

Focus on Prophecy GUIDE 7



God Walks on Earth

- **After Ruthie Turner began working as a maid at a Chesapeake Bay mansion, it didn't take her long to realize that the lady of the house had serious problems.**
- **Treena had been going downhill for years and was suffering emotionally. In the meantime, only a high daily dose of Valium kept her going.**
- **But Ruthie was a woman of prayer. She asked fellow believers at her tiny church to pray for Treena. Ruthie knew that everything else had failed the woman.**
- **Treena and her husband, Graham, were financially secure, but their personal lives were a struggle.**
- **They'd just taken a dream cruise around the world in a beautiful yacht, but had come home more miserable than ever.**

God Walks on Earth

- **After three months of praying, Ruthie one day found Treena screaming at the ceiling. Ruthie got up enough courage to suggest, “Why don’t you give your problems to God?”**
- **Treena took up the challenge angrily: “All right, God, if You’re so clever, You deal with my problems, because I can’t.” A week later she found herself in Ruthie’s church.**
- **She was unexpectedly moved by the worship service and began weeping.**
- **Kneeling down, she said simply, “I’m sorry, Jesus. Forgive me, Jesus.”**

God Walks on Earth

- **Back home, Treena started reading a Bible Ruthie had given her. It got late. She went to get her sleeping pills as usual. But something told her she wouldn't be needing them anymore. So she took all her drugs and poured them down the bathroom sink.**
- **A week later Graham returned to find his wife transformed. He thought her kindness and peace must have something to do with the season; it was Christmastime. But Treena's new life lasted beyond the holidays. His astonishment only grew.**
- **Graham had watched his wife slowly being destroyed over the years. But now, he said, "She was totally put back together again, and really better and more loving than any time I could remember." To Graham and Treena it seemed that God had indeed come down to Earth, entered their home, and dramatically touched their lives.**

God Walks on Earth

- **God does care about each one of us. And one of the ways He responds to us is through prayer.**
- **When you pray, you are giving God permission to act on your behalf.**
- **God doesn't force Himself upon us. He gives us a choice. Our asking unleashes the power of heaven in our personal lives.**
- **Even when we don't see the results obviously or immediately, we can rest assured that God is working with our best interests at heart.**
- **This is the great principle that Daniel chapter 10 highlights in a unique way.**

Greatly Beloved

- **Even God's prophets faced difficult times when it seemed that God was far away.**
- **"In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel. . . . The message was true, but the appointed time was long. . . In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled" (Daniel 10:1-3).**
- **Daniel was thinking about the 490-year prophecy concerning his people.**
- **He now understood that prophecy.**
- **And he was very concerned because certain forces had risen to oppose the Jews in their quest to rebuild Jerusalem and its holy temple. (You can read about this in Ezra 4 in the Old Testament.)**

Greatly Beloved

- **How did Daniel respond to this crisis? He began to pray.**
- **That had been the pattern of his life. He also fasted during this intense time of prayer.**
- **Daniel probably ate only a bit of simple food, avoiding anything that might cloud his mind as he talked with God. Verses 2, 3 tell us that Daniel did this for three full weeks! He was a man of persistence!**
- **After three weeks of praying and fasting, Daniel and some friends were walking along the banks of the Tigris River (also called the Hiddekel). They were enjoying the fresh air and sunshine.**
- **Daniel was about ninety at the time and probably went out for a daily walk whenever possible. Without warning, a bright, dazzling light cascaded down on the riverbank and enveloped Daniel and his companions in the presence of God.**
- **Daniel's friends ran in terror, looking for a place to hide. Daniel himself suddenly felt weak; his face turned deathly pale. He described his experience as a deep sleep. In this state he heard someone speaking (vss. 4-9).**

