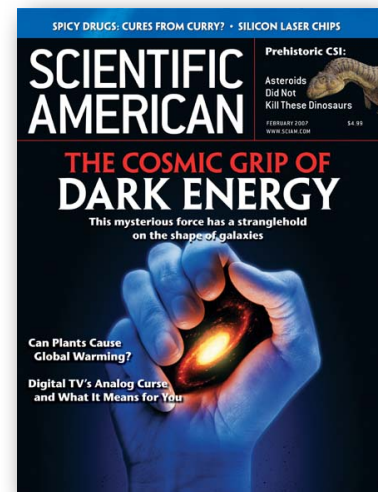


Daniel 10 - Dark Matter and Dark Energy

February 17, 2012

Good morning! I am Pastor Kurt. I want to give a special greeting to those joining us through the Internet. It is good to have you. As a church, we are studying the Old Testament book of Daniel. This morning, we are in Daniel 10. Take your Bibles and turn to Daniel 10. If you didn't bring a Bible, take one from the seat pocket in front of you, and you will find Daniel 10 on page 748.

While you are turning, I want to share what I was reading on the NASA Astrophysics web site. It concerns Dark Energy and Dark Matter. In the 1990s, one thing scientists were certain about was the rate of expansion for the universe. Then, in 1998, the Hubble Space Telescope allowed scientists to peer further into our universe and observe the edge of our galaxy. What they discovered amazed them. The rate of expansion of the universe, that they were so sure of, was wrong. Our galaxy is expanding at a much slower rate than expected. The only thing that can slow down the rate of expanse of a galaxy is the gravitational attraction of matter. Scientists did calculations to discover the amount of matter necessary to slow the rate of our galaxy's expansion down to its current rate. Then they calculated the amount of know matter in our galaxy. They discovered a problem. All known matter in our galaxy adds up to only 5 percent of the gravitational pull necessary to slow the galaxy down to its current rate of expansion. That means 95 percent of the



gravitational pull in our galaxy is coming from something we haven't seen and we can't detect.

The article went on to postulate about what scientists call Dark Matter and Dark Energy. Scientists believe there must be a massive invisible world in our galaxy that we know nothing about.¹

This morning, we are going to learn about the invisible world of Dark Matter and Dark Energy. We are not going to explore it using the Hubble Space Telescope but we will learn about it from our Bibles, specifically Daniel 10.

If you have been with us for the last few weeks, you know we are studying the book of Daniel. The first half of the book has the historical, chronological, high points of Daniel's life. The second half of the book is a collection of weird apocalyptic visions given to Daniel by God. They are really funky. Daniel was given these visions between the events that transpired in the front half of the book but they are pulled together and collected at the back end of the book.

This morning, we are looking at Daniel's final vision. Some of you are wondering why we are looking at his final vision if we are only in chapter 10 but there are 12 chapters in the book. Chapters 10-12 are all one vision. It is one of the most detailed and complex visions in the entire book. While it is complex, and it is easy to get lost in the details, if we keep to the main points, we will find these chapters incredibly encouraging. Chapter 10, the chapter we are looking at today, pulls back the curtain on the unseen spiritual world around us. It gives us a peek of this massive invisible world. Most of chapter 11 gives us a window

¹ <http://science.nasa.gov/astrophysics/focus-areas/what-is-dark-energy/>

into the near future with precise prophetic details from the time of Daniel to the time of Christ. The last parts of chapter 11 and chapter 12 give us a window into the distant future and the way the final battle against evil will unfold. There is plenty of exciting stuff in these chapters.

Background

In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar. And the word was true, and it was a great conflict. And he understood the word and had understanding of the vision. In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks. I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks. On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river (that is, the Tigris)... Daniel 10:1–4 (ESV)

All of these visions begin with a date reference. This takes place in the third year of King Cyrus. Daniel was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians when he was a 16-year-old teenager. The Medes and the Persians eventually conquered Babylon, and Daniel was kept as a leader in the new nation.

This date marker is very important. Liberal scholars tell us the prophecies of chapter 11 are too specific to be written before they happened. They claim this vision was a late addition to the book of Daniel that was added just before the time of Christ. The problem is that it makes this date marker, and all the other date markers in the apocalyptic section, flat out lies. If these date markers are not true, where do you stop crossing out material in our Bible when we don't understand it.. Science doesn't have all the answers. Scientists thought they were certain of the rate of expansion of the universe until 1998. Then they

discovered their calculations were 95 percent in error. Sometimes we have to trust our Bible by faith and over time learn it is right.

Daniel also tells us the vision is true. He is not lying. He knows the vision is really funky so he preparing us for it by telling us it is true. He wasn't on a bad drug trip. He didn't hallucinate after eating old pizza. This is a vision from God.

He also tells us it began when he was in a time of mourning. He fasted for three weeks. Incidentally, a fast doesn't necessarily mean going without food. You can fast from certain things. You don't have to abstain from all things. Daniel was fasting from delicacies like meat and wine plus he was fasting from lotions. This sounds weird but, when you think about it, it makes sense. If you look at the calendar, this is the time of the Passover. It is a time of feasting and celebration. Daniel was skipping the party.

