

Struggle for the mind of the king of Persia



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Behind the scenes a relentless battle rages between the forces of good and evil, between Christ and Satan over the mastery of the world

POINTS TO LOOK FOR

- How Daniel met the Son of God 500 years before Bethlehem.
- Evidence of unseen agents in national governments and courts of kings.
- The invisible battle between good and evil.
- A glimpse of the caring ministry of angels.
- The importance of personal decision regarding our eternal destiny.

One of Daniel's Greatest Visions

Spring had come to Persia in the third year of Cyrus the Great (probably 535BC). The white-haired Daniel, now in his late 80s walked by the bank of the Hiddekel – the ancient Tigris river. Suddenly, a most awe-inspiring vision burst upon him. A being of surpassing glory, with eyes like torches of fire, appeared above the waters. Daniel fell like a dead man, while his companions fled in terror.

Who was this mighty one?

Why had he come to Daniel just then?

Discussion Questions

A. DANIEL'S SORROW FOR JERUSALEM

QUESTION 1 (Daniel 10:1-3, page 868)

What did Daniel say which shows he was passing through great stress at the time?

"I Daniel, was _____ three full weeks." (verse 2)



Daniel prays earnestly by the Tigris river

What was troubling him?

NOTES:

Exhibit 3

MICHAEL - WHY IS HIS NAME IN THE FORM OF A QUESTION?

The name Michael means "who is like God?"

This name is a challenge to all who would claim God's place and authority, a common occurrence throughout history.

The first usurper was Lucifer (Satan). He declared:

"I will be like the Most High ... I will exalt my throne above the stars of God." (Isaiah 14:12-14, page 667; Ezekiel 28:1-3, page 830)

Many followed in Lucifer's steps - Babylon, Egypt, Rome and others deified their kings, pharaohs, emperors, and popes. That is, made "gods" of them (see Acts 12:21,22, page 1065).

Daniel, in the Old Testament foretells the rise of one who would act as God (Daniel 11:36). Paul, in the New Testament says this one would "sit as God in the temple of God showing himself that he is God." (2 Thessalonians 2:4, page 1138)

But Michael stands in the way of all such, with the challenge of His very name -

"Who is like God?"

*There is only one - the Divine Son.
(Read John Chapter 1, page 1025)*

We learn in verse 1 that something had been revealed to Daniel about "the appointed time". Remember that Gabriel had spoken about an appointed time in Chapter 8 (the 2,300 days, and about the "time" of Jerusalem's restoration in Chapter 9 (the 70 weeks). Two years had passed since then. With joy, Daniel had seen the issuing of the decree of Cyrus allowing Jewish exiles to leave for Jerusalem. But now, bad news was coming back to Persia.



A bright being appears to Daniel as he is praying

Local Palestinians, hostile to Jewish resettlement, were sending false reports to Cyrus, and doing everything possible to obstruct the work of restoring the temple. They kept this opposition "all the days of Cyrus". (Read Ezra 4, page 446, for this interesting glimpse of history.)

In a state of grief, Daniel had given himself to fasting and prayer for God's intervention. It was at this point, as he walked by the river, that he saw the vision of the heavenly being.

B. VISION BY THE HIDDEKEL

QUESTION 2 (Daniel 10:5,6, page 868)

How did Daniel describe the "man" who suddenly appeared to him above the waters?

"I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold a certain _____ clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz! His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of _____, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in colour, and the sound of his words like the voice of a _____." (verses 5,6)

QUESTION 3 (Compare Revelation 1:13-16, page 1174, with Daniel 10:5, 6, page 868)

Who was this glorious personage? Do other scriptures help us discover his identity? John, the writer of Revelation, experienced a similar vision. He saw:

"one like the _____ " "
 "girded ... with a _____ band" (Revelation 1:13)
 "his _____ were like a flame of fire" (Revelation 1:14)
 "his feet were like fine _____ " "
 "his voice as the sound of _____ " "
 (Revelation 1:15)

QUESTION 4 (Revelation 1:17, 18, page 1174)

How did the being identify himself to John?