Greatly Beloved

- **Daniel says, “I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz! His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude” (vss. 5, 6).**
- **This description is similar to the description of Jesus in Revelation 1:12–16 (which we will study later in this series).**
- **John’s reaction in Revelation was quite similar to Daniel’s reaction here.**
- **Suddenly Daniel felt a hand touch him. He sank down on his hands and knees, trembling. Who wouldn’t be shaken by such an experience?**
- **He heard the one who touched him say, “O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you” (vs. 11). Daniel got to his feet and stood, still trembling.**

Greatly Beloved

- Daniel is called “greatly beloved” again in verse 19 and also in Daniel 9:23. Often friends or spouses give each other special names. They are terms of endearment that express affection. God looks on Daniel endearingly as someone greatly loved.
- But do you realize that this is exactly how God looks at you too? (See 1 John 3:1.) Your heavenly Father designed a plan of salvation because you are greatly beloved by Him. Jesus came to Earth from heaven and died for your sins because He loves you so much.
- **TO THINK ABOUT:** *How does it make you feel to know that God has a special name for you?*
- **THOUGHT QUESTION:** The angel that God sent to Daniel called him “greatly beloved,” showing the high regard in which Daniel was held in heaven. (False or True)

Unanswered Prayers

- **The angel says that Daniel's prayer was heard when He first sent it heavenward.**
- **But why, then, wasn't his prayer answered immediately?**
- **The angel said, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me" (vss. 12, 13).**

Unanswered Prayers

- **As Daniel prayed, evil angels engaged in a cosmic struggle against God's angels.**
- **These evil angels were fighting to retain control of the situation, fighting to keep influencing the people Daniel was praying about.**
- **This glimpse behind the scenes of an angelic conflict demonstrates that we do not fight merely against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against Satan, his angels, and his allies (Ephesians 6:12).**
- **Daniel's story should encourage us to persist in our prayers. We have a part to play in the cosmic struggle.**
- **Our prayers have an impact on the outcome of events.**
- **So we need to pray even when we don't see victory right away. Keep praying in faith. Keep praying because God is ultimately in control.**

Unanswered Prayers

- **Maybe you have a personal need right now.**
- **Maybe you'd like to ask for God's help.**
- **You can simply repeat the following prayer and make it your own.**
- **Father, I know You helped Daniel with his personal crisis thousands of years ago.**
- **And I believe You are still working today. Please help me now with (your personal request).**
- **Thank You for hearing and answering my prayer.**
- **In the name of Jesus. Amen.**

Unanswered Prayers

- **Gabriel then told Daniel,**
- **“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” (vs. 14).**
- **Daniel hears those familiar words once again: “I have come to make you understand.”**
- **Understand what? Understand certain key events in the last days.**
- **Daniel is to be given another view of the future.**
- **This prophetic picture covers the same ground as visions described in previous chapters.**
- **But, again, this particular picture fills in different details.**

Unanswered Prayers

- **Before we take a look at these details, described in chapters 11 and 12, we need to review a key principle from chapter 10. It's an important one.**
- **Chapter 10 describes a cosmic struggle between God and Satan.**
- **Daniel asks for help, and Satan tries to interfere with God's messengers sent to answer that prayer. It was a twenty-one-day battle! It was a kind of war.**
- **In a later lesson on the book of Revelation you'll learn about Satan's open rebellion against God and an actual war that broke out in the middle of heaven.**
- **That ancient conflict illuminates the beginning of sin in the universe. And it helps explain why Satan fights so passionately against God today.**

Unanswered Prayers

- **Satan tries hard to interfere with God's plans. He doesn't want God's help to get through to you. He desperately wants you to believe that God isn't there for you.**
- **But you must hold on tight to God's assurances. Your heavenly Father longs to come through in your hour of need, in your hour of loneliness or anger or discouragement. He wants to be by your side if you're devastated by heart disease, cancer, or AIDS.**
- **He wants to stand with you when you experience rejection or abuse. Remember that God has the last word. Christ's death on the cross makes Satan's defeat an absolute certainty.**
- **It makes the one who has faith in Jesus stronger than all the powers of the Evil One. When confronted with Christ's spotless life, with His heroic death and resurrection, Satan has no answer.**