There was a reason. In Cyrus' first year, Daniel's life-long prayer was answered. Cyrus decreed the exile was over. The Jews could return to their homeland. The exile lasted 70 years, exactly like God said it would through Jeremiah. Read Ezra and Nehemiah and you find out the problem. You have a quarter million Jews in Babylon. When they get the chance to return, less than 50,000 take up the offer. Babylon was their new home. Nobody wanted to leave.

Those that returned to rebuild found life was hard. The rubble pile was huge. The walls were destroyed. They laid the foundation of the temple but the surrounding peoples complained to Cyrus. A letter from their neighbor was sent requesting they stop building Jerusalem. As a result, the temple building project came to a screeching halt for the next 15 years.

Daniel was approximately 85 years old. He was too old to help build, so he skipped the Passover party, identified with the hard life of those rebuilding Jerusalem by adopting a lifestyle and food similar to theirs and he prayed for them. Prayer doesn't sound powerful but I think your opinion will change as we study this chapter.

The terrifying vision

I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude. And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves. So I was left alone and saw this great vision, and no strength was left in me. My radiant appearance was fearfully changed, and I retained no strength. Then I heard the sound of his words, and as I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face in deep sleep with my face to the ground. Daniel 10:5–9 (ESV)

This guy was terrifying. Daniel hits the deck WWF-style, like he was hit on the chin. He was knocked out cold.

Who is the guy in the terrifying vision? He has eyes like torches. He has the appearance of lightning. Daniel is ransacking his memory banks to try and find words to describe this amazing being. The text doesn't tell us who this is but I have a guess. I don't know for sure but I think this is a vision of the pre-incarnate Jesus.

When we read Revelation 1:12-16, it is virtually the same description we have of the risen Christ.

...and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many

waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. Revelation 1:13–18 (ESV)

Just as Jesus appeared to John to give him an apocalyptic vision about the way history would unfold for the church; Jesus appeared to Daniel to give him an apocalyptic vision about the way history would unfold for Israel.

Another thing I noticed was that Daniel's friends did not see the vision but they fled out of fear because of the supernatural spiritual encounter. This reminds me of Paul on the road to Damascus when Jesus appeared to him in Acts 9. His companions fled even though they didn't see Jesus. Paul was knocked to the ground just like Daniel.

This might be Jesus. This excites me because it reminds me that Jesus is very present in the Old Testament, just like he is in the New Testament. It is one book. One story. One Jesus.

Touched by an angel --- Daniel style

And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly loved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you." And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come." When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and was mute. And behold, one in the likeness of the children of man touched my lips. Then I opened my mouth and spoke. I said to him who stood before me, "O my lord, by reason of the vision pains have come upon me, and I retain no strength. How can my lord's servant talk with my lord? For now no

strength remains in me, and no breath is left in me.” Again one having the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me. And he said, “O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage.” And as he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, “Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.” Then he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come. But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince. Daniel 10:10–21 (ESV)

If you spend time with the scholars in this section, you find there is plenty of controversy. Is this the same incredibly powerful spiritual being we just saw or is it another angelic being? I think there is another spiritual being involved. The sight of the pre-incarnate Jesus was enough to knock Daniel out cold. This angelic being strengthens Daniel. It is a completely different reaction. I think this may be Gabriel --- that is just my opinion.

I want to use this text as a launching pad to peer into this vast unseen spiritual world around us that Daniel encounters. Beginning with this text, let's learn about it, and then we will conclude by discovering how Christ's coming changed this unseen world around us.

There are powerful spiritual beings battling in an unseen world.

The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia... Daniel 10:13 (ESV)

The Bible tells us that when Satan fell, many spiritual beings fell with him. We typically call these angelic beings demons but there is much more to this picture than we realize.

All angelic beings are not the same. The Bible talks about different kinds of angels. There are cherubim (which are guardian angels of the Garden of

Eden and God's throne), seraphim (which means burning ones that have six wings, whose role is to constantly praise God), regular angels and Revelation talks about strong angels. This implies some angels are stronger than others. In Daniel 10:13, we see some powerful angels are assigned, by Satan, to influence nations. This talks about a powerful fallen spirit that was a strong influence over the Persian empire. Daniel 10:20 talks about another powerful demon that would later come and be influential upon Alexander the Great and the Greek empire. If you have ever wondered why some countries seem so lost and evil, here is part of the explanation. There are powerful demonic beings assigned by Satan to influence them.

The messenger angel could not get to Daniel for 21 days because he was caught up in a battle with that powerful fallen spiritual being. He could not break free until Michael, who is called a chief angel, or archangel, came to his aide. Michael, is called the captain of the Lord's army. He is also called the guardian of the nation of Israel. He is a beast of an angel that is an ace-in-the-hole when it comes to angelic warfare.

