

Kings and Prophets 17-06-29

This is Thursday, the 29th of June, 2017. We continue our study in the book of Daniel as part of our larger series on Kings and Prophets, and we've come to Chapter 10. We saw the introduction of this last time, where Daniel once again was in a period of spiritual focus and preparation, and then he receives word from God.

And it's a wonderful thing to contemplate the example that is given to us in terms of being ready and expressing a willingness to know and understand the will of God, and God responding and honoring that desire. Let's take a moment to go to the Lord in prayer, and we'll pick up our study. Father, we thank you for this opportunity to spend time together in fellowship in the study of your word, recognizing what a wonderful grace has been bestowed on us to have the presence of your Holy Spirit and the powerful truth of your word available to us, really as never before in history.

We pray that as we look at this portion of your word together, that the Spirit will be our teacher, that each one will find the truth that is pertinent and meaningful and that you will use to lead each of us and guide us in the way that we should go for work of service and acts of ministry and reflecting the testimony of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ in our lives in the time that remains to us here on this earth. We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen. We saw last time that this is the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia, and this gives us a pretty good fix historically because we know that Cyrus began ruling in 559 B.C., so this is in the vicinity of 556 B.C. If you do a little mental math here, do you remember when it is that Daniel and his friends were taken captive? There are three invasions of Nebuchadnezzar that finish off the land of Judah.

It's like three strikes and you're out, going, going, gone, and the dates, and you just have to kind of, I just had to shove them into my memory, are 605, 597, and 586. 605 is the first incursion, and this is recorded in the vicinity of 2 Kings chapter 24. I think it's right at the beginning of the chapter that says Nebuchadnezzar came down, and if you read 2 Kings 24 and 25, you'll see, and long months ago we reviewed these three successive incursions.

Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaël, and Nazariah are taken in that first one in 605. This is now, just call it 555 to round it off. So if it's 555, how long has Daniel been a captive with the Babylonians and now with the Medo-Persians? My math is right, it's 50 years, right? So this is a good long stretch, but this is the third year of Cyrus the Great, and it's interesting, different scholars will compute this in different ways, this timing.

I've seen people say that Daniel is about 85 years of age at this point, being taken as a young man, I would think that he might be a bit younger than this. But we know that he has been preparing by way of fasting and mourning for three full weeks in verse 2. We know from later on in this chapter that this was in the first month, and in about the third week of the month. What happens in the first month of the religious calendar in Israel, if you think about your feast schedule? This is going to be the month of Nisan, Passover on the 14th, and then you have the

Feast of Unleavened Bread, and so on.

So if Daniel began this 21 day fast, and if you look at verse 4, it's the 24th day of the first month. So this is 10 days after Passover, three days after the Feast of Unleavened Bread has concluded. So if he's been fasting for three weeks, he basically fasted through the Passover.

It doesn't mean that he ate nothing, but he ate nothing special, no dainties, no dainty meats or wine came into his mouth, and he may have even just done a spiritual Passover. You know, of course, that it's difficult to observe that when there's no temple and the Passover lambs and so on. But we also know that this is after the first trickling back to the land of people like Nehemiah and Ezra, and Daniel is still in or near the capital city here.

He's going to tell us that he's by the Hittikal River, which is basically the Tigris, and he's in the Tigris-Euphrates area, and so he has not gone back to the land. He's not by the brook Kidron, he's not looking over the temple. So given his age, given his assignment in the government, it seems to be God's plan and will for him that he remain even as these other captives have returned.

And he had anticipated their return, this actually a couple of years earlier was the first wave of returning captives to the land. So it's been a couple of years, and Daniel is concerned about them. We saw that in the last chapter.

But by now the altar has been set up and the foundation of the temple has been laid. This would be Ezra chapter 3, and we'll be looking at the Ezra-Nehemiah complex as we finish Daniel, because this is now our timing. So he's concerned about current events, he's concerned about the people of God, he's concerned about the plan and program that God has in the earth in general, and through his people Israel in particular, right? This is what we've seen in these last several chapters.

And so God explained to him in chapter 9 the vision of the 70 weeks, and he said, I know you're anticipating the end of the 70 years, but you've got to take a longer view. Because it's like Jesus says in Matthew 24, even when you see all of these symptoms and signs and birth pangs, the end is not yet. Remember that phrase? Jesus says, the end is not yet.

