

The Book of Daniel, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 10: A Vision of the Glorious One; Kings of North and South

Daniel 10:1–11:35

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

Doctrinally, this section magnifies the glory and majesty of God, the reality of unseen spiritual conflict, and the meticulous sovereignty of God over history. The vision of the glorious One, so closely echoed by the appearance of the risen Christ in Revelation 1, reminds us that God is awesome in holiness, and that a true sense of His greatness is essential to humility and worship. The glimpse of the messenger withstood by the prince of Persia until Michael came opens a window onto the spiritual warfare behind the visible world, in which God's purposes advance and our prayers are caught up.

The long, detailed prophecy of chapter eleven, fulfilled in the wars of the kings of the north and south (the Seleucids and Ptolemies) and the persecution under Antiochus, displays God's sovereign control over even the smallest turns of history. This must be handled within its historical horizon. The passage is not a coded timetable of modern political events but a demonstration that nothing in the rise and fall of nations escapes God's rule. Teach students to rest in that sovereignty and to resist the newspaper exegesis that has so often distorted these chapters.

The lesson is richly formational and pastorally tender. It shows God meeting the weak, overwhelmed Daniel with the words "greatly loved" and "be strong," strengthening him precisely at the point of his frailty. And it holds up the promise that "the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action" even under fierce persecution. Aim to send students home with a larger vision of God's glory, a deeper awareness of the unseen and of the importance of prayer, fresh confidence in God's rule over their circumstances, comfort in their weakness, and resolve to stand firm in a hard age, looking finally to the victory secured in Christ.

Question 1

Student Question:

Daniel's vision of the glorious One, with face like lightning, eyes like flaming torches, and body like beryl, left him without strength (10:5–9). What does this overwhelming appearance, so like the vision of the risen Christ in Revelation 1:13–17, reveal about the glory and majesty of God? Why is a right sense of God's greatness essential to true worship and humility?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Begin with the overwhelming vision of the glorious One in verses 5 through 9: clothed in linen, belt of fine gold, body like beryl, face like lightning, eyes like flaming torches, arms and feet like

burnished bronze, voice like the sound of a multitude. The sight drained Daniel of all strength and left him face down on the ground.

Help students notice the striking parallel to Revelation 1, where the risen Christ appears to John with face like the sun, eyes like a flame of fire, feet like burnished bronze, and voice like the roar of many waters, and John falls at His feet as though dead (Revelation 1:13–17). Whether the figure in Daniel 10 is the pre-incarnate Son or a glorious angel sent in His likeness, the vision lifts our eyes to the awesome majesty of heaven.

Draw out the doctrine of God's glory and holiness. The Bible consistently shows that those who truly glimpse the glory of God are undone by it: Isaiah cried "Woe is me" (Isaiah 6:5), Job repented in dust and ashes (Job 42:5–6), Peter said "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man" (Luke 5:8). A genuine sense of God's greatness produces not casual familiarity but reverent humility.

Apply this to worship. Much modern worship suffers from a shrunken view of God, treating Him as a comfortable companion and little more. Daniel 10 corrects this. The God we worship is glorious beyond our strength to behold, and a recovered sense of His majesty is essential to true worship, deep humility, and steady awe.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The glory and majesty of God revealed in the vision of the glorious One (Daniel 10:5–9).
- The parallel with the risen Christ in glory (Revelation 1:13–17).
- The undoing of those who truly glimpse God's glory (Isaiah 6:5; Luke 5:8).
- Reverent humility as the proper response to God's greatness.
- A recovered sense of God's majesty as essential to true worship.

Discussion Prompts

- What does this overwhelming vision reveal about the glory of God?
- Why does a true sight of God's greatness produce humility, not casualness?
- How might a larger view of God's majesty reshape your worship?

Question 2

Student Question:

When confronted with God's glory, Daniel did not feel proud or self-assured but fell down emptied of strength. How does a true vision of God's greatness affect the way you see yourself? Where do you need a deeper sense of God's majesty to humble your pride or steady your fears?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question applies the vision of God's glory to the student's self-perception. Daniel, a man of remarkable courage, did not respond to God's glory with pride or self-

assurance but fell down emptied of strength. The right vision of God always corrects an inflated view of self.