"He laid his right hand on me, saying to me, 'Do not be afraid, I am the _____ and the _____."
 "(verse 17)

"I am he who lives, and was _____, and behold I am _____ forevermore." (verse 18)

The almost identical descriptions given by John in Revelation and by Daniel here, leave little room for doubt that Daniel was in the presence of the Son of God, that day by the Tigris River.

QUESTION 5 (Daniel 10:7, 8)

Could you describe from these verses the effect the vision had upon Daniel and his companions?

This appearance of the Son of God in power was God's answer to Daniel's fears about Jerusalem. Here was the one who had walked in the fire with the three Hebrews; the "Son of Man", whom Daniel had seen standing before the Ancient of Days in judgement; "the Messiah the Prince"; "the Prince of Princes"! With this "man" on Israel's side, no force on earth could obstruct God's plans for restoring Jerusalem.

of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed." (Romans 9:6-8, page 1091)

"If you are Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:29, page 1122)

"For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him." (Romans 10:12, page 1093)

"... He made known to me the mystery ... that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ through the Gospel." (Ephesians 3:3-6, page 1125)

Henceforth, believing Jews and Gentiles, in one single body, were to be counted as God's true Israel. For further examples, see Ephesians 2:12-14,19,20 (page 1125); 1 Peter 2:9,10 (page 1163).

Paul illustrates this joining of believing Jews and believing Gentiles into one body in Romans 11:16-27, page 1094. There are two olive trees, said Paul, one wild and the other cultivated. The wild tree represented the Gentile nations. The cultivated tree represented national Israel. Some of the branches were broken off the Israel tree 'because of unbelief'. But branches from the Gentile tree were grafted in to take their places. Notice that the believing Gentiles were grafted into believing Israel. Israel was the root and stock. Thus believing Gentiles made up for unbelieving Jews, and in this way God still had His "good olive tree".

To conclude his illustration, Paul said: 'And so all Israel will be saved.' (Romans 11:26, page 1094) This can be rightly translated *in this way* all Israel shall be saved'. In what way? By the grafting of Gentiles into the Israel tree. When the fullness of the Gentiles has come in' God will have His complete Israel.

Hence, God's people in the latter days' are not national Israel as such, but multi-national Israel. People from all the world; 'every nation, tribe, language, and people'. (Matthew 24:14, page 960; Revelation 14:6, page 1183)

What Gabriel was saying to Daniel is: "I have come to show you what shall happen to your people - true believers, true followers of the Messiah, spiritual Israelites from all nations - in the latter days."

Exhibit 2 (Continued)

Greek-English Lexicon, does not necessarily mean a particular breed or racial entity. It is defined as "1. A company, body of men; 2. Race, tribe; 3. A nation, people ...; 4. A particular class ... a caste."

To unbelieving Israel, Jesus sadly declared:

"Your house is left unto you desolate." (Matthew 23:38)

Strange words?

Almost immediately after making these declarations, Jesus pointed to the coming destruction of Jerusalem as predicted in Daniel 9:26 (see Matthew 24:1,2,15-20, page 960). This was one of the most terrible tragedies in history. A million Jews died. Most of those who remained were sold around the Mediterranean as slaves. The market was so glutted that a donkey fetched more than a man.

But all was not lost. A 'remnant' of Israel believed in the Messiah. After the crucifixion more joined them. They were the true people of the Messiah - Christians - believers (see Acts 2:36-41, page 1053). Later, Saul (Paul), a Jewish leader who had bitterly opposed Christ, became a Christian. Under his ministry, many non-Jews accepted Christ. Gentile believers came to outnumber Jewish believers until it seemed that Christianity was a Gentile religion.

But Jesus said, "not so"! Because He, the Messiah, was born a Jew, and because the Word of God was committed to the Jews, He declared:

"Salvation is of the Jews." (John 4:22, page 1028)

Later, Paul was inspired to say:

"He is not a Jew who is one outwardly ... but he is a Jew who is one inwardly ... of the heart" (Romans 2:28,29, page 1086)

Again Paul said:

"For they are not all Israel who are of Israel. Nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham ... those who are the children

QUESTION 6 (Daniel 10:10-12, page 869)

As Daniel felt the touch of a hand upon him, what encouraging words did he hear?