And this is essentially the message to Daniel. And it's a useful thing to observe for us, I think, because we confront circumstances, we get into situations, and many times they seem to be of a crisis nature, urgent nature, very pressing, weighing on us because loved ones are involved or finances are involved or our immediate future is involved, decisions need to be made, priorities need to be set. And we're looking for a resolution in what we can see directly out our windshield, right in front of the car.

We're not thinking about the long road trip. We just want to make sure we don't run into something in the immediate light of our headlights. And so often in scripture we are encouraged to slow down and take a breath and take the long view.

It's one thing to hear that, it's one thing to say that, it's one thing to receive the encouragement to do that, but how do we actually calm ourselves and not be preoccupied with the here and now and the immediate future? Well, we have a great example here with Daniel because first thing he does is establish spiritual things as his priority. And I'm sure that he's getting correspondence. You can imagine these people have gone back to the land.

Daniel is the highest placed Israelite in the government. And as these people have returned, if you don't think that they're having problems and that letters and messages are coming back to Daniel, his inbox is probably full and overflowing as their foundation. I would not be at all surprised when we get to the future and get to ask that Ezra and Nehemiah both perhaps in the early days and years were in contact with Daniel.

How could they not? He's highly placed in the government. He's got influence. He has found favor and can get things done.

You always look for a friend that can help you out. I was told that somebody I know was in the tag office, and I thought, well, it'd be nice to find them when I'm trying to get all of these vehicles' titles changed and tags changed and driver's license and the rest of it. Anybody can do it, but it's nice to have a friend who will have a little more sympathy and a little more interest in your case.

So with all of this going on, what does Daniel do? Is he down at his office 12 or 14 hours a day? He takes three weeks at the beginning of the year during the Passover season, which is the beginning of the feast cycle. He has just gotten, well, he hasn't just gotten, we have just seen in the previous chapter the vision of the 70 weeks. And so he is sensitive to the information in that vision, which is God has got a timetable and there are 70 weeks of years.

Well, each year begins with Passover. That's the first, it's like New Year's Day. In Israel, they didn't drop the ball in Times Square, they sacrificed the Passover lamb.

This is where the religious calendar began. So what do we conclude from all of this? God responds in a remarkable and miraculous way, and in an unprecedented way in this chapter. Daniel has interpreted the dreams of others, he has received visions himself, he has had angelic communication in the past, but something new and something of a higher order happens in this chapter.

Why? And by the way, if you remember last week, Daniel understands this one because he has digested and learned from all of the previous divine revelations in addition to his study of the book of Jeremiah and his three times a day prayer life before God. And this is why he is a man greatly beloved. And this is why he is going to receive the information from the messengers who appear here in this chapter.

So we know the setting now, and by the way, what would the timing be for the 70 years? If this is somewhere in the 550's realm, then the 70 years starting from 605, the first incursion of

Nebuchadnezzar would be about to expire. And this is where I'm a little bit confused because when I look at the third year of Cyrus, I get 556, but other scholars seem to think that this was later, and that Daniel figures that this return, the first return, is the end of the 70 years. So when Ezra and Nehemiah, two years earlier, when they begin to go back, Daniel says, okay, the 70 years are up, but that 70 years was figured from 605.

So the dating, according to these guys, is down closer to 535 B.C. So there's, and it's very difficult to untangle, nobody was there, and by the way, it's kind of like if you ever find a coin and it says 350 B.C. on it, you immediately know it's a fake, right? Because nobody knew they were living in the years B.C., and so everything is dated from the reign of so-and-so, and they're cross-referencing Egyptian chronologies and ancient sources, and there is a lot of scholarly disagreement. Here's what I'm going to say. I am going to say that we are in the vicinity of 535 B.C., and it's been 70 years since Daniel and his friends were taken captive, which means he's probably about 85.

He's in his late 80s at this point, between 85 and 90 years of age. If he was a young teenager, a young noble, capable and susceptible to training in the first chapter of Daniel with his friends, he's quite elderly. This could be another reason he didn't go back with the returning captives two years earlier.

So remember we were talking about, at some length, the decrees, going forth of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, trying to figure out which decree is that. There were four possible candidates, and we chose number five, remember that? And what was our big idea, at least I suggested an application of that, that we have to be careful about making assumptions, and it's happened in our own lifetime. Everybody saw Israel become a nation again in 1948.