Help students see the connection between a small view of God and a large view of self. When God shrinks in our minds, we naturally swell; our problems loom larger, our pride grows bolder, our fears intensify. But when God is seen in His true greatness, both our pride and our fears are put in proper proportion. He is great; we are small; and that is good news.

Show the twofold effect of God's majesty. For the proud, it humbles, exposing how small and dependent we truly are. For the fearful, it steadies, for the God who is so glorious is also the God who calls us greatly loved. A right sense of God's greatness both deflates arrogance and calms anxiety.

Move toward a concrete need. Encourage students to identify whether they most need God's majesty to humble a pride or to steady a fear, and to spend time deliberately contemplating His greatness in that area this week. The aim is the right-sizing of the self that comes from a true vision of God.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- A true vision of God correcting an inflated view of self.
- The connection between a small view of God and a large view of self.
- God's majesty humbling the proud and steadying the fearful.
- The right-sizing of the self through contemplating God's greatness.

Discussion Prompts

- How does a true vision of God's greatness affect how you see yourself?
- Do you most need God's majesty to humble a pride or steady a fear?
- How could contemplating God's greatness help you this week?

Question 3

Student Question:

The messenger reveals that he had been sent on the first day Daniel prayed, but was withstood by "the prince of the kingdom of Persia" until Michael came to help (10:12–13, 10:20). What does this teach about the unseen spiritual realities behind the visible world, and about the real conflict in which God's purposes advance (Ephesians 6:12)? Why is it important to remember this dimension without becoming preoccupied or speculative about it?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Turn to the remarkable glimpse of unseen conflict in verses 12 and 13. The messenger tells Daniel that his words were heard from the first day, and that he was dispatched at once, but that "the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days," until Michael, one of

the chief princes, came to help. Behind the visible world of Persian kings, there was an unseen struggle.

Help students grasp the reality of spiritual warfare without speculation. Scripture teaches plainly that “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). There is a dimension to reality, and to history, that is unseen, and in it God’s purposes advance against real opposition.

Note the connection to prayer. Daniel’s three weeks of prayer were bound up with this unseen conflict; the answer was on its way from the first day, even though it was delayed. This suggests that our prayers matter in ways we cannot see, that perseverance in prayer is significant, and that apparent delay is not the same as God’s inattention. Heaven was at work from day one.

Guard against two errors. The first is to ignore the unseen dimension entirely, living as practical materialists for whom only the visible is real. The second is to become preoccupied and speculative, mapping out hierarchies of demons or attributing every difficulty to direct spiritual attack. Scripture gives us enough to take the unseen seriously, and to pray and persevere, without giving us license to speculate.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The reality of unseen spiritual conflict behind the visible world (Ephesians 6:12).
- God’s purposes advancing against real opposition in the heavenly places.
- The significance of prayer and perseverance amid unseen conflict.
- Delay not equaling God’s inattention; heaven at work from the first day.
- Avoiding both practical materialism and speculative preoccupation.

Discussion Prompts

- What does this glimpse teach about the unseen realities behind our world?
- How should the reality of spiritual conflict shape our prayers?
- How do we take the unseen seriously without becoming speculative?

Question 4

Student Question:

We are tempted to live as though only the visible, material world is real. How does this glimpse of unseen spiritual conflict change the way you view your prayers, your struggles, and the importance of perseverance? Where do you need to take the spiritual dimension of your life more seriously?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-focused question presses the reality of the unseen into the student's daily life. Most of us function as practical materialists, living as though only the visible, tangible world is real and significant. Daniel 10 pulls back the curtain and reminds us that there is more going on than we can see.

Help students reconsider their prayers in this light. If there is an unseen conflict in which God's purposes advance, then prayer is not a religious formality but a real participation in spiritual realities. Apparent delays in answered prayer may reflect unseen battles, not divine indifference. This calls us to pray more seriously and to persevere when answers are slow.

Apply this to our struggles. Some of the resistance, temptation, and discouragement we face has a spiritual dimension. This does not mean blaming every hardship on direct demonic attack, but it does mean recognizing that the Christian life is a battle, that we have a real enemy, and that we need the spiritual armor and weapons God provides (Ephesians 6:10–18).

