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PRINCE OF PERSIA IN DANIEL 10:13: ANALYSIS OF INTERPRETATION AND CONTEMPORARY SIGNIFICANCE

[1]**ADEOTI, FATAI ABIODUN (PhD Candidate**),
University of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

[2]**OLADOSU, OPEYEMI TUNBOSUN (PhD Candidate),**
Adventist University of Africa, Nairobi, Kenya

ABSTRACT

In spite of the renewed interest in the study of apocalyptic prophecy in Daniel, one enigmatic question remains: Who is actually the prince of Persia? The identity of the prince of Persia in Dan 10:13 has generated diverse opinions among scholars. Whereas some claim that the prince of Persia should be interpreted literally as human such Cyrus, the king of Persia, others assert that he is Cambyses, the crown prince. Another school of thought posits an angelical interpretation such the guardian angel of Persia assigned to the sponsorship and control of the Persian realm that vehemently stands against the delivery of the divine answer to Daniel's quest angel of Persia. Thus, the study is an attempt to evaluate the strength and weakness of the two opposing views in the identity of prince of Persia in the narrative of conflict in Dan 10:13-21 between שר *"prince" of Persia and Michael, highlighting their contemporary implications in ongoing discourse. The possibility of each interpretative understanding has been detailed in this paper. The study however recognizes the use of metaphor in the apocalyptic prophecy writing of Daniel that a literal translation will be difficult to suggest vis a vis theological implication. This suggests that a translation of Daniel 10:13 metaphorically presents an understanding devoid of pretext and indicates Daniel's intention to impress upon his hearers the significance of paying attention to apocalyptic characteristics of the book of Daniel.*

Keywords: Prince, Persia, Metaphor, Angel, Daniel.

Introduction

Biblical scholars, over the centuries have debated the term prince of Persia in Daniel 10:13 who intercepted and withstood the heavenly messenger sent to Daniel that resulted in delay to the his prayer for twenty one days. The overview of the entire the book of Daniel reveals strife between the people of God in exile and their captors (c.f. Dan 1:1; 2:44-45; 3:6-30; 7:25; 8:25). However, the conflict motif of Daniel chapter 10 begins on an alarming note, princes are involved—the prince of Persia and Michael, the great prince (c.f. Dan 12:1). The exiles have been allowed to return and rebuild the temple but not without opposition. Against this background Daniel was given a vision of "great conflict" (Dan 10:1). Daniel in chapter 10 tells of the coming of angelic messenger to give vital information on the on-going war who was opposed by headstrong prince of Persia that led to the delay of prayer of Daniel for twenty one days. This study is aimed at analyzing a review of possible meanings of the term "prince of Persia" who is strong enough to withstand divine messenger. Review of interpretations on the text centers on the literal and metaphorical usage of the text in Daniel 10:13.

Literal Interpretation: Prince of Persia as Cyrus

In ascribing human prince to an antagonist that vehemently stands against the delivery of the divine answer to Daniel's quest Dan 10:13, Cyrus is pinpointed (Godvine Bible Commentaries).Adam Clarke has observed that "Cyrus alone was the prince of Persia, and God had destined him to be the deliverer of his people; but there were some matters, of which we are not informed, that caused him to hesitate for some time."(Adam Clarke Commentaries). Shea suggests that as indicated in Haggai, Zechariah, and Ezra 5-6, it was not God's intention that the rebuilding of the temple should be delayed but the setback was caused by local resistance (Ezra 4:4). Counselors were employed against the returning Jews to "frustrate their purpose" (Ezra 4:5). The counselors served at the court, and the renowned court of greatest importance at this time was the Persian court in the east where the counselor would have been the most effective in their lobby. These factors put together is said to suggest that Cyrus, directly or through his representatives, gave in to the pressure exerted by the adversary of the Jews; he agreed to the suspension of the reconstruction of the temple. This act of halting temple reconstruction makes Shea to posit that "the issue most likely at stake in Daniel 10; namely, the development of resistance on the part of Persian authority to the reconstruction of the temple in Jerusalem"(Shea, 1983:225-250)