Jesus said, the generation will not pass away until these things are fulfilled. So everybody said, well, biblical generation is 40 years, so Jesus will return no later than 1988. I lived through that.

There was a pastor, every Sunday we had the TV on, and Pastor Pack was on there, and he would talk about how close the time is. This was in the 70s. He said, we've only got a few years here, and make the most of it.

We're all going to be gone by 88. Then there was a guy that wrote that book I told you about, 1985, and I've got that one up on my, maybe it's 1995, 1995, that big two and a half inch thick book. And so Daniel himself may have done this fasting.

Here's my whole point. He may have been figuring, well, hey, Jeremiah said 70 years, it's been 70 years, I've been a captive for 70 years, so I want to know what God's plan and purpose is at this point. I'm concerned for the land, I'm concerned for the people, I'm concerned for the temple.

All of the things that they've been patiently waiting for, here are the early signs. Well, it's real interesting, and this is my whole first point, so hopefully I've laid enough of the foundation that

it'll look to you the way it looks to me. So Daniel is thinking, okay, God's timing, I know my Bible, 70 years, here I am, I'm 85 or 90, I've spent the 70 years in the land, there are people back in the land, they've laid the foundation of the temple, they've built the altar, okay, it's time for things to start happening.

And what he didn't, perhaps, and apologies to Daniel if he had this figured out and I don't know it, but this three weeks of fasting and prayer and mourning, I think he was starting to get the reports back now after two years that things aren't really going well in the land. If you've read Nehemiah, you know all the warfare and the trowel in one hand, the sword in the other, and infighting and bickering, and the governor, this and the, it just reminds me when the Republicans had the presidency, the House, and the Senate, and they just imploded and couldn't get anything done. You know, here, remember the contract with America and the Newt Gingrich and all that, and they thought, okay, the good guys have got all the pieces of government here, they got a majority in the Supreme Court, everything's set up, and it was a complete fiasco.

They didn't get anything done, and the whole confederation fell apart. Well, this is starting to happen in Jerusalem, and reports are coming back to Daniel. I would suggest this is perhaps why he's mourning, why he's going to God, why he's looking for an answer.

We look around today and we think, you know, everything's going to Hades in a handbasket, and it doesn't seem to matter what people of faith try to do, the forces of evil and darkness are all around us. So think about this, though. If Daniel carefully studied his scriptures, and he's going to get some additional information here that is going to help him draw this conclusion, how long is the judgment that God pronounced through Jeremiah? 70 years.

When is the beginning of that 70 years? Not 605, and not 597, because if you read it closely, it says that Jerusalem and the temple are going to get this judgment for 70 years. When do those get utterly sacked and fall? 586, 585, 587, somewhere in that range. You'll see all three dates.

But let's say 586, because that's what I learned back in the ancient day. Well, how long, if he's sitting in 535, 536, he's thinking the 70 years is up, but there's another 20 years to run, right? The earliest people expecting the 70 weeks prophecy that Daniel is going to author, the same thing Daniel is looking at Jeremiah's prophecy, and potentially he's 20 years off, because misread the starting clock. And a lot of people in the land did.

And they're sort of trying to get things done in Jerusalem and at the temple that are going to meet with great hardship and resistance because they're too early. It's too soon, right? The judgment started in 586, and it's going to run until 516. And so, Nehemiah and Ezra and that whole crowd, they have no end of difficulty.

People always go to those books and say, well, here's how to get things done. No, here's how to be frustrated and be out of sync, in my view, with the plan and purpose of God. And we'll see this when we cover Ezra and Nehemiah here very shortly.

So, what I'm suggesting is this. I say all of that to say this. Misreading the start of Jeremiah's 70 years, I'm going to suggest to you, led to 20 years of frustration, because they're not actually going to get this thing done for a couple of decades after they start, because God's clock did not run out until around 516.

And that, coincidentally, is right around the time that you lose Artaxerxes Longimanus, and they're kind of on their own. That was the expiration of the seven sevens, remember that, the 49 years? That's the first point. Daniel himself has put down on paper the revelation God gave him through Gabriel of the 70 weeks of years.

And people misreading that were looking for the Messiah all over the place before Jesus actually came. And even when he did come, if we're right about Esther's, Mordecai's day, and that Xerxes and his decree that gave them sovereignty and the right of self-determination and the ability to truly hold onto what they had in the land and be back to a semi-sovereign nation, figuring forward from that, you'd say, okay, well, it ought to be around A.D. 11 or so, A.D. 10, somewhere in there, the time when Jesus is 12 years old and goes to the temple. And if you figured that out, you'd still be 20 years early, almost exactly, from when the Lord Jesus is going to have his public ministry and go to the cross.

