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The Arrival of an Angel
10:1 to 11:1

The arrival of an angel DIG: Was Dani'el physically standing on the bank of the Tigris River? Why was Dani'el mourning? How did he mourn? Who was the messenger? Who heard the message? How did Dani'el initially react? Why would he expect a swift answer to his prayer? Why had the powerful high-ranking angel been delayed? For how long? What kind of power structure did the angel reveal? What three activities are demons generally involved in? Was the angelic being's message to Isra'el or to the Church? What was the actual prophecy?

REFLECT: What word does God have for us that will help us maintain our faithfulness over the long haul? How can Dani'el's mourning help believers today? When you face circumstances in life in which it seems God's agenda is not being accomplished, how do you decide whether to sit back and let God do His work or to jump in and "help God out" a little bit? How does it make you feel to think that a whole spiritual war is being waged around you between the power of God and the power of evil? In what ways is prayer a powerful weapon in that war?

Dani'el prayed, and angels went to war.

The background (10:1-3): Verse one provides the date of **Dani'el** final **vision**. **In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia** (**to see link click Ag – Cyrus and Darius**)**, a revelation was given to Dani'el, who is called Belteshazzar**. In 536 BC, **Dani'el** was about eighty-five years old, and had been in **Babylon** for a little over seven decades. **The message was true,** meaning it was fulfilled, **and it concerned a great war.** In other words, **it** did not refer to a single battle, but to a long, continuous period of trouble for **Isra'el**. **The understanding of the message came to him in a vision. Its message was true and it concerned a great conflict (10:1). Dani'el** claimed to have **understood the vision,** but, in reality, the only thing **h**e realized was that it meant trouble for **the Jewish people**. As **he** admitted in **12:8**, **he** didn't comprehend every detail.[360]

Dani'el shifted from a third-person narrative to a first-person description of the occasion when **he** received **the vision**. **At that time I, Dani'el, mourned for three weeks (10:2).** In the first year of **Cyrus**, the first party of **Jewish exiles** had returned to **Jerusalem** in response to **Cyrus' decree** (see the commentary on **Ezra-Nehemiah Ag – The First Return**). But **they** found life there far from easy. **They** rebuilt **the altar of the Temple** but almost immediately ran into powerful opposition from **the Samaritans** (see **Ezra-Nehemiah At – Opposition during the Reigns of Cyrus and Ahasuerus**). That opposition, on top of the difficulties of scratching out a living in their new home, cause **the** returned **exiles** to stop working on **the Temple**, a hiatus that would continue for more than fifteen years until the time of **Haggai** (see **Ezra-Nehemiah Ay – Haggai: The Strait Talker**) and **Zechariah** (see **Ezra-Nehemiah Az – Zechariah: The Visionary**). **The third year of Cyrus** would therefore have been a time of discouragement for **God's people**, both in **Judah** and **Babylon**.

That disheartening news caused **Dani'el** to **mourn for three weeks**. It was not a total fast from all food; rather, **he ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched his lips; and he used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over (10:3). Dani'el** fasted and abstained from anything that would have brought **him** pleasure, such as putting oil on **his** face for refreshment, as a sign of happiness, or to protect it from the sun **(Psalm 45:7 104:15, 121:6; Proverbs 27:9)**. As the next verse will show, the period of **Dani'el's** fast included the week of **Passover**, which is typically a time of feasting rather than fasting. The fact that **his fast** persisted through **the Passover** festival in the middle of **the first month** was both a sign of the seriousness of **his** commitment to **mourn** and an implicit cry to **God** to repeat **His** ancient acts of salvation in **Dani'el's** own day. It was **his** way of identifying with the difficulties and trials of **those** who had returned, and a crying out to **God** for **their** ultimate deliverance.[361] Under the Torah, **Passover** could only be observed where **the Ark of the Covenant** was kept. Initially, this was in Shiloh, then in **Jerusalem**. Thus, **Dani'el** did not violate **the Torah**.[362]

Dani'el's solidarity with **his** brothers and sisters, even at a great distance, should be a challenge to us. The Church around the world is one family of **God's** people. When **one suffers,** we should all sorrow; when **one rejoices**, we should all celebrate **(1 Cor 12:26)**. We should especially remember the persecuted Church. In many parts of the world there are those who suffer severely for their allegiance to **Messiah**. The writer of the Hebrews urges his readers to **remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are ministered**

as if you yourselves were suffering (Heb 13:3). Of course, in most cases we cannot write to these people personally, to assure them of our support. Nevertheless, we can do what **Dani'el** did, which was to **fast** for a time from some of the luxuries that are a routine part of our lives, and devote ourselves to praying for those persecuted believers in their time of desperate need. Such an act is also good for us when we are tempted to grumble about the difficulties and challenges of our present situation. It reminds us to be thankful for **ADONAI's** mercies to us and to pray for **God's** people undergoing trials. Abstinence also helps us to keep in mind that **this world is not our home (Heb 13:14)**. Like the believers under persecution, we too are engaged in a spiritual battle against a powerful opposition, a battle that rages around us at all times.[363]