Move toward concrete seriousness. Encourage students to identify one area where they have been living as though only the material world matters, and to begin taking its spiritual dimension seriously, through prayer, Scripture, and dependence on God. The aim is a life awake to the unseen, neither materialistic nor speculative, but spiritually alert.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The temptation to live as practical materialists, ignoring the unseen.
- Prayer as real participation in spiritual realities, not mere formality.
- The Christian life as a genuine spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:10–18).
- Spiritual alertness without blaming every hardship on direct attack.

Discussion Prompts

- How does the unseen conflict change the way you view your prayers?
- Where might you be living as though only the material world is real?
- Where do you need to take the spiritual dimension more seriously?

Question 5

Student Question:

Daniel was told three times that he was "greatly loved," and he was strengthened precisely when he was weakest (10:11, 10:18–19). What does this reveal about how God meets His people in their weakness rather than despising it (2 Corinthians 12:9–10)? Why does God so often strengthen us at the very point of our frailty?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Focus on God's tender dealing with the overwhelmed Daniel. Three times he is told he is greatly loved (10:11, 10:18–19), and twice he is strengthened by a touch precisely when he has no

strength left. “O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage.” God meets Daniel’s weakness not with rebuke but with reassurance and renewed strength.

Help students see the pattern that runs through Scripture: God strengthens His people at the very point of their frailty. “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness,” the Lord told Paul, who then learned to boast in his weaknesses, that the power of Christ might rest upon him (2 Corinthians 12:9–10). God does not despise our weakness; He meets us in it.

Draw out the comfort. We often imagine that God is impatient with our fears and frailties, that we must be strong before He will help us. Daniel 10 shows the opposite. The overwhelmed, depleted, trembling saint is the very one God touches, reassures, and strengthens. Our weakness is not a barrier to His help but an occasion for it.

Apply this to the believer’s experience. There are seasons when we are emptied of strength, undone by grief, fear, or the sheer weight of life. In those seasons, God’s word to us is the same as to Daniel: you are greatly loved; fear not; be strong, for I will strengthen you. His strength is made perfect precisely where ours runs out.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God meeting His people in weakness with reassurance and strength (Daniel 10:18–19).
- God’s power made perfect in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9–10).
- The repeated assurance that Daniel was ‘greatly loved.’
- Weakness as an occasion for God’s help, not a barrier to it.
- God strengthening the saint precisely at the point of frailty.

Discussion Prompts

- How does God meet Daniel in his weakness rather than despising it?
- Why does God so often strengthen us at the point of our frailty?
- When have you experienced God’s strength in your weakness?

Question 6

Student Question:

Many of us hide our weakness, afraid that God or others will think less of us for it. Where are you tempted to pretend you are stronger than you are? What would change if you brought your real weakness to God, trusting that His strength is made perfect there?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-focused question presses on our habit of hiding weakness. Many believers feel they must appear strong, competent, and put-together, fearing that admitting weakness will lower

them in God's eyes or others'. Daniel 10 dismantles that fear: the weak, undone Daniel is the one God calls greatly loved and strengthens.

Help students examine where they pretend. We hide our struggles, project an image of having it all together, and resist admitting need, even to God in prayer. This pretense isolates us and cuts us off from the very help God offers to the weak. The strong-seeming life is often a lonely and brittle one.

Offer the freedom of honesty. Bringing our real weakness to God, and to trusted believers, is not failure but faith. It is the doorway to the grace that is sufficient for us. "When I am weak, then I am strong," Paul learned (2 Corinthians 12:10), because acknowledged weakness opens the door to God's power.

Move toward a concrete step. Encourage students to identify one area where they have been pretending to be stronger than they are, and to bring that real weakness honestly to God this week, perhaps also to a trusted brother or sister. The aim is the freedom and strength that come from honest dependence rather than hollow self-sufficiency.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The temptation to hide weakness behind a strong image.
- Honest weakness before God as faith, not failure.
- Acknowledged weakness as the doorway to God's sufficient grace (2 Corinthians 12:9–10).
- The isolation of pretense versus the strength of honest dependence.

Discussion Prompts

- Where are you tempted to pretend you are stronger than you are?
- What would change if you brought your real weakness to God?
- Who is a trusted believer with whom you could be honest about your struggles?