So, God gives us these times, but you really have to be careful about figuring them. The Lord did not come back in 1988, and you think, well, and so then people started fudging. They said, well, see, they became a state in 48 with the Balfour Declaration and all that, but they actually didn't take Jerusalem back until the 67 War.

So 40 years from 1967 is 2007. So everybody started cutting holes in sheets and standing out waiting for the rapture in 2007. And then they said, well, actually, it was the 73 War, and so that got you to 2013.

Well, you know. The general point here of application, I would suggest, is God knows the timetable. God knows the timing.

And He reveals some of that to us. But the big idea in God's timing is our knowledge that He's got the calendar. He has got the weeks figured out.

He's got the years figured out. He is taking the long view. The reason this is so important to establish, and we've spent a couple of weeks establishing it, is that if we are going to have the mind of Christ, if we are going to live and function in the plan of God, we have to constantly bring ourselves back to the long view.

Don't get sidetracked or tripped up or caused to stumble by what is in the immediate future. We can get so wrapped up in who's attacking us while we're trying to build a wall. I keep hearing messages, Daniel says, from all of these returning Israelites, and they're having all kinds of trouble.

I'm going to go to the Lord and find out what it is. What has God said in Daniel 9? What is He

saying again in chapter 10? There is a bigger picture. There is a longer view.

Now, to confirm that idea, look at verse 7. I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, the other men who were with him didn't. You remember how in vision he was at the river Ulai, and we knew it was a vision because he could have been on a trip, but it really sounded like he was there in vision. We know that he is actually at the Hiddekel River here because other people are with him and they flee.

He didn't have other people with him fleeing from the river Ulai, but this is a clue that he actually is still in the land of captivity. Great terror fell on them. They fled to hide themselves.

I was left alone when I saw this great vision. No strength remained in me. If you count and observe carefully, Daniel is going to be strengthened three different times before he finally gets this information.

Three times he has to be strengthened. I will let you review mentally at your leisure the significance of that three times. Jesus in the garden, could you not wait with me one hour? Three times.

There is a three-fold test. There is a three-fold opportunity for strengthening. The hand touches him in verse 10.

O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you and stand upright. I have now been sent to you. So he stands trembling.

Then we get this information about the 21-day delay. I was sent to you as soon as you started your appeal, but I didn't get here for three solid weeks. Now, here's my question to you.

It reminds me, parenthetically, of a panel call that I had today. I had an appointment. I was supposed to be there a certain time.

I was unavoidably detained. I, to no fault of my own, could not leave when I was supposed to leave. I was delayed a half an hour.

Patty called and said, Sam's been unavoidably delayed. He'll be there a half hour late. Fine.

No problem. No big deal. So when I got there, you know your human instinct is to explain, to elaborate, to apologize, to get the person to understand.

I really, really could have and would have been here. I need you to understand the horrendous things that happened that made it. When you're a plebe at the Naval Academy and when you're a Marine at Quantico, that gets trained out of you.

You just don't make excuses. You either get there when you're supposed to be there or get somebody else to make your apologies, but don't go on about, oh, you know, I would have, could have, should have, but please empathize and sympathize. I think the angels are this way.

I imagine that God has detailed angels all over the place, and when they go somewhere to deliver a message, if they get detained, they're not going to make a bunch of excuses. They're just going to say, hello there, Daniel. You've been praying for three weeks.

Here I am with your answer, and you just go forward. There may have been all kinds of angelic delays in the past and in the future, but this one gets explained, and I ask myself, why is Daniel let in on this delay? Is the angel just apologizing? You really didn't have to pray and fast three weeks. I'm real sorry about that.

You went to all that trouble for nothing. I would have been here on the first day, but here was this big old hairy-legged angel from the opposition that stopped me, and I had to get help, and you start whining. That just does not sound angelic to me.

It certainly goes against the training that I've received. You do your job, and if you do it as well as you can, you do it as quick as you can, as timely as you can, but you don't make a lot of excuses. He gets a very detailed account of why the angel didn't come for three weeks, and I ask myself, why? And why is it in the Word of God? Even if he explained it to Daniel, if it wasn't important to us, Daniel could have just left it out.