The Messenger (10:4-6): At the end of **the three-week** period of **mourning**, **the vision** began. **On the twenty-fourth day of the first month of Nisan, as I was standing on the bank of the Tigris River (10:4). Dani'el** was **there** physically, not merely in **vision** as before (see **Ck – The Ram and the Male Goat**). Three weeks earlier, sometime after the New Moon, **Dani'el** had begun **his** fast. It continued through the completion of **Passover** (see the commentary on **Leviticus Dy – Pesach**), **Unleavened Bread** (see **Leviticus Dz – Hag ha'Matzot**), and **Firstfruits** (see **Leviticus Ea – Rasheet**).



I looked up. This phrase is used elsewhere in the TaNaKh to describe the beginning of a visionary experience (for example **Zechariah 1:18, 2:1**, and **5:1**). **And there before me was an angel** appearing as **a man. He** was **dressed in linen,** like **a** Hebrew **priest (Exodus 28:5, 39**, and **42). Angels**, who dwell in **the Presence of God**, who is light, are themselves clothed with light, and **Dani'el** saw something of **heaven's Shekinah glory** reflected in this **angel** who visited **him**.[364]

This **angel** wore **a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. His body was like topaz, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches. His arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze,** indicating that **his** body had a fiery appearance, **and his voice like the sound of a multitude (10:5-6).** Some commentators see this person as a theophany of **Messiah** because of its resemblance to **the LORD** in **Revelation 1:12-16**. But, in **10:13** we are told **the angel** required **Micha'el's** assistance in **his** conflict with **the chief demon of Persia.** There is something unbiblical about the possibility of **God** needing any help.[365] This **angel** was, then, probably a very powerful high-ranking **angel**.

Dani'el's Reaction (10:7-11): **Dani'el** had taken other men to **the Tigris River** with **him**. But **he was the only one who saw the vision; those who were with him did not see it, but they** knew something strange was happening. **Overwhelmed with terror, they fled and hid themselves.** This situation is reminiscent of **Paul's** Damascus road experience (see the commentary on **Acts Bc – Sha'ul Turns from Murder to the Messiah**), where **Paul's** companions also saw nothing, though they heard a sound and stood speechless.[366] **Dani'el**, however, **was left alone, gazing at this great angel,** trembling and **helpless**. **He had no strength left** and **his face turned deathly pale. Then he heard** the unnamed **angel speaking, and as Dani'el listened to him, he fainted and fell, face first, onto the ground. The** powerful **angel** had come to give **Dani'el** a special revelation concerning **the Jewish people** and what would happen to them in the "end times." **A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. The angel** said, **"Dani'el, you are very precious to God, so listen carefully to the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you." And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling (10:10-11).**

The Message Delayed (10:12-14): As Arnold Fruchtenbaum relates in his commentary on *Dani'el*, then **the** high-ranking **angel** revealed the reality about the unseen world and the **angelic** war that is going on in **the heavens**. According to **verse 12**, **the angel** was supposed to arrive on the same day that **Dani'el** began **his** fast. **Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Dani'el. Since the first day that you began to pray for understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your request has been heard in heaven. I have come in answer to your prayer.** As has been suggested in **10:2**, **Dani'el's** fast may have been in response to the problems surrounding the rebuilding of **the Temple** and **Jerusalem**. **The angel** consoled **Dani'el** by explaining that on **the day the**

prophet began to **humble himself** before **ADONAI, his** words were **heard in heaven**, and **the holy angel** was dispatched to answer **Dani'el's prayer**. **Dani'el** would have been familiar with the possibility of a speedy response from **YHVH** because in **9:20-21, the angel** arrived before **Dani'el** had even finished **his prayer**. This time, however, **the** unnamed **angel** arrived after **twenty-one days**.