How many angelic beings exist?

Revelation 5:11 gives us a glimpse of the unfallen spiritual beings.

Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands... Revelation 5:11 (ESV)

Literally there is an uncountable number. In every direction John looked, he saw angelic beings as far as he could see.

What types of angels exist?

The New Testament, which quotes rabbinic literature of the day, confirms this vast world of fallen evil spiritual beings has rank and order.

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. Colossians 1:16 (ESV)

According to the rabbinic literature of the day, thrones, dominion, rulers and authorities are different ranks and powers of angelic beings which are led by Satan to influence nations, organization and individuals. All angels and demons are not the same.

Angels and demons influence the physical world.

Again one having the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me. Daniel 10:18 (ESV)

Daniel was touched by an angels and strengthened. This is much better than a can of Red Bull at 3 p.m.

For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. Psalm 91:11 (ESV)

God commands his angels to guard our lives. In the church I served in Michigan, we had a young man serving in Afghanistan when his truck ran over an IED. What they couldn't explain is why he wasn't hurt by the shrapnel. It passed around him. God's angels were watching over him.

And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand; only spare his life." So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. Job 2:6–7 (ESV)

God can also allow demons to physically oppress us. He doesn't allow demons to do that without a purpose. They cannot do anything to us that God does not allow.

How did Christ, and the cross, change the unseen spiritual world?

On the cross, Jesus disarmed the fallen spiritual powers.

He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. Colossians 2:15 (ESV)

There seems to be something different between Daniel 10 and what happened in the New Testament. In Daniel 10 there was a real battle with powerful evil powers. After the cross, the spiritual beings opposed to God, and committed to our destruction, are disarmed and shamed by Christ. They have guns, but Jesus took all the bullets. They can threaten and scare, but ultimately they are fighting a losing battle.

Today in heaven, all spiritual beings are subjected to Jesus.

...who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him. 1 Peter 3:22 (ESV)

After the triumph of the cross, all spiritual beings opposed to God were disarmed and subjected to Jesus. Apparently there is something that happened at the cross that empowered Jesus in some way with a type of authority over fallen spiritual beings that he did not have until after the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection.

Ultimately, all spiritual beings opposed to God will be destroyed by Jesus.

Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. 1 Corinthians 15:24 (ESV)

Jesus tore the teeth out of all the powers in the demonic world. He shamed them. He humiliated them. He subjected them to his authority in a manner that wasn't true before calvary, and ultimately, according to the book of

Revelation, all he needs to do is say the word to finally destroy them by consigning them to the Lake of Fire forever.

When you think about it, our planet is just a tiny spec in a vast universe, a universe we know is teeming with powerful spiritual beings. Jesus, the one who created the entire universe, chose to pour himself fully into a human body. He united himself with flesh permanently on our tiny planet. He wrote himself into the drama of Earth's history to redeem us from sin and death. In doing so, he didn't just save us, he disarmed the fallen spiritual powers of the entire universe. 1 Peter 1:12 tells us all spiritual beings in the universe are fascinated as they watch the drama of Christ and the church play out on planet Earth. Christ's victory on calvary didn't just save us, it disarmed all of the fallen spiritual powers in the universe. It had cosmic significance.

We are engaged in the battle!

While part of my goal this morning is to stretch your thinking about the unseen spiritual world around us, another goal is to let you know how we play a role in this unseen spiritual world. As sons and daughter of Jesus, we are not just spectators of the battle. We are part of the battle. The Bible tells us that because we are identified with Christ our prayers and lives have cosmic ramifications through the power of Jesus.

For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. 2 Corinthians 10:3–4 (ESV)

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Ephesians 6:12 (ESV)

Our prayers, the holiness of our lives, our knowledge of the Bible and our salvation all enable us to engage in this great spiritual battle with authority because of our identity with Christ.

Applications

1. **We are not alone.** There is a vast unseen spiritual world around us with powerful spiritual beings trying to influence nations, peoples, cities and regions.
2. **Planet Earth is the stage of the universe.** The vast unseen spiritual world is fascinated to watch the drama of how the creator of the universe became part of our planet's story to disarm the evil authorities on the earth and in the universe.
3. **Christ's cross had cosmic ramifications.** While Christ conquered sin and death on the cross, he also disarmed and shamed the fallen spiritual powers of the universe.
4. **As brothers and sisters of Christ, we are engaged in the spiritual struggle we are guaranteed to win because of Christ.** Our prayers, purity, worship and obedience to Scripture have cosmic ramifications.

Next week, we step into chapter 11. That chapter contains some of the most precise prophecy in the Bible. Next week, you will be amazed at God's control of history and our lives. We can rest assured that nothing happens which is out of his control.



Dr. Kurt Trucksess is ordained in the EFCA. He enjoys reading, writing, time with his family and wrestling with his sons. His favorite topics of study are ancient rhetoric and preaching. Feel free to contact him at ktruck@gmail.com or visit his web at www.christ2Rculture.com

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