"Oh Daniel, man greatly _____ ." (verse 11)

"Your words were heard, and I have _____ because of your words." (verse 12)



The voice he heard and the hand that now touched Daniel were almost certainly those of the angel Gabriel. Gabriel had already guided the prophet in understanding the vision of Chapter 8 and the prophecy of Jerusalem's restoration in Chapter 9. Their meeting again gives us a touching insight into the tender care of angel beings for the members of our fallen race! Gently lifting the old man to his feet, Gabriel assured Daniel that he was greatly loved by the inhabitants of a better world.

C. THE BATTLE BEHIND THE SCENES

QUESTION 7 (Daniel 10:13)

Why had Daniel been left to fast and pray for three weeks before Gabriel could come to him?

"But the prince of the kingdom of _____ withstood me twenty-one days." (verse 13)

There had been a fierce conflict at the court of Cyrus between Gabriel and somebody called the "prince of the kingdom of Persia". This "prince" may have been the king of Persia himself. However the unusual phrasing, "prince of the kingdom of Persia", seems to point to an angelic prince matching Gabriel – a supernatural being – one who was attempting to manipulate the mind of Cyrus the Great against God's plans. Day after day, for three full weeks, the contest had gone on –

Gabriel versus an evil angel-prince.

This takes us behind the scenes of the visible world and gives us a glimpse of the awesome conflicts that constantly go on between the angels of God and the messengers of Satan for control of people's lives! Do you sometimes feel that powerful unseen forces seem to drive leaders and even whole nations into war and disaster? Do you yourself sometimes struggle with inner conflict when you are making a choice between right and wrong?

SEE EXHIBIT 1: Page 13, 14
UNSEEN AGENCIES

QUESTION 8 (Ephesians 6:10-12, page 1128)

What did the apostle Paul say concerning the battle between good and evil?

"For we do not _____ against flesh and blood, but ... against _____ hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (verse 12)



Gabriel was locked in a deadly struggle with the forces of evil over the mind of the king of Persia

QUESTION 9 (Daniel 10:13, page 869)

Who came to help Gabriel in his battle to win the mind of Cyrus?

"And behold, _____, one of the chief princes, came to help

Michael, "one of the chief princes", had come to Gabriel's aid. The name Michael means "who is like God?" Gabriel told Daniel that beside himself, only Michael had knowledge of the divine mysteries that he was about to reveal. Who was Michael? His full identity becomes clear in these final chapters we are now studying.

Exhibit 2

**"GOD'S PEOPLE
OF THE LATTER DAYS"**

Are they simply the Israelis? Today's distant descendants of Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham?

It is true that the Israelites were called to be God's chosen nation (Deuteronomy 7:6-11, page 173; Exodus 19:5,6, page 70). But it is also true that their standing with God depended upon their faithfulness to Him. Being born a national Israelite was an opportunity - not a guarantee of eternal life. Without love, trust, and obedience toward God the nation would lose its standing. (Read Deuteronomy 27 and 28, page 191.)

Furthermore, God's promises to Israel were not meant to exclude other nations. Gentiles could become part of Israel as well. In fact, God's plan was for "all nations" to become His people (Isaiah 56:1-8, page 713) through the Messiah - Christ.

But when the Messiah came, Israel rejected Him. They urged the Romans to nail Him to the cross. "His blood be upon us and upon our children!" was their cry. "We have no king but Caesar!"

Did Israel's rejection of the Messiah as a nation alter their standing with God? Could they still claim God's approval on the grounds that they were the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Listen to what Christ said to Israel's leaders:

"If you were Abraham's children you would do the works of Abraham" (John 8:37-47, page 1035)

"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruit of it." (Matthew 21:43, page 957)