Verse 13 explains the reasons for the **angel's** delay. **But the prince of the kingdom of Persia, opposed me for twenty-one days.** This **prince of the kingdom of Persia** was a fallen **angel** of high rank. One-third of all the **angels God** created, including **cherubs** and **seraphs**, fell with **Satan (Revelation 12:1-5)**. In the same way that **Ha'Shem** has a hierarchy of holy **angles**, **the Adversary** has a hierarchy of **demons**. It is obvious that the organization of **demons** is an imitation of the organization of holy **angels**, with similar ranks and orders. **Satan** and **his demons**, who were once a part of the divine order of creation, were fully aware of the hierarchical structure that **God** had set up in **heaven**. The TaNaKh speaks of **demons** who function as rulers over nations, such as **the prince of the kingdom of Persia** in **10:3**, and **the prince of Greece** in **10:20**. **The Devil** uses **his demons** to thwart **God's** plans. This is especially true in relation to **Isra'el** because **the great dragon** wages a special war of hatred against **the Jewish people**, both as **God's chosen people** and as the source of **the Messianic** line. So, **the ruler of demons** did not want **Dani'el** to be given this **vision** of **Isra'el's** future or to record it, so **he** sent a very powerful **demon** to stop **God's** high-ranking **angel**. When **Dani'el prayed**, **Satan's** fallen **angels** and **God's** holy **angels** went to war.

Then Micha'el came to help me, because I was detained there with the kings of Persia. In the **angelic** realm, there is only one **archangel (Jude 9** and **Revelation 12:7)** who has authority over all the other **angels**. On **his** way to **Dani'el**, **the holy angel** had been **engaged in a spiritual battle** with **kings (demons) of Persia** for **twenty-one days.** Besides being **the archangel**, **Micha'el** also serves as **the chief prince**, or guardian **angel**, of **Isra'el (Dani'el 12:1)**. **God's** holy **angel** was weaker than **the demon** who fought against **him** for **twenty-one days**. However, **Micha'el** was stronger than **the Adversary's demon**. So once **Micha'el** arrived, **he** was able to fight **the** fallen **angel** of high rank alone, so **God's holy angel** was released to take **his** message to **Dani'el**.

In a general sense, **demons** are involved in **three main activities**. **First, they** try to thwart the purposes of **ADONAI** as we have just seen in **10:12-14**. Another example is described in **Revelation** where **demons** will aid in gathering the

nations for the Campaign of Armageddon to try to halt **God's** plan for **the Second Coming** (see the commentary on **Revelation Eg – I Saw Three Evil Spirits That Looked Like Frogs**). A **second** general activity of **demons** is to extend **Satan's** authority over the world by doing **his** bidding (see the commentary on **Ephesians Av – Salvation from Sin**). This activity is the reason **Paul** urged believers in **Ephesus** to put on **the armor of God** (see **Ephesians Cb – The Armor of God**). A **third** general activity of **demons** is to do **ADONAI's** bidding. **Demons** can be, and are, being used by **Ha'Shem** to carry out **His** own purposes, plans, and will. For example, in **First Samuel 16:14**, **a demon** was used to torment **King Sha'ul**. In **First Kings 22:19-23**, **a** lying **demon** was used to arrange for the death of **Ahab** (see the commentary on **Elijah and Elisha Be – Micaiah Prophesies against Ahab**). In **Second Corinthians 12:7**, a **demon** was allowed to be used to keep **Paul** humble. **YHVH** will use **demons** to carry out **His** own purposes, and nothing of what happened in **Dani'el 10** was outside **His** permissive will **(Job 1:6-12** and **2:1-6)**.

In **verse 14**, **the angelic being** explained the purpose of **his** coming: **Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come. The angel's** message was intended for **Isra'el** and not to the Church (see the commentary on **Jeremiah Eo – I Will Make a New Covenant with the People of Isra'el: The Church's Relationship to the B'rit Chadashah**). Furthermore, **the angel** gave a hint of the prophecy by stating that parts of the message referred to **a time yet to come,** meaning in **the far eschatological future**. All the remaining prophecies in **Chapters 11** and **12** had such a broad scope that it would take a very long time for them to be fulfilled.[367]

