

Lesson 26

The Non-Millennial Chronological Viewpoint

This view, which is popular in the church, begins with the decree of 458 BC when Artaxerxes gave Ezra approval to rebuild the city. (That is, it begins with the second decree - the decree found in Ezra 7.)

Again, verse 25 tells us that 69 weeks will elapse before the Messiah comes. Applying the "Day Equals a Year" principle to the 69 weeks gives us 483 years, as before. Taking the starting point of 458 BC and adding 483 (solar, this time) years, we arrive at the year AD 26, which is about the year that Jesus was baptized (which we agreed was most likely the event that marked the end of the 69 weeks).

Verse 27 tells us that in the middle of the seventieth week, the sacrifices will cease. This, they say, occurred when Jesus died on the cross and ushered in the new Christian age (which also agrees with our conclusions). Again, this seems to fit chronologically since Jesus' earthly ministry lasted about three and a half years.

Most in the church rightly reject the millennial approach, but this non-millennial approach is very popular. Let's consider a few arguments against the non-millennial chronological viewpoint.

Arguments Against the Non-Millennial Chronological Viewpoint

Argument #1: Again, there is no proof that the "Day Equals a Year" principle is in operation here. There are only two places in Scripture where we know it is used, and the reason we know it is because each time God explicitly told us it was being used.

Argument #2: Verse 25 requires that seven weeks (49 years) elapse from the decree in 458 BC until the city is rebuilt. That is, verse 25 under this interpretation would have the city rebuilt in 409 BC. But, Nehemiah suggests that the city was rebuilt in 444 BC during the reign of Artaxerxes.

Argument #3: There is no particular reason to begin with the decree in 458 BC from Ezra 7, and there is much more reason to believe that the prophecy begins with the contemporaneous decree of Cyrus in 539 BC.

Argument #4: Verse 26 tells us that the seventy weeks includes the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus in AD 70. There is no way to make this AD 70 event fit with a 490 year chronology beginning in 458 BC. If the first half of that final week is a literal three and a half years, then why not the second half?

In short, I think the non-millennial chronological view is wrong, but just because it doesn't make sense - not because it violates the Scriptures (which makes the non-millennial chronological view very much unlike the millennial chronological view in that regard).

One last point about Chapter 9: Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70 - is that number seventy somehow tied in with all of the other seventies we have seen here?

The answer is likely yes and no. The AD system of numbering did not appear until 500 years after AD 1, but we can say, at least, that the city of Jerusalem fell about seventy years after the birth of Christ, which is definitely interesting and likely not a coincidence given that God determined the timing. But we can't say for sure.

Chapter 10

Chapter 10 is a prelude to the final vision in the book of Daniel.

And although it is only 21 verses long, Chapter 10 shows us some of the most puzzling and intriguing events found anywhere in the Bible.

This chapter, perhaps more than any other, lifts the curtain on the unseen spiritual world that surrounds us.

It would be easy to go over a cliff of speculation in this chapter, so we will try to stay well-grounded with what has been revealed to us, realizing that much about these issues has not been revealed to us.

Daniel 10:1

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.

The third year of Cyrus would be the third year of his reign over the Chaldeans, not the third year of his reign over Persia - which could have been twenty years earlier depending on where you place his reign.

Each of the four visions in Chapters 7-12 is dated, and the visions appear in two groups of two: the first (Chapter 7) and third (Chapter 8) years of Belshazzar and the first (Chapter 9, Darius) and third (Chapter 10) years of Cyrus.

As we have discussed, it is possible that Cyrus and Darius are the same person, and it possible instead that Darius was the last king of Media, with Cyrus being the first king of the combined Medo-Persia and reigning as co-regent or possibly as crown prince with Darius. Either way, the first year of Darius coincides with the first year of Cyrus with regard to their rule over the Chaldean kingdom.

We know that this vision occurred after Cyrus's decree that the Jews could return to Palestine. Why? Because Ezra 1:1 tells us that decree went out in the **first** year of Cyrus.

Cyrus' **third** year would have been 536 or 535 BC, two years after Gabriel's appearance to Daniel in Chapter 9 and a short while after the first return of the Jewish exiles to Palestine.

The timing here is important because Daniel, who was very concerned about the exiles, may have just heard that work on the temple had been halted (Ezra 4:17-24). The arrival of that news may explain why will see Daniel mourning in verse 2 of this chapter.

Daniel was now close to 85 years old, having been in exile for over 70 years. Perhaps Daniel's Babylonian name (Belteshazzar) is used in verse 1 to remind us that (unlike those who have returned) he is still far away in exile.

Why didn't Daniel return with the others? It may have been because of his age, or perhaps he felt that he could be of more use remaining behind and continuing his service for the king.

What does Daniel tell us in verse 1 about the word that was revealed to him? He tells us three things.

The first thing Daniel tells us about the word that was revealed to him is that the word was true.

Daniel received this vision and this word from God, and so Daniel knew with certainty that the word

and the vision were true. The vision contained prophecies that would certainly be accomplished. That is how we, too, should always approach God's word. God's word is truth (John 17:17).