Unanswered Prayers

- **THOUGHT QUESTION: God sent the angel Gabriel to Daniel to let him know that the Jewish captives in Babylon would soon be given the opportunity to return to Jerusalem. (False or True)**
- **Daniel was troubled because it seemed to be taking a long time for his prayers to be answered. (False or True)**

The Kings of This Prophecy

- **The final verses of chapter 10 show us the angel telling Daniel that the purpose of this angelic visit is to explain what will happen in the last days.**
- **Let's get an overview of this new prophetic picture, which runs through chapters 11 and 12. It points out events which we have looked at before.**
- **We see represented, in symbols, the empire of Medo-Persia and events associated with the empires of Greece and Rome.**
- **Also represented is the divided kingdom and the second coming of Jesus Christ.**
- **We'll examine some of the major points. One unique aspect of this particular prophetic picture is that it focuses more on details than on broad vistas.**

The Kings of This Prophecy

- **You may have wondered why God keeps covering the same ground through these different prophetic visions—with a few variations. Jesus gives a very good answer to that question in John 14:29.**
- **“And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe.”**
- **In other words, the fulfillment of prophecy helps us develop a trust in God. So God wants to make His prophetic pictures stand out. He wants to show us His grasp of the future clearly.**
- **So He goes over key events in various ways, each time giving us more details about those events.**
- **Our faith in God can be built on strong evidence, not just on what someone tells us to believe.**
- **That’s why God shows us these details about history and about the future.**

The Kings of This Prophecy

- **Gabriel continued to help Daniel understand the vision, pointing out that it focused on the kingdoms of Persia and Greece.**
- **He said, “Behold, three more kings will arise in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than them all; by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece” (Daniel 11:2).**
- **The historical record demonstrates that the four kings mentioned in these verses were:**
 - **Cambyses (530-522 B.C.).**
 - **False Smerdis (522 B.C.).**
 - **Darius I (522-486 B.C.).**
 - **Xerxes (486-465 B.C.).**
- **Just as verse 2 indicates, King Xerxes spent four years stockpiling weapons and gathering an army.**
- **His armies marched into Greece, but were soundly defeated.**

The Kings of This Prophecy

- **Gabriel had this to say about the king who would overthrow Medo-Persia:**
- **“Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.**
- **And when he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken up and divided toward the four winds of heaven . . . for his kingdom shall be uprooted” (vss. 3, 4).**
- **The Greeks were thrilled by this general/king who led them to victory over the powerful Persian Empire.**
- **The future looked bright for thirty-two-year-old Alexander.**
- **But just as he was rebuilding the capital of his new empire, he became ill and died.**
- **Alexander was survived by a son, born after his death, and a half brother, Philip.**
- **Alexander’s generals eliminated the son and brother and divided the kingdom among themselves.**
- **As the Bible suggests in verse 4, the Greek kingdom was sliced into four parts (the four winds)—Cassander took the west; Lysimachus took the north; Seleucus the east; and Ptolemy the south.**

The Kings of This Prophecy

- The terms “King of the South” and “King of the North” appear often in chapter 11. In this instance they refer to those who presided over the divided territory of Greece.
- The King of the South, Ptolemy, ruled in Egypt. The King of the North refers to Seleucus, who overthrew his rival generals. His territory changed as various battles raged, but at its greatest extent it spread from the Aegean Sea to India.
- All the kings of Egypt (the South) carried the name Ptolemy. All the kings of the North carried the name of either Seleucus or Antiochus.
- In history books they are differentiated either by a number attached to their name or by a second name which they or the people they ruled assigned them.
- Daniel 11 describes the rise and fall of these rulers and certain details surrounding their lives.
- One human interest story in particular shows what extraordinary detail God revealed about the future.