Question 7

Student Question:

Chapter eleven unfolds an astonishingly detailed prophecy of the kings of the north and south, fulfilled in the wars of the Greek successor kingdoms over the centuries (11:2–35). What does the precision of this fulfilled prophecy reveal about God's sovereign control over the smallest turns of history? How does it confirm that nothing in the rise and fall of nations escapes His rule (Proverbs 21:1)?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Turn to the extraordinary detail of the prophecy in chapter eleven. The messenger foretells the kings of Persia, a mighty Greek king whose empire is broken and divided, and then an intricate history of the kings of the north and the kings of the south, the Seleucid and Ptolemaic

successors of Alexander, warring back and forth over the centuries with the holy land between them (11:2–35). The detail is so precise that skeptics insist it must have been written after the fact.

Help students see what this precision reveals about God. He governs not only the broad sweep of history but its smallest turns: marriages and betrayals, battles and treaties, the rise and fall of particular kings. “The king’s heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will” (Proverbs 21:1). Nothing in the tangled affairs of nations escapes His sovereign rule.

Draw out the confidence this gives. If God so precisely foreknew and governed the convoluted wars of the Hellenistic kingdoms, then history is not a chaos of competing powers but the outworking of His purposes. The God who scripted these centuries in advance holds all of time in His hand. Fulfilled prophecy on this scale is a powerful confirmation that God truly rules.

Note the purpose of the prophecy. It was given not to satisfy curiosity but to strengthen God’s people for the hard times ahead, especially the persecution under the fierce ruler who closes the chapter. Knowing that God had foreseen and ordained even these troubles would steady the faithful to endure them. Prophecy serves faith and endurance, not mere prediction.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God’s sovereign control over even the smallest turns of history (Daniel 11:2–35).
- The king’s heart in the hand of the Lord (Proverbs 21:1).
- Fulfilled prophecy as confirmation that God truly rules history.
- History as the outworking of God’s purposes, not a chaos of powers.
- Prophecy given to strengthen faith and endurance, not to satisfy curiosity.

Discussion Prompts

- What does the precision of this prophecy reveal about God’s control?
- How does God’s rule over history’s details confirm His sovereignty?
- Why was this detailed prophecy given to God’s people?

Question 8

Student Question:

It is easy to feel that the great movements of history, and even the events of our own lives, are random or out of control. How does the truth that God governs the smallest details of history strengthen your trust in His care over your own circumstances? What worry could you surrender to His sovereign hand this week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-focused question applies God's meticulous sovereignty to the student's own circumstances. If God governs the smallest details of international history, then He surely governs the details of our individual lives. The same sovereignty that scripted the wars of the north and south watches over our days.

Help students apply this to their anxieties. Much of our worry assumes that our circumstances are random, out of control, or at the mercy of forces indifferent to us. The God of Daniel 11 governs every detail; not a sparrow falls apart from Him, and the very hairs of our head are numbered (Matthew 10:29–30). Our lives are not adrift; they are held.

Be careful and pastoral. The point is not that God's sovereignty makes hard things painless, or that we will always understand His purposes. The point is that we are not at the mercy of chance. Even the painful and confusing turns of our lives are under the rule of a God who is wise and good, working all things for the good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28).

Move toward a concrete surrender. Encourage students to name one worry, one detail of their lives they have been gripping with anxiety, and to surrender it deliberately to the sovereign hand of God. The aim is the peace that comes from trusting that the God who governs history governs our smallest concerns.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God's meticulous sovereignty extending to the details of individual lives (Matthew 10:29–30).
- Our circumstances held by God, not adrift in chance.
- God working all things for the good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28).
- Peace through surrendering our worries to the sovereign hand of God.

Discussion Prompts

- How does God's rule over history's details strengthen your trust in His care?
- What worry could you surrender to God's sovereign hand this week?
- How is trusting God's sovereignty different from expecting a painless life?

Question 9

Student Question:

In the midst of this turbulent history a fierce ruler arises who profanes the temple and turns against the holy covenant, yet "the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action," even though some fall in the testing (11:31–35). This detailed prophecy is set firmly within its historical horizon, the Persian and Greek eras and the persecution under Antiochus, rather than being a coded calendar of modern political events. How should we read such a passage faithfully, resting in God's sovereignty over history and the call to stand firm, rather than forcing it into newspaper headlines? And how does the promise that those who know God will stand firm

encourage God's people to faithfulness in every age, looking finally to the victory secured in Christ?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the heaviest doctrinal block of the lesson, and it must teach both faithful interpretation and the call to stand firm. The chapter culminates in a fierce ruler, most naturally Antiochus Epiphanes, who profanes the temple, takes away the regular sacrifice, sets up the abomination that makes desolate, and turns against the holy covenant, seducing some by flattery, while “the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action,” though some of the wise fall in the testing (11:31–35).