The Greek word for nation, "ethnos", according to Liddell and Scott's

Exhibit 1 (Continued)**EVIL ANGELS**

Jude 6	Some of the angels turned against God.
2 Peter 2:4	They sinned.
Revelation 12:7-9	Their leader, Satan, is called the '_serpent' and the '_dragon'. They were cast out of Heaven with him.
Genesis 3	Satan brought sin into the world.
Revelation 12:9	He deceived the whole world - caused the present great battle between good and evil.
Revelation 12:12	He brought suffering to the human race.
2 Corinthians 11:14,15	Satan can appear as an angel of light, and cause his followers to seem like ministers of righteousness.
Revelation 16:14	Evil angels can work deceptive miracles.
2 Thessalonians 2:9,10	Satan can lead minds to pervert God's truth, deceiving many into believing error,
Matthew 24:4,23-26	if they are not firmly anchored in Christ and His word.
Revelation 12:17	In the last days, Satan will war against those who obey God's commandments.
Matthew 25:41	Satan and his angels with all who follow them will be finally destroyed.

me." (verse 13)

D. DANIEL'S PEOPLE NOT FORGOTTEN**QUESTION 10** (Daniel 10:14, page 869)

Now that Gabriel was free to come to Daniel, what had he been instructed to tell the prophet?

"Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the _____, for the vision refers to _____ yet to come." (verse 14)

Here Gabriel gives the reason for this visit to Daniel. It was to reveal more about the future of God's people – especially the far distant future. Their warfare in the battle between good and evil and their final victory is Gabriel's main theme for the rest of the book of Daniel.

STUDY EXHIBIT 2: Pages 15-17
Who are God's People of the Latter Days?

QUESTION 11 (Daniel 10:15-19)

After reading these verses, describe how Daniel was revived and given new strength.

E. CONFLICT TO COME**QUESTION 12** (Daniel 10:20, page 869)

Was the conflict with the "prince of Persia" over?

"Then he said, ... And now I must _____ to _____ with the prince of Persia." (verse 20)



QUESTION 13 (Daniel 10:20)

For how long would Gabriel's presence at the headquarters of Persia continue?

"And when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of _____ will come." (verse 20)

Gabriel would continue to strive with the Persian kings until Persia was superseded by Greece (about 200 years into the future). He would then strive to influence the Greeks in favour of God's people as he had the Persians.

It could well be that the second restoration decree by Darius the Great in 519BC and the third and final decree of Artaxerxes in 457BC to let the Jews restore Jerusalem and their nation, were the result of Gabriel's strivings with the minds of these Persian kings.



Gabriel explains to Daniel in great detail critical events of the future

F. GABRIEL HAS MORE TO TELL**QUESTION 14** (Daniel 10:14,21)

Before returning to the Persian court, what else did Gabriel say about his purpose in making this visit to Daniel?

"But I will tell you what is noted in the _____ of _____ ---- _____." (verse 21)

Gabriel said that what he was about to reveal was noted in "the Scripture of Truth" or "the true writing" – God-given, unerring truth. This is what he reveals in the last two chapters of Daniel (Units 15 and 16).

Exhibit 1**UNSEEN AGENCIES**

As we have gone along in the book of Daniel, angels have come more and more into the drama. Who are these great beings who can shut the mouths of lions and interpret visions? What does the Bible teach us about them?

- Hebrews 1:7,14 Angels are ministering spirits' - higher beings of God's creation.
- Hebrews 2:7 Man is made 'a little lower than the angels'.
- Hebrews 1:13,14 Angels are sent to minister to, influence and
- Psalm 34:7 Protect God's people.
- Revelation 5:11 They are vast in number - at least
- Daniel 7:10 100,000,000 attend God's throne.
- Luke 1:19 & Matthew 18:10 Angels stand in the presence of God.
- Genesis 19:1-3 & Hebrews 13:2 They can appear on earth as human beings.
- Psalm 103:20 They excel in strength.
- Isaiah 37:14-36 They help answer prayer.
- Luke 1, 2 Angels announced the birth of Jesus.
- Matthew 4:11 They ministered to Christ after His temptation in the desert. They strengthened Him after His trial in the Garden of Gethsemane.
- Matthew 28:2 They attended Him at His resurrection.
- Acts 1:9-11 They escorted Him upon His return to Heaven.
- Matthew 24:30,31 They will accompany Him when He comes again.
-
- Matthew 13:39-41 They will gather the redeemed at Christ's second coming.
- Matthew 24:31

REVIEW QUIZ (multiple choice)

Select the correct answer from (a), (b), (c) in each section, and answer by placing a tick alongside your choice.