While Clarke did take emphasis human interpretation of this prince, which is commendable, the problem which his approach raises is that "Cyrus was also identified as king in the same chapter, and it would seem strange to identify him as both prince and king at the same time" (Shea, 1983:233). Thus, this claim seems to flounder in the light of overwhelming evidence in Hebrews scriptures. Cyrus is among the few named in the scriptures with their mission and job descriptions clearly stated. Of Cyrus it is written:

> Thus says the LORD to His anointed, To Cyrus, whose right hand I have held- - To subdue nations before him And loose the armor of kings, To open before him the double doors, So that the gates will not be shut: `I will go before you And make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze And cut the bars of iron. I will give you the treasures of darkness And hidden riches of secret places, That you may know that I, the LORD, Who call *you* by your name, *Am* the God of Israel. (Isa 45:1-3)

More than a century before his birth, prophecy had mentioned him by name, and had caused a record to be made of the specific work he should do in conquering Babylon unawares, and in preparing the way for the release of the Jews in exile **(**White, 1917:551).Thus, Cyrus is widely known for his generous policies towards the Jews in exile (Stefanovic, 2007:389). His auspicious policies are praised by many classical authors; Aeschylus, Herodotus, Xenophon, Plutarch, Cicero and others(Nichol, 1980:3.328). The influence of Daniel and Isaiah prediction concerning him seems to have much to do with the formation and implementation of his imperial policies (Nichol, 1980:3.334). Thus**,** in favor of the flaw of this view are the following points of evidence.

First, the biblical account of Cyrus's decree allows exiles to "go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel; He is the God who is in Jerusalem" (Ezra 1:3). This marks the beginning of a series of returns of exiles from Babylon to Jerusalem. The first wave, probably a few of the exiles returned, under Sheshbazzar, a son

of the exiled king Jehoiachin, shortly after Cyrus's defeat of the Babylonians in 539 BCE. According to Ezra, Sheshbazzar was given the Temple implements stolen by the Babylonians for restoration of the temple. (Ezra 1:7-11), and Sheshbazzar is reported to have rebuilt the foundation of the Temple (Ezra 5:16). A few years later, one of Jehoiachin's grandsons, Zerubbabel, led another group of exiles back to Jerusalem (Carr, n.d:213).

Biblical text details massive supports given by Cyrus as follows:

> Also King Cyrus brought out the articles of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and put in the house of his gods; and Cyrus, king of Persia, had them brought out by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and he counted them out to Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah. Now this *was* their number: 30 gold dishes, 1,000 silver dishes, 29 duplicates; 30 gold bowls, 410 silver bowls of a second *kind and* 1,000 other articles. All the articles of gold and silver *numbered* 5,400. Sheshbazzar brought them all up with the exiles who went up from Babylon to Jerusalem. (Ezra 1:7-1 NAU)

The return of these valuable articles plays a major role in this decree (Nichol, 1980:3.336). thus it will be unrealistic to see prince of Persia (an antagonist who resisted Who is like God? — Michael for twenty one days) as Cyrus. Conversely, Cyrus sees himself as an appointee of heaven, one who has a divine commission to fulfill; thereby gives such immense support to the restoration of the temple in Jerusalem. The tenacity of purpose is seen in his word, "The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah" (Ezra 1:2). It has been that the word "he" in the text "is emphatic." This emphasis is also found in the ancient Greek and Latin rendering of the text. Apparently Cyrus refers to Isaiah 44:28: "*It is I* who says of Cyrus, '*He is* My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.' And he declares of Jerusalem, 'She will be built,' And of the temple, 'Your foundation will be laid'" (Isa 44:28 NAU). Josephus claims that this passage was shown to Cyrus after Babylon's fall and it is natural to take Daniel who intimated him about the prophecy of Cyrus' conquest and his role in rebuilding the Jerusalem's Temple (White, 1917:557).

Second, while the word "prince" may seem to allow for the view that the princes of Persia and Greece are