Three weeks later, here comes the angel, here's the message, but it's set down for us in copious detail. Why do you think that is? Well, here's what I think. It's about time.

Time is weird in the heavenly realms, and we see it in the explanation here. One thing that this does, think about the result. This is an English major thing.

Any time an author does something out of the ordinary, or their characters do something out of the ordinary in a narrative, any time in the Word of God, something kind of sticks out sideways, and it doesn't lay down and conform. It's a clue, and you ask yourself, what is the purpose of that? Why is that happening? And to explain this delay gives us all of this information about what's going on in the angelic realm. Here is, for those of you who have ever heard the term angelic conflict, this is where it comes from.

This paragraph in this chapter in the Word of God is where the term angelic conflict comes from. There is opposition, and there is warfare amongst the principalities and the powers and the rulers, both of light and of darkness, and they apparently are fairly evenly matched, because sometimes the good guys can't get their stuff done. I find this hugely comforting, hugely comforting.

It should be comforting to all of us, and here's why. If the angels of God, in their unfallen beatific perfection, can't get their stuff done because of Satan and the fallen angels, if I am having trouble getting my stuff done, I don't have to immediately start assuming that I have fallen into error and sin and I'm being judged by God. I may be a good guy.

I may be doing everything I'm supposed to do, and we do our gut check when we start getting opposition. We say, well, is this a wakeup? Is God ringing a little alarm bell saying, hey, pay

attention? And I look and I say, no, I'm hitting my marks. I'm on time to formation.

My uniform is right. I did what I was supposed to do. I learned what I was supposed to know, and yet I'm still really in the soup here.

If the unfallen glorified angels of God get in the soup, and it takes them three weeks to crawl out, then we don't have to always assume that we are wrong or goofing or in trouble when we hit opposition. That's the first point. You can be doing everything right and hit incredible, weeks-long opposition, and it is evidently by the purpose and design of God that it happens.

How do I know that? Do you not think that when this angel was dispatched from the heavenly courts to give Daniel a message, that God in His omnipotence could have carved a giant path through time and space, or could have teleported this angel directly into Daniel's presence with no intermediate friction of any kind? Is God capable of doing that? Is God stronger than Satan and the fallen angels? There is your question. Is He greater than, and could He, with a thought, instantly eliminate all of them? Of course He could. At the point that Satan said, about the time he got to his first, I will, and sinned in his heart in the eternal past, Satan looks around and says, you know, I will, poof, and he's gone.

God could have vaporized him, but God let him do the first I will and the second I will, and all five of the I wills. I will raise my throne above the stars of God. I will be like the Most High, and God did not remove him.

God decided to use him. The reason He has been made the God of this world is that God uses Him. He is useful.

And evidently, and interestingly, He and His minions are useful, not only in teaching us and giving us opportunities to exercise faith and apply the Word of God, and learn and grow in grace and knowledge, but God is using Satan and the opposition angels to teach His unfallen angels. They are learning. We know they stoop down to look at what's going on here, and women have a head covering because of the angels, and they are learning.

God has them involved. They are participating, and God lets them hit the same kind of opposition that we hit. So I just think that's very comforting.

It's encouraging that we're going to have a lot to talk about with the angels. We could say, well, you know, when I was fighting my fight with the angels, I was trying to send nature and flesh and the devil and the world and all of these things, and the angels say, well, let me tell you about the time I tried to go deliver a message to... I mean, how many times has Gabriel been thwarted? Did he have to leave early to go see Mary? We don't know, but these angels have got a whole history. They'll be a whole other testament of the Bible that is their story.

They are learning. And by the way, when we graduate out of this life and we are perfected and sanctified and have resurrection bodies like the Lord Jesus Himself and move into the next phase of service and opportunity as members of the family of God, don't think it's going to be

sitting on a cloud eating bonbons and that everybody will be happy over there. We will learn.

This is why there are vague references to things like healing in the book of Revelation after the kingdom of the Father comes in. The leaves of the tree of life are for the healing of the nation. Why do they need healing? There are still going to be some opportunities to learn and to grow and to serve.

So that's the first observation. The second observation from this story of the delay, look at what he says. The prince in verse 13, he says, I've come because of your words.

I would have been here sooner, but verse 13, the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me 21 days and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes came to help me for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. Now, how many kings of Persia are there? How did this chapter begin? I belabored it at some length. Who's the king of Persia? Cyrus.