The second thing Daniel tells us about the word that was revealed to him is that the word involved great conflict.

The King James Version translates this phrase as "the time appointed was long." The Hebrew word translated "time appointed" in the KJV is more properly translated "army" or "host" going forth to war. The ESV translation is better - "And the word was true, and it was a great conflict."

The "conflict" here is the warfare that we will see in Chapter 11. That is, the vision will involve conflicts between many different peoples and nations.

The third thing Daniel tells us about the word that was revealed to him is that he understood the word and the vision.

In Daniel 8:27, Daniel confessed that he did not fully understand the vision that he received in that chapter even after an angel appeared to help him understand it. Why is this vision different?

The primary difference is that the vision in Chapters 11 and 12 is longer and contains more details. This extra detail seems to have helped Daniel understand what was in store for his people.

Also, the vision in Chapters 11 and 12 is largely historical narrative, and in that sense it is more straightforward than the earlier visions.

Daniel 10:2-3

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

Once again we see the extent of Daniel's spiritual preparation. Daniel prepared himself to seek God and to study his word. And Daniel got results when he prayed. We have seen those results. If we want similar results, then perhaps we should prepare ourselves as Daniel did.

For easterners, anointing oneself with oil was a daily ritual except for those who were sick, who were mourning, or who were facing a crisis. Here, Daniel abstains from the daily oil because he is

mourning.

Daniel also abstained during this time from meat and wine. The inference of course is that normally Daniel did not abstain from this food and drink. What that means is that the dietary changes Daniel made when he first arrived in Babylon seem to have been just temporary. That is not to suggest that Daniel ever ate anything unclean, but rather that Daniel was not a vegetarian his entire life and some diet books have suggested.

Why was Daniel mourning? As we have suggested, Daniel may have heard bad news from the exiles who had left several years earlier for Palestine. As we know from the book of Ezra, the news was not all good. His people were facing hardships back in Jerusalem.

Also, Daniel may have mourned because he was left behind - he had not seen his homeland since he was 13, and he likely never would see it again.

Also, the vision in Chapter 8 had described the horrors that lay in store for God's people under Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

The vision in Chapter 9 had told Daniel that one day the Messiah would come, only to be cut off, and that soon afterward the city and the sanctuary would be destroyed - and this would be God's last word with regard to the Jews.

The vision in Chapter 11 that Daniel is about to receive will have even more to say about the horrors that would soon face God's people.

What else could Daniel do but mourn? Daniel knew that there was a time to mourn (Ecclesiastes 3:4), and Daniel knew that time was now!

Daniel 10:4-6

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; 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: 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 colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.

Daniel received this vision on the twenty-fourth day of the first month.

The first month of the Jewish calendar was Nisan. The Passover celebration took place on the fourteenth day of that month, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread was from the fifteenth to the twenty-first day.

That means Daniel received this vision ten days after Passover. While traditionally this was a time of *feasting*, Daniel had instead spent the time fasting and mourning.

Daniel was standing on the banks of the great river Hiddekel, which the Septuagint identifies as the Tigris River. The Tigris River was the third river that went out of Eden in Genesis 2:14.

Earlier Daniel had a vision next to the River Ulai, which flows into the Tigris River. As we recall, it was unclear if Daniel was actually at the River Ulai or rather was just seeing the river in his vision. The wording here seems to suggest that Daniel was actually present at this river when these events occurred.

Daniel was not the only prophet to receive a message from God next to a river. Ezekiel received several visions by the River Chebar, which may have been a canal connecting the Tigris with the Euphrates.

In fact, what Daniel witnesses here has some other similarities to Ezekiel's vision in Ezekiel 1. Daniel 10:6 mentions beryl, lightning, lamps of fire, polished brass, and the voice of a multitude. Ezekiel 1 mentions burnished brass in verse 7, burning coals of fire, lamps, and lightning in verse 13, beryl in verse 16, and "the noise of an host" in verse 24.

Who is Daniel seeing here in verses 5 and 6?

I think Daniel is seeing Jesus in this vision. Some say that this is just an angel, but I don't think so. I think Daniel saw Jesus. Why?

One reason I think Daniel saw Jesus is because of the context. Think about the vision Daniel had received just a few years earlier in Chapter 9. That vision specifically mentioned the Messiah, and it said that the Messiah would be cut off. I think Daniel needed some reassurance from God about the promised Messiah, and what better way to get that reassurance than for God to allow Daniel to see Jesus in a vision?

Another reason I think Daniel saw Jesus is because of Daniel's reaction in verses 7-9, which we will look at next.

Yet another reason I think Daniel saw Jesus is because of the descriptions we see here, and how they compare with the vision of Christ in Revelation 1. Here is the description in verses 5-6 from the ESV.

Daniel 10:5-6 - I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude.

Compare that description with what we find in Revelation 1 when John sees Christ.

Revelation 1:12-16 - Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

I think Daniel, like John, also saw a vision of Christ.