1. Gabriel's conflict with evil in the Persian court demonstrated that:

- (a) People are like "puppets" under God's arbitrary control. He determines what they will decide
- (b) God will try to influence, but will not force people to do what is right
- (c) God has no active interest in this world's affairs

2. Important themes in Daniel Chapter 10 show that:

- (a) God makes life smooth and easy for His people
- (b) There is an invisible warfare going on between Christ and Satan and their angels
- (c) Christ did not involve himself in human affairs until New Testament times

3. The main reason why the angel Gabriel took so long to explain the vision of the 2300 "days", the 70 "weeks" and the experiences of God's people into the far distant future was that:

- (a) The visions were so long and complicated
- (b) Daniel was not ready emotionally, and physically to endure at one time the full impact of the truth about the future
- (c) Prophets were not just receivers of messages for others. They were personally involved in receiving and pondering them first for themselves, and this took time.

G. GABRIEL'S SUPPORTER**QUESTION 15** (Daniel 10:21, page 869)

Who is again mentioned as Gabriel's chief supporter in the continuing conflict with evil powers?

ANSWER: _____

WHO IS MICHAEL?

His name appears only in the symbolic prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, and in Jude 9 (page 1173). Jude calls him "Michael the Archangel". In the original language, "archangel" means "prince of angels" or "ruler of angels". Revelation shows him to be the great commander who cast Satan out of heaven (Revelation 12:7-9, page 1182). Michael always appears under this name in His role as protector and deliverer of God's people against Satan and the forces of evil.

Some Jewish writers and many Christian writers identify "Michael" as one and the same as the "Messiah". Gabriel does this – "Michael your prince", he says, "Messiah the prince"; "Michael the great prince who stands for your people." (Daniel 10:21; 9:25; 12:1) Many Christians find certainty only as they identify Michael with the Son of God.

At His birth, Christ took upon Himself the nature of mankind to save mankind. But prior to Bethlehem He was just as involved in the work of salvation. He visited the earth as a mighty angel – always taking the lead at the battlefield to deliver His people from evil, as here in Daniel 10. This divine "angel" appeared on many occasions in Old Testament times. He is sometimes called a "man"; sometimes an "angel", and sometimes "God". (See Joshua 5:13-15, page 206; Genesis 32:24-30, page 32; Hosea 12:3-5, page 881; Isaiah 63:9, page 720.) (Also see Revelation 12:7-9, page 1182; Jude 9, page 1173; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, page 1137.) This mighty one could be none other than Christ. "God with us." (Matthew 1:23, page 935) (See 1 Corinthians 10:4, page 1105.)

**WHY IS MICHAEL'S NAME
IN THE FORM OF A QUESTION?**

SEE EXHIBIT 3: Page 18

THE DAILY BATTLEGROUND

When we study the rise and fall of empires as in the prophecies of Daniel 2, 7, 8, it is possible for us to see only military conflict. But when the curtain is drawn aside as it is in this chapter, the truth comes close to home that greater forces of good and evil are fighting it out on the battleground of minds that rule the nations, and on the battleground of our everyday lives.

As we face the future with its tests of right or wrong, we can say “yes” or “no” to God. We have the choice. But we should understand that these day-by-day decisions determine our eternal destinies.



Michael, captain of the Lord's host, Son of God, Defender of the Faith

QUESTION 16

Would you like to say: 'Dear God, I need your protection against the forces of evil. I choose, freely and deliberately, to let you have your way in my life, both today and in the future?'

OPTIONAL QUESTIONS TO THINK THROUGH

Does a knowledge of the battle between the forces of good and evil help in understanding the reason why this world is experiencing so much conflict?

Do these facts help you better understand the presence of suffering in an otherwise wonderful world, and the sufferings of Christ in His conquest of Satan on our behalf?

Why did the Creator permit sin to rise and allow humans and higher beings the freedom to choose between good and evil?