How many Cyrus's are there? Just one. And these angelic beings are called princes, right? The prince of Persia was contending and Michael, the chief prince, he's a mighty prince, he came and helped me and I had been left alone there. That left alone, by the way, is a real interesting Hebrew verb.

It doesn't mean to be left alone or to be left behind or to be left. This is leftover. This is what happened when they took up the baskets of fragments when Jesus fed the 5,000 and the 4,000.

There were all of these fragments and this is what was leftover. He says, I was leftover. I was superfluous.

I was extra. I was excess is what it really means. He came to help me and you could almost put this at the beginning of verse 14.

Michael, one of the chief princes came to help me, period, and I being now excess, superfluous, no longer needed with the kings of Persia have come to complete my mission. Once Michael showed up he took care of that deal and I was free. I was not needed for that effort.

I was superfluous. I was supernumerary and so I am now free to come do my primary mission. It's another way to understand that text.

It says, Now I have come to make you understand. But kings, plural of Persia. So I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days for the vision refers to many days yet to come.

When he had spoken such words to me I turned my face to the ground. He gets strengthened again and down in verse 19 he says, Fear not, peace to you. Be strong, be strong.

Let the Lord speak. You've strengthened me. He says in verse 20, Do you know why I have come to you? Now we left off that story come to make you understand in verse 14.

Then he goes through all this weakness and strengthening and all that. Now we're down to verse 20. Do you know why I've come to you? So Daniel having sort of fainted and been restored now a total of three times he says, Now are you back on the same page? Can I proceed with the story? Do you know where we are? He reviews.

Do you know why I've come to you? Now I must return and we're back to this back story. I must return to fight with the prince of Persia and when I have gone forth indeed the prince of Greece will come. Now why do we even know anything about Greece? I thought we're in Persia.

Remember you've got Babylon, you've got the Medo-Persians, then you've got the Greeks, then you've got the Romans and the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and all the rest of it. Remember the goat and the horns and the ram and all of that and we saw Persia and Greece fighting against each other a couple of chapters ago. Remember that? Why has he had to go fight the prince of Greece? The prince of Greece is going to come.

I said a few minutes back time works weirdly. The angels are both in time and beyond time. They live in God's realm outside of time.

God is the Alpha and the Omega. He knows the end from the beginning. He's already in the future.

He is still back in the past. Names are written in the book of life before the foundation of the world. The lamb is slain before the foundation of the world.

The Lord Jesus is the lamb that was slain. You read Peter and you read Revelation. He is the lamb slain before the foundation of the world.

How does that happen? I thought he was slain at the cross and that was well after the foundation of the world. Time is of a different quality and nature. Why does it say kings of Persia here? This is all the answer to that question.

Because these angels are not just dealing with Cyrus in the here and now. The kings of Persia, and you can get this out of Wikipedia, start with Cyrus the Great. If you go by Wiki's dates, and this is where there is a difference with the biblical scholars and why I gave you starting in 559 and going down to 530 B.C. Cyrus the Great is there for nearly 30 years.

Then comes Cambyses, he's there for 8 years. Then there is Bardia or Gautama, and he's there for a really short time. He claims the throne and gets assassinated immediately in 522.

Then Darius I, and he goes for 40 odd years, almost 40 years. He's in here 522 to 486. Then you have Xerxes of Esther fame.

These angels evidently, these princes, are contending with the kings of Persia. They're dealing with the whole line. They're dealing with time from above and outside of time.

The kings of Persia are human. The princes assigned to those nations, the prince of Persia and

the prince of Greece and the mighty prince, Michael, they are assigned to oppose and contend with these that are trying to affect the course of history in these nations and empires. So here's the answer to my original question.

Why do we have this long account? Why are we given the excuse of why it took so long to get the answer? There is a larger conflict than just us against the world, us against the forces of darkness. God's angels are also contending. This is why Paul says we wrestle not against principalities and powers, against flesh and blood, but against those, against the rulers of the darkness of this age.

We have to remember, and the Bible tells us, and this section of Daniel emphasizes, we are part of something a lot bigger than just immediate history or even our own national history. We are linked by our relationship with God, with the world of the angels and with the world of God himself that is outside this planet and outside our linear perception of time. And to remember that, we have to remember that we are the children of a God who is so big and so vast and has such a large program, an exhaustive program, a comprehensive program that incorporates not just everybody in the human race that has ever lived, past, present, and future, and comprehends them all at the same time.