The Kings of This Prophecy

READ DANIEL 11:6.

- **About 250 B.C. King Ptolemy of Egypt and King Antiochus of Syria attempted to guarantee peace between their two countries by having King Antiochus marry Berenice, the daughter of King Ptolemy.**
- **“At the end of some years they shall join forces, for the daughter of the king of the South shall go to the king of the North to make an agreement” (vs. 6).**
- **There was only one problem with this arrangement—Antiochus was already married. So he divorced his wife, Laodice.**
- **The new marriage took place, and a baby boy was born. But Antiochus soon realized that he liked his first wife, Laodice, more than his new bride. After his new father-in-law (King Ptolemy) died, he divorced Berenice and took Laodice back as his wife.**

The Kings of This Prophecy

- **Laodice, however, had grown to distrust her husband, King Antiochus.**
- **Using her royal powers she hatched a plot and had Antiochus, Berenice, and Berenice's attendants and son murdered.**
- **It's quite a sordid story. But the amazing thing is this: the Bible predicted these events in detail 300 years before they occurred! And that tells us something.**
- **God looks into the future. God looks into the heart. God sees the details. He knows about every hurt you experience.**
- **He knows about your anguish when you stand by the grave of a loved one.**
- **He knows about your pain when you experience mistreatment and rejection.**
- **If you will let Him, God will reach into your innermost heart and touch you with His comfort and care.**

The Kings of This Prophecy

- **As we continue in chapter 11, we discover details concerning the empire of Rome and the battles between the King of the North and the King of the South. These details also reflect attacks made on God's people. They create yet another picture of the battle against God's people described in previous chapters (such as Daniel 7 and 8). Some of these parallel references are as follows:**
- **Verse 21: "A vile person."**
- **Verse 22: "Prince of the covenant."**
- **Verses 28, 30: "His heart shall be moved against the holy covenant;" "damage shall be done to the holy covenant."**
- **Verse 31: "Defile the sanctuary;" "take away the daily sacrifices and place there the abomination of desolation."**
- **Verse 33: some of the people shall "fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering."**
- **Verse 36 uses words similar to those we read in chapters 7 and 8 regarding the "little horn" power.**
- **According to the prophecy, the King of the North "shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done" (vs. 36).**

The Kings of This Prophecy

- **Chapter 11 comes to a dramatic climax with this final attack against God's people. But the good news is that victory is assured for God's faithful followers. All those who love Jesus will prevail.**
- **Although the King of the North would "go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many" "yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him" (vss. 44, 45).**
- **Immediately following this description, chapter 12 outlines the final events of Earth's history. As we shall see, victory in Jesus is again the theme.**
- **"At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time.**
- **And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake" (Daniel 12:1, 2).**

The Kings of This Prophecy

- **The resurrection of the dead is a certain event! Jesus came back to life when He was in the grave—that is what Easter weekend is all about. Notice that death is called a “sleep.”**
- **That means death is not permanent. It’s not permanent because God can wake us from it! He can awaken us from death as easily as a friend nudging us awake from a nap.**
- **Death is simply a brief pause before we rise up to be with Jesus forever.**
- **THOUGHT QUESTION: When Michael stands up at the end of time, the righteous dead will be raised to life. False or True)**
- **Two main players in the prophecy of Daniel 11 are the King of the North and the King of the South. (False or True)**
- **God sent the angel Gabriel to Daniel to let him know that the Jewish captives in Babylon would soon be given the opportunity to return to Jerusalem. (True or False)**

Blessed Is He Who Waits

- **Listen to these words written by Paul to the believers in Thessalonica:**
- **But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.**
- **For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.**
- **For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.**
- **For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.**
- **Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.**
- **Therefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).**