Teach students to read this within its historical horizon. The prophecy is anchored in the Persian and Greek eras and the persecution under Antiochus, whose deeds match the description in striking detail. It is not a coded calendar of modern political events. The recurring temptation, in every generation, is to tear these chapters from their setting and match the kings of the north and south to current nations and headlines, recalculating with each news cycle. This newspaper method has been wrong every time and misses the passage's real message.

State the faithful approach positively. The point of the prophecy is God's sovereignty over the turbulent affairs of nations and His call to His people to stand firm under persecution. Even when a fierce power profanes what is holy and seduces the weak, those who know their God will stand firm and take action. The prophecy is given to fortify faith, not to fuel speculation. We rest in God's rule over history and answer its call to faithfulness, rather than forcing it into modern timetables.

Draw out the great encouraging promise: “the people who know their God shall stand firm.” This is true in every age. Knowing God, not merely knowing about Him, but a real, living relationship with Him, is what enables His people to stand when the pressure comes. The faithful are not promised exemption from the testing; some of the wise stumble and fall. But knowing God supplies the strength to stand firm and act when others bow.

Lift students' eyes finally to Christ. The persecutions foreseen here, and all the conflict of the kings of north and south, stand under the sovereignty of the God who would, in the fullness of time, win the decisive victory in Christ. The faithfulness to which this passage calls God's people is sustained, ultimately, by the victory Christ has secured over every power of evil. We stand firm in our own hard age not by reading newspapers into prophecy, but by knowing our God and resting in the triumph of His Son.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The prophecy read within its historical horizon: the Persian and Greek eras and the persecution under Antiochus (Daniel 11:31–35).

- Rejection of the newspaper method that matches the kings of north and south to modern nations.
- The prophecy's real message: God's sovereignty over nations and the call to stand firm.
- Knowing God, not merely about Him, as the source of standing firm under persecution.
- The faithful not promised exemption from testing, yet enabled to stand.
- The victory secured in Christ as the final ground of the believer's faithfulness.

Discussion Prompts

- How should we read this detailed prophecy faithfully rather than as modern headlines?
- What does it mean that those who know their God will stand firm?
- How does the victory of Christ sustain our faithfulness in a hard age?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back across the whole vision, from the glorious One who overwhelmed Daniel to the people who know their God and stand firm. Name one specific way the truth that God is glorious, that He governs all history, and that He strengthens His loved and weak people is reshaping how you will live, pray, and stand firm this coming week.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This capstone question calls for a personal, concrete response. The aim is to move students from the grandeur and detail of the vision to a changed life before the glorious, sovereign God who loves and strengthens them. Ask them to look back across the chapter and name where the Spirit is pressing on them.

Help them gather the threads: the glory and majesty of God, the right-sizing of the self before Him, the reality of unseen conflict and the importance of prayer, God's strength meeting our weakness, His meticulous sovereignty over history and our lives, and the call to know God and stand firm. Ask which thread is speaking most directly to them.

Refuse vagueness. "Trust God more" is not a plan. "This week I will dwell on God's greatness, persevere in this prayer, bring this weakness to God, or stand firm in this specific pressure" is concrete and livable. The best answers will be specific and personal.

Close by lifting their eyes to Christ. The glorious One whose appearance overwhelmed Daniel is gloriously revealed in the risen Christ, who holds all history in His hand and strengthens His weak and beloved people. We pray, persevere, and stand firm not in our own strength but in His, as He forms His own steadiness and courage in us (Revelation 1:17–18; Philippians 1:6).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The goal of study as a life shaped by God's glory, sovereignty, and strength (Romans 8:29).

- Christ the glorious One who holds history and strengthens His people (Revelation 1:17–18).
- Knowing God as the source of standing firm in a hard age.
- Concrete, named obedience as the fruit of genuine study.

Discussion Prompts

- Which truth from this vision is God pressing most on your heart?
- What is one specific way you will pray or stand firm this week?
- How does the glory and sovereignty of God steady you for the days ahead?