That's why names are written in the book of life before the foundation of the world. Because we are like a, I saw one of these at the, when I'm trying to, let me finish my sentence. We are like one of these sand toys that you set on a desk.

I saw one at the Grand Canyon Museum. Have you seen those? A guy, I looked it up, a guy made these in his garage and then patented it and then started getting them manufactured. But he got these different colors of sand and they're in a flat type of thing made out of plexiglass or glass or something and they're thin.

And so it looks like a sand dune with a sky and clouds and it's all different colors of sand. And then you flip the thing and there's glycerin and water in some proprietary concoction. Anyway, it takes like a half an hour for this thing to resort the sand and no two times does it make the same picture.

Well, you could imagine human history as one of those, sitting on a big dais at the front of an auditorium full of God's angels. And they are looking at it in a way that we cannot. We're trapped inside.

We're just sand in the hourglass, so is the days of our lives, right? They see it from a completely different perspective. They can enter into it. They can come and intrude.

God can speak and we can hear His voice but not see Him. The Holy Spirit can act in and through. The angels can interact in a momentary fashion.

But there is a ladder, angels ascending and descending because they are going to a realm that we're not a part of. It is hard to remember all of that when a crisis hits, when things go wrong,

when we are challenged, when our faith is stretched in whatever way, relationships, logistics, whatever it might be, health. So what do we do? We've seen already Daniel's intensive preparation and prayer and focus on the understanding he had of God's plans and purposes.

That we need to do. So secondly, we need to be constantly aware, and this passage reminds us, that there is more going on than just us. And if there is a delay in provision, if there is a delay in healing, if there is a delay in progress, if there is a delay in restoration, in reconciliation, whatever it might be, God builds these delays in even for His own unfallen angels.

Because it is good for them in ways that we can't currently comprehend. But we will soon enter into when we move into their realm and their type of existence at death or the rapture. How handy is it for us to see this and begin to understand it so that it doesn't blind sight us when we go to glory.

It's an interesting question to ask, you know, where are those believers who have already checked out? Where is my grandmother? Where is my dad? Where is my husband? Where is my loved one who has departed? Well, it's a really difficult question to answer and that's why the answers are so vague in scripture. Paul says, well, absent from the body, face to face with the Lord. Well, the Lord where? The Lord in the past? The Lord in the present? The Lord in the future? As soon as we exit this time and we're not a golf ball rolling down a tube, we enter in a whole different kind of existence.

If the dead in Christ rise at the coming of Christ, well, that's future. But maybe it's not future to them. We just have to remember that there is so much big stuff going on that our tiny earthworm limited consciousness can't understand, therefore we trust.

What is Daniel going to ultimately do? He goes to God in faith. He goes to God in prayer and he goes to God trusting. And God responds to that seeking heart and that trusting soul with the information that he needs.

And he says, Daniel, don't fret yourself about your people. Don't fret yourself about the temple. Don't fret yourself about the city.

Don't fret yourself as you get these reports coming back in. Look at the plan and program. There are going to be plenty of short-term tribulations.

There's going to be this Antichrist that is going to come in, the Mashiah who will come. His people are going to, this city everybody is trying to rebuild. It will finally get rebuilt in troublesome times.

And then it's going to get knocked down again. You've got to take the long view. Anything that you build and anything that you try to put together and prop up here is going to fall apart over time.

But beyond that is the victory in God, the eternality that is ours through Christ, through he who

shall come. There are two he's who shall come. There's Christ and the Antichrist.

And through one is salvation and deliverance. And at the end of the book of Daniel, remember we've got a wonderful reminder that many who sleep in the dust of the earth are going to awake. And the point is, what are you going to awake to? So if we're sensitive now, and God encourages us through Daniel to be sensitive to the big picture and have some perspective on our circumstances and our lives because, and just flip over to the end, flip over to Daniel, Daniel chapter 12.

And we can legitimately do so because what's the fourth word in Daniel chapter 12? Michael. Michael is back. Michael is back.

At that time Michael shall stand up. The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people. We get some information we don't have back in chapter 10.

We know he's a great prince. But he is Israel's prince. He's Israel's angelic guardian angel if you will.

He will stand up. There will be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation. And at that time your people will be delivered.