Daniel 10:7-9

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. 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. 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.

Only Daniel saw the vision of the man in verses 5-6.

This scene reminds us of another appearance of Christ.

Acts 9:3-7 - Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, **hearing the voice but seeing no one.**

Daniel's companions were likewise not able to see the vision, but they experienced a great quaking that caused them to be afraid and to flee, leaving Daniel alone.

Daniel's outward appearance changed when he saw the vision in verses 5-6.

I love the KJV in verse 8 - "my comeliness was turned in me into corruption." I also like verse 8 in the New English Bible: "My strength left me; I became a sorry figure of a man." The ESV reads: "My radiant appearance was fearfully changed."

As we saw before, Daniel again appears to faint dead away as a result of the vision, and specifically in verse 9 as a result of hearing the voice, which verse 6 tells us was like "the voice of a multitude."

Remember the description we read from Revelation 1 of John's vision of Christ? How did John react to seeing that vision? Very similar to how Daniel reacted here.

Revelation 1:17 - When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.

I think Daniel and John were both seeing Jesus - Daniel over 500 years before Christ came to this world, and John 40 years after Jesus ascended from this world, having accomplished all that he came to do.

Daniel 10:10-12

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

Who lifts Daniel up in verse 10?

This person in verse 10 is not the same person we saw in verses 5-6. Why?

Because verses 5-6 was a vision as verses 7-8 tell us three times. Daniel faints as a result of the vision, and in verse 10 someone physically touches him and physically sets him upon his knees. And verse 11 tells us this person was sent to Daniel.

In short, verses 10-12 do not sound like a vision, but rather what happened is that Daniel saw Jesus in a vision in verses 5-6, and Daniel met an angel in person in verses 10-12.

Again, Daniel is said to be greatly beloved by God in verse 11. A literal translation is "man of preciousness."

Why were Daniel's prayers so effective? What was his secret? Verse 12 says that Daniel set his mind to understand, and he humbled himself before God. And so, the angel says, God heard his words.

James 4:6 - God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

It is a sad fact that although God is always able to hear us, sometimes God chooses not to hear us. Why? Because of our sinfulness.

Isaiah 59:1-2 - Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you so that he does not hear.

That was not Daniel's problem! When Daniel prayed, angels were dispatched!

Daniel 10:13-14

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. 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.

One commentary described these verses well when it said: "One of the strangest accounts in the Bible

is now unfolded."

Several questions arise immediately from verse 13:

- Who is speaking? That is, who is the "me" in verse 13?
- What and who is the prince of the kingdom of Persia?
- What happened during those 21 days?
- Who is Michael (that one is easy) and what did he do to help?
- Who are the kings of Persia?
- When are the "latter days"?

Who is speaking?

We have already answered this one. I think it must be an angel, and I do not think it is Jesus (even though I think Daniel saw Jesus in verses 5-6) because of what we will soon learn about this speaker.

In short, I think the speaker is a powerful angel, but not an all-powerful angel because (a) there are no all-powerful angels, and (b) verse 13 confirms that this angel is not all-powerful.

What and who is the prince of the kingdom of Persia?

Let's start with **what** is the prince of Persia?

I think we can safely conclude that this prince of Persia was not just a man.

What ordinary man could withstand an angel sent on a mission from God and cause Michael to have to come to that angel's rescue? Almost all commentaries agree that the prince of Persia was an angel, and I think that is correct.

Was the prince of Persia a good angel or a fallen angel?

Again, most commentaries also agree on this point - this prince of Persia withstood and delayed an

angelic messenger sent from God to Daniel, which strongly suggests that this prince was an evil angel.

What do we mean by a fallen angel? Jude answers that question.

Jude 1:6 - And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

We don't know too much about the fallen angels, but we certainly know they exist.

Why is this fallen angel called the prince of the kingdom of Persia?

I think what we are seeing here is the organization of Satan's kingdom. Again, we are seeing only a glimpse of it, but I think that is what we are seeing. This prince of Persia is apparently the fallen angel assigned to use Persia however possible in fighting the will of God.

I think Jesus also gives us a glimpse of that organization.

John 12:31 - Now is the judgment of this world: now shall **the prince of this world** be cast out.

John 14:30 - For **the prince of this world** cometh, and hath nothing in me.

John 16:11 - Of judgment, because **the prince of this world** is judged.

And, I think, Paul also gave us a glimpse of that organization.

2 Corinthians 4:4 - In whom **the god of this world** hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

This prince of Persia in Daniel 10:13 was most likely a servant of the prince of this world, who is Satan. It is even possible that the prince of Persia was Satan himself. We can't say for sure.

Are we surprised to learn that Satan is organized? I hope not. I hope we are not ignorant of his devices (2 Corinthians 2:11).

We would be foolish to think that Satan is not organized in his fight against God and against us, the people of God. Satan has a plan, and Satan is working to carry out that plan. And that was

particularly true at this time when the plan of God was beginning to unfold as God was preparing the world for the coming of Christ.

#daniel