Blessed Is He Who Waits

- **What a fantastic promise! Sin and death will be no more when Jesus comes! Your loved one—that mother, father, child, or best friend that you have buried in sorrow—will be restored to your arms.**
- **You will look into that face and see again those sparkling eyes and that unique smile.**
- **You will feel the touch of his or her hand. Jesus is going to make it happen when He comes again. What a glorious day that will be!**
- **When the vision came to an end, the angel told Daniel, “Shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase” (vs. 4).**
- **The book was to be sealed until the time of the end. It was then that people would understand the prophecies (“knowledge shall increase”).**
- **In verse 6 the question is asked, “How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?” In other words, “When will these prophecies be understood and reach their fulfillment?”**

Blessed Is He Who Waits

- **And the answer was: “It shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished” (vs.7).**
- **Time, times, and half a time. We have seen this phrase before. In our study of Daniel 7:25 we learned that it referred to the 1,260-year period, the period between A.D. 538 and 1798.**
- **Daniel wanted to understand the prophecy better, but the angel told him, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.**
- **Many shall be purified and made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand” (vss. 9, 10).**

Blessed Is He Who Waits

- **Daniel was told that two prophecies must be fulfilled before God begins wrapping up the affairs on Earth. The two are:**
- **(a) the 1,290-day prophecy (vs. 11)**
- **(b) the 1,335-day prophecy (vs. 12).**
- **No beginning or ending dates are given for these prophecies. No specific events are attached to them.**
- **However, many scholars believe they parallel the periods already covered by the 1,260-year and 2,300-year prophecies.**
- **Finally, the angel said to Daniel, “Go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days” (vs. 13).**

Blessed Is He Who Waits

- **Daniel was probably frustrated about not knowing exactly what would happen. But he was a man of faith; he knew God was in control.**
- **And so I'm sure he found peace in his heart. The same God who protected him in the lions' den, the same God who'd given him remarkable visions—this God could take care of the future.**
- **Verse 12 states, "Blessed is he who waits." In other words, don't become discouraged when life gets tough and you can't sort out where you're headed.**
- **Don't become anxious because Jesus hasn't come as soon as you think He should.**
- **There is a great blessing in waiting patiently. There is a great reward in continuing to hope.**
- **TO THINK ABOUT: *What would you like to say to Jesus regarding His coming to Earth?***

Conclusion

- **A little boy running through Shantung Compound started it all. He was yelling that he'd spotted a plane in the sky. It was August 16, 1945.**
- **The American and European internees had been worn down by years of harsh treatment at the hands of their Japanese guards.**
- **But as many as could, ran out to an open field. They looked up.**
- **They spotted the plane. And then they saw an American flag painted on its side.**
- **In a daze, voices rang out, "They're waving at us! They know who we are! They've come to get us!"**

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Conclusion

- **Suddenly the underside of the plane opened up. Men jumped out and began floating down through the clouds in parachutes. Pandemonium broke out in the compound. Everyone began yelling and running toward the gate.**
- **No one thought of the armed guards. No one thought of the barbed wire. No one thought of the machine gun towers. A sea of humanity broke through the gate and poured down the road outside.**
- **As the paratroopers landed, they were surrounded by a wildly celebrating crowd. The internees picked the soldiers up on their shoulders and escorted them back into the compound.**
- **There an American officer took over, and the Japanese surrendered. The long war was finally over. Freedom had come. The world seemed brand-new.**

Conclusion

- **All those who have waited for the glorious coming of Jesus Christ will experience a similar joy. But their joy will be magnified.**
- **Their rescuer will be far more glorious as He descends from heaven. And He will usher in a new world of perfect peace. He will establish a kingdom of love that will last forever.**
- **You can be one of those who runs out to meet Him. You can be one of those who celebrates wildly when He comes.**
- **You can be one of those who is wrapped in His arms. Just place your life in His hands right now. Place your faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. And determine to keep your faith alive in the blessed hope of His soon return.**
- **Why not pray this prayer right now? God is listening and waiting.**