Everyone who is found written in the book. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake. Some to everlasting life.

Some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise are going to shine like the brightness of the firmament. And those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.

Notice he doesn't say those who successfully negotiated all of their circumstance tests. Those who successfully made sure they saved money and didn't go into debt and kept their house clean the whole time and kept their cars running and never were late to work. What is the criteria that we should be looking at as we take this step back and try to gain this larger perspective? Success is going to be found when we wake up out of the dust.

Success is going to be found not in our accomplishments in this life. Not even in how successfully we negotiated various circumstance challenges. It is wisdom.

Do we learn? Why does God let his unfallen angels get opposed? Wisdom is wisdom. They are learning. They are becoming wise.

They have observation. Do you think an unfallen angel having observed all of the destruction and woe that has come through Satan and the fallen angels, if God had just winked them out of existence before they ever did anything, the unfallen angels would say, well, I wonder what that was. Lucifer was standing there one minute and he's gone the next.

I wonder what that was about. But by God allowing these things into their lives and into ours,

we learn. We become wise.

We know the consequences. We have seen it firsthand. We know what it is to be opposed.

We know what it is to push through. And we know most of all what it is to trust and rely on God and see the expressions of his love and his grace, knowing that all things work together for good to those who love him back, who recognize the calling and pursue that. Those who are wise are going to shine like the brightness of the firmament.

And that goes back, it's kind of a big chiasm. We're going to shine like stars in the sky. What was in the sky when God built the universe? Remember when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy when God first started this whole thing off? We're going to be at the end doing the very same thing.

We can shine like those stars. We can shout for joy. We can sing together at the work of God because we have been through this intermediate opposition.

So again, we're taking a little bit of an alternate view. We've done the book of Daniel and looked at the content of the prophecies, but the form here and the way that it is delivered and the incidental information seems to me to be so important. How do we prioritize? How do we conduct ourselves knowing who we are and why we're here, knowing that God has a plan and program, and how do we actually do that? Being aware that we need to do it, how do we actually do it? And Daniel's example is so helpful because he invests the time and effort and he waits.

Those who wait on the Lord will do what? Renew their strength, mount up with wings like eagles, run and not be weary, walk and not faint. And by the way, another thing you can ask yourself about that particular verse, if I could mount up with wings as an eagle, I really wanted to. When we were at the Grand Canyon, I thought, boy, to be an eagle, that's the way to see this thing.

Get the chopper to her. But if you could mount up with wings as eagles, why would you ever want to run or walk? If you mount up with wings as eagles, just fly. I got that suggestion earlier today.

I need to get my daughter up here right after class. Well, why don't you just fly her? We've got to roll her over the ground for various reasons. We've got to roll down there and roll back right after this.

If you could mount up with wings as eagles, why doesn't the verse just end there? They wait on the Lord, mount up with wings as eagles. Because sometimes it is better to run than to fly. And sometimes you have to walk instead of running or flying.

And God is with us in all of those circumstances. Why? Because you gain wisdom on the ground that you don't get in the air. You gain wisdom in the air that you can't get on the ground.

And God puts us through all of those in His time and in His season, in His way, for His purposes. And we just have to trust Him that He knows what He's doing. And with that trust comes rest.

And we don't go faint. Daniel gets faint in the face of this truth that's revealed to him, but what does God do? Three times. Puts a hand on him and strengthens him.

Puts a hand on him and lifts him onto his feet. Puts a hand on him and tells him he's greatly beloved. All of that encouragement, all of that example precedes the content of the actual vision itself.

And I think it kind of gets lost sometimes. But what a tremendous reassurance from God in heaven. It is as good as an angelic visitation to us.

Because the same things are true exponentially. Because we are in Christ. We are His body.

We belong uniquely to Him. And so all of these things are true and then some for us. Well, let's close here in a word of prayer and we'll be looking toward Daniel chapter 11 next time.

Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You for the comfort and encouragement that You convey to our souls through Your own Holy Spirit. We have surpassed the days of the Old Testament where in visions and dreams and in angelic visitations Your truth would be revealed.

It comes to us directly, ministered to our hearts through Your Spirit. We thank You for that. We thank You for the Lord Jesus who has conferred these tremendous privileges on us.

We pray that we can be worthy of them, that we can exploit them and see their potential and live in the light of them so that our lives reflect Your glory and the glory of our Savior. We ask it in His name. Amen.