

### **Daniel 10 Daniel's Vision of a Man**

Daniel received his final vision from the Lord while standing by the Tigris River. He saw a radiant angelic being (some say a Christophany) whose voice thundered. Overwhelmed by the vision, Daniel fell into a deep trance, losing all his strength in fear. The angel told Daniel to stand up and encouraged him not to fear. The angelic being then explained that he had been delayed in coming to Daniel by the "prince of Persia," apparently a reference to an angel who exercised some authority over Persia. After a 21-day struggle, Michael intervened, allowing this angel to come to Daniel. He would soon be off again to fight against the prince of Persia, but before leaving, he revealed to Daniel certain future events about the Jewish nation.

### **Daniel 11 History of Alexander the Great's Divided Kingdom**

Chapter 11 of Daniel is divided into two parts. The first 35 verses cover the period from the Persian kingdom under Cyrus the Great to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, a Greek king who reigned over Syria. Antiochus attempted to transform Judah and Jerusalem into a Greek outpost of his kingdom as the Romans were advancing. This caused the revolt of the Maccabees, a priestly family of Jews who organized a successful rebellion against the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV and re-consecrated the defiled Temple of Jerusalem. As a side note, the period from 167 B.C. to 37 B.C. was the only time in the history of the nation of Israel where it was independent of any foreign power.

Four Persian rulers would succeed Cyrus the Great. The last of them, Xerxes, campaigned against Greece, which was led by Alexander the Great. We are told of the relationship between the Seleucids ("the king of the North"), who ruled Syria, and the Ptolemies ("the king of the South"), who ruled Egypt. Next, the chapter focuses on the career of Antiochus Epiphanes, mentioning his Egyptian campaigns and mistreatment of the Jews. Lastly, we see the Maccabean revolt against Antiochus. Antiochus' character and his methods were corrupt, deceitful, and cruel, but this man would only be able to operate within the sovereignty of God, unable to proceed beyond the limit marked for him. Antiochus Epiphanes would set out on a new campaign of conquest but finally died on his way to Jerusalem. He is famous for almost conquering Egypt and for his brutal persecution of the Jews.

### **Daniel 12 The Prophecy Is to Be Sealed**

Last things are now foretold. The angelic prince Michael instructed Daniel to seal up and keep this prophecy a secret until the end times. Daniel then saw two other angelic beings standing by the river, both clothed in linen. One asked how long it would be before the revelation was fulfilled. The other responded that "a time, times, and a half a time" (probably three and a half years) would pass between the breaking of Israel's power and the fulfillment of the vision. Lastly, Daniel was urged to go his way until the end. He was assured that blessing would be granted to those who waited, that he would rest, and yet he would stand at the end of the days.

*The book of Daniel stresses God's sovereignty over world history. History unfolds as part of God's plans and is moving toward God's predetermined goals. Earthly kings exercise their cruel power for a short time. God's goals for human history include the deliverance of His people from oppression, the resurrection, judgment, and the establishment of His everlasting kingdom. Daniel calls God's people to persevere and hope. Like Daniel and his friends, Christians today are*

*tempted to compromise their values and worship their gods. Daniel calls Christians to live out their faith in an evil world whatever the cost.*

## **2 Chronicles 36:22-23 Cyrus Promises the End of the Exile**

Cyrus, king of Persia, announces that all the Jewish exiles should return to Israel and rebuild the Temple. So, the exile and punishment of Israel are ended after 70 years.

### **The Purpose of Ezra**

The first six chapters of Ezra center on the building of the temple. The Lord inspired Cyrus to permit the return of the Jews to worship their God. Those who volunteered for the first expedition are listed in chapter 2. The foundation of the temple was laid, and the people worshiped God in chapter 3. But opposition from their enemies stopped the work (chapter 4). In chapter 5, the LORD stirred up the people by the prophets Zechariah and Haggai to complete the work despite inquiries from the Persian governor. King Darius authorized and funded the project, which was completed with a great celebration in chapter 6.

### **Ezra 1-2**

In the first year of Cyrus's reign over Babylon, he permitted the Jews to return and rebuild their temple and worship their Lord. The Lord had inspired Cyrus to allow the Jews to return as the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy. The Cyrus Cylinder (presently in the British Museum, sets all the peoples free, lets them go back to their homes and homelands. Most amazingly, Cyrus lets them recover their statues and gods – all the things that were confiscated as symbols of victory – and go back to their lives and religions, worshipping their gods in their way and in their temples.

The LORD also stirred up some of the exiles of Judah to return. Cyrus returned the temple vessels stolen by Nebuchadnezzar.

Ezra 2 provides the register of the remnant honoring those who trusted the Lord and shows that the prophecy of Israel's return from exile was fulfilled. The registry includes the leaders, general population, temple personnel, descendants of Solomon's servants, and some unidentified people.