Touched by an Angel (10:15-19): Once again, the words of **the** unnamed **angel's** introductory message were overwhelming. **While the angelic being was saying this to Dani'el, he** resumed **his** prostrate position and **bowed his face to the ground.** Once again **he** was rendered **speechless. Then one who looked like a man touched Dani'el's lips** (kind of like angelic first aid)**, and he opened his mouth and began to speak,** saying: **I am overcome with anguish because of the vision, sir, and I feel very weak. How can I, your servant, talk with you, sir? My strength is gone and I can hardly breathe." His** weakened condition prevented **him** from not only communicating with **the angel** but also from listening to the prophecy. There was just no **strength** left in **him**, nor did he have any **breath**. In other words, **Dani'el** feared that **he** would suffocate if

the conversation continued. Then **the angel** touched **Dani'el** for the third time. **Again the one who looked like a man touched me and gave me strength.** Then **the** powerful **angel** continued to comfort **Dani'el**, reminding **him** that **he** was **very precious to God (9:23** and **10:11)**. **He** was not to **fear**, but to have **shalom** (**peace**). Then **the angel** encouraged **Dani'el** to *chazak va'chazak*, **be strong now; be strong.** Those words of encouragement finally strengthened **Dani'el** to the point that **he** was able to hear what the **angelic being** had to say. **When he spoke to me, I was strengthened and** said: **Speak, sir, since you have given me strength.**

The Prophecy Given (10:20-11:1): So he said: **Do you know why I have come to you?** Slightly paraphrased, **the angel** asked, "Now that **you** have been strengthened, are **you** able to comprehend what **I** said earlier and why **I** came to **you**? The absence of a response suggests that the question was rhetorical. **The angelic being** in the likeness of **a man** explained what **he** would do after delivering the prophecy in the next two chapters to **Dani'el**. **Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and after that, the prince of Greece will come. The holy angel** would return to battle **the chief demon of Persia** who had stopped **him** earlier. The **angelic** warfare against that **demon** had to continue in order to preserve the advantage **Micha'el** had gained in **10:13**, which assured the rebuilding of **the Temple** and **Jerusalem**. However, at some point in the future **the demon of Persia** would be defeated and **the angel's** battles would shift from **the demon of Persia** to **the demon of Greece**. In other words, the time would come when **the chief demon of Persia** would be defeated along with **the Medo-Persian Empire** (see **Az – The Second Empire: Chest and Arms of Silver**). Then **Greece** would become the dominant power, and **the Jews** would fall under the control of **the Greeks** (see **Ba – The Third Empire: Belly and Thighs of Bronze**). At that time, **the holy angel** would have to stop **his** battle with **the chief demon of Persia** and begin another war with **the** guardian **demon** of Greece, being **supported**, once again, by **Micha'el**, **Isra'el's guardian angel**. **But first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth.** This could refer to **a book** in heaven that records everything that was, is, and is to be. Presumably this **Book of Truth** contains the course of history of the Gentile nations and **the Israelites** as **God's people**, a portion of which is about to be revealed to **Dani'el**. Indeed, some parts of this **book** were turned into what we now know as the Bible. From this **book**, **the** unnamed **angel** knew that **Micha'el** would be with **him** in the war against the **demonic** domains. **The angel** made sure to add that **Micha'el** was **"your" guardian angel**. The Hebrew term for **"your,"** *chem*, is plural. **Micha'el**

was not **the guardian angel** of **Dani'el** . . . but of **Isra'el**.

In summary, every nation has its own leading **guardian angel** as well as a **guardian demon**. As **the guardian** of **Isra'el**, **Micha'el** fights on behalf of the **Jewish** nation, especially during the times of **the Gentiles** (see **Ao – The Times of the Gentiles**), when **Isra'el** is under **Gentile** domination. **He** is aided by holy **angels** such as the one who was talking to **Dani'el**. Therefore, this powerful **angel** and **Micha'el** were fighting against the leading **demon of Persia** and would fight against **the demon of Greece** in the future.



The unnamed **angel** who was speaking to **Dani'el** explained in **11:1** that **he** had assisted **Micha'el** in the past. **And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I (the** unnamed **angel) took my stand to support and protect him (Micha'el).** So the relationship between **the** powerful **angel** and **Micha'el** was mutual. Just as **Micha'el** came to help **the angel** in **his** battle against **the prince of the kingdom of Persia** in **10:13**, so had **the** holy **angel** once helped **Micha'el**. Two years earlier, **Micha'el** and this unnamed **angel** fought a spiritual battle against **Satan's demons**. The Hebrew word for **to take one's stand,** *amad*, has a military connotation. The spiritual battle in **the heavens** was militaristic in nature. Historically, this was roughly the time when **Cyrus and Darius** began taking a pro-Jewish stance (see **Dp – The Deliverance of Darius**). **ADONAI stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm** that **the Jews** could voluntarily return to **their land** (see **Ezra-Nehemiah Ai – The Decree of Cyrus**)**. Micha'el and the** powerful **angel** fought **the demons** attacking the returning **Jews** from Babylon all the way back to **their Promised Land**. From the perspective of **Chapter 11**, these events were in the past.[368]