when Gabriel has come to give the vision and give him understanding for it.

[25 : 58] So this is Gabriel speaking. He says, From the first day that you set your heart to understand and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard and I have come because of your words, I have come because of your prayer.

So whatever Daniel was concerned about that drove him to this intense, intensive time of prayer, the vision that God gave him was an answer to that time of prayer.

I think very likely Daniel would have been praying about the future of the people of Israel. I mean, near his death, what's going to happen to his people in the future? He's already had a few visions about that.

He's still burdened about that and praying about that. And now God is going to give him a vision that's going to take him several thousand years out into the future, even out to a time that's still future for us.

in regard to God's dealings with Israel. All right, then fourth, the turmoil in his soul before the vision, before the vision comes, the turmoil.

[27 : 07] Verses two and three, in those days I, Daniel, was mourning, and the verb is continuous, so he's continuously mourning. three full weeks, so three solid weeks, and he said, I ate no, I like this translation, no pleasant food.

You know, food is pleasant. So I like this, I ate no pleasant food, and actually the word pleasant means good tasting.

I ate no good tasting food. no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all. Now that doesn't mean he never bathed.

What they did in those ancient times, they put oil in their bodies, and it would, you know, keep them cool, and refresh them, and so forth, and he didn't do any of that for three whole weeks, until three weeks were fulfilled.

Now, verse four also indicates that Daniel had selected a place of seclusion for this season of prayer, and fasting.

[28 : 21] He said in verse four, as I was by the side of the great river, that is the Tigris. Now, that sounds familiar to something that he said in, I think it was his second vision, but when he mentioned in that second vision that he was in a certain place, I think it also was the Tigris, that very likely that was just part of the vision, that he saw himself there, but this, he really was here, the way it's worded indicates, this is not part of the vision.

He was actually there on the side of the great river, the Tigris. Now, the Tigris river did not run through Babylon, it's not the Tigris river, that flowed there.

Tigris river originated several hundred miles to the north of Babylon, the city of Babylon, and it flowed through the country of Babylonia, but, and it flowed through there and ended up in the Persian Gulf, as it still does today, and it passed within 20 miles of the capital city, so, so if that's the case, then Daniel was not in Babylon, he was at the very least 20 miles away, in some place, some, I think, some secluded place, and now he could have been further than that, you know, I mentioned, you know, some 200, or excuse me, 700 miles to the north, he could have been there, but it's not likely, if you're 85 years old, you're not traveling 700 miles, so the closest point to Babylon, maybe there was some settlement there, some little city there, village, some place that he had frequented before, a place where he could be secluded, remember Daniel is determined to have a time of intensive prayer, prayer and fasting, and he wants to be in a place of seclusion, some place away from duties that he had in the city of Babylon, and so there he is, getting off by himself in a secluded place.

Now, so the setting of the vision. Next, the sovereign presence at the vision. The sovereign presence at the vision.

Daniel had a divine visitation. It's really quite neat, though terrifying for him. Verse 5 begins this way.

[31 : 00] I lifted my eyes, you know, he'd been praying, lifted my eyes, he's by the side of the river, so we can kind of visualize that he's there and he's looking out across the river.

I lifted my eyes and looked and behold, a certain man, a certain man. Now, anytime you see, not only in Hebrew, but also in the Old Testament, you find the word behold.

It's almost always a translation of the word that conveys the idea of amazement, surprise, behold, something startling. And that's the idea here.

Verse 4 tells us that Daniel, again, was beside the river Tigris. and if we were to go all the way further on down to chapter 12 and verse 6, we have also a statement there of the presence of the presence of God, of the Son of God there.

And in chapter 12 verse 6, he's hovering in the air just above the water. And so I think that's probably what is taking place here when Daniel first sees the Lord of glory.

[32 : 22] and he's hovering above the water. So he looks up and huh! You know, we would all be quite amazed, quite surprised, and really even terrified.

And Daniel was. So that's pretty amazing. And so let's say just a few things very quickly about this sovereign presence. First of all, the terror. The terror of it.

We see two things. in connection with terror. We see a terrifying man, or that is Daniel did. We didn't see him, but we have him described.

A terrifying man. And when we look at the description here, every part of this description, the description of this person who appeared there to Daniel, every part of it, he appeared, by the way, again, as a man, but that didn't mean he was a man.

All right. He was just in some form of a man. And when we get into the description of it, we find out he barely looked like a man. I mean, in that sense.

[33 : 28] So it wasn't just simply a flesh and blood man that he saw, but a form of a man in the sense he had a head and shoulders and arms and legs, and that's going to be described for us.

But beyond that, you know, it departs any description of a man, of a human man. And so look at verse 5. Clothed in linen, that's simple enough, right?

Linen, by the way, the garment of the priests. So this is the high priest here, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz, Uphaz, so girdle of solid gold.

His body was like beryl. That's the word in the King James and New King James. I'm not sure I didn't check some of the other translations, but it's, scholars say it's called chrysolite.

Chrysolite, a very precious stone, a gold-colored precious stone. All right, so that's his body. Okay. And actually, the idea is the upper, kind of the upper body.

[34 : 43] His face, like the appearance of lightning. I say, this is no, this is no mere man, no mere man. I mean, you know, his face appeared as lightning.

His eyes, like torches of fire. His arms and feet, like burnished bronze in color. that is, they appeared, the appearance was like molten or burning metal.

What a sight. And the sounds, sound of his words, like the voice of a multitude, a multitude of people. people. Now, you know, if you've watched, you know, horror flicks today, it's kind of, or something, you know, depicting a person who's supernatural, that's a supernatural voice, you always hear that.

It's like they have a voice where the movie makers have, you know, maybe combined, you know, 20 voices together, like they're speaking in unison, so you have the sense that there's more than one voice here.

It could mean that, or it just meant it was that loud, you know, a multitude, the strength of that, and the sound of that, all right? Now, who is this?

[36 : 02] Well, it's the Lord. How do we know that? I mean, could this not just simply be a description of an angel? Well, the deal is, and I gave these references, and I'm going to read one of them, and then we'll finish tonight.

But Ezekiel gave a similar description in Ezekiel chapter 1, verses 26 to 27. I'm not going to read that one. It's a very similar description, and he's describing the Lord, not an angel.

But also John, in his Revelation, Revelation chapter 1, verse 12, let me read that one to you.

You'll see what I'm talking about here. And there's no mistaking here who John is seeing. He's seeing the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so at verse 12, then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me, and having turned, I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands one like the Son of Man, that means he was the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet, like a linen garment, garment, and girded about the chest with a golden band, just exactly the way it's described in Daniel's vision.

[37 : 21] And his head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, like lightning, the brightness of it, and his eyes like a flame of fire, same description.

His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many waters. That's a little different metaphor, but almost verbatim, same description.

Now John is seeing Jesus. There's no question about that in Revelation 1. And so the description is the same, so we must then come to the conclusion that Daniel is seeing not an angel, but the Lord Jesus himself very clearly.

And I guess I'll go ahead and just finish up. So we have the terrifying man, and then we have the terrified men. The terrified men, verse 7, and I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great terror shaking, quaking, trembling, fell upon them so that they fled to hide themselves.

You might remember a similar thing happened when Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus. And, you know, Paul saw Jesus, but the others who were with him did not see him.

[38 : 58] They were scared speechless, and that's the same kind of deal. And by the way, you know, it's interesting, I think, to note that the location, the location here where Jesus met with Daniel is a very historic location, or in that region anyway, beside the Tigris.

And now, can you remember what historic site was located between the Tigris and the Euphrates River? The Garden of Eden. The Garden of Eden.

And so, you see, you know, as of old, when God came down to the garden to walk with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day, and so now God comes down to commune with his aged prophet, prophet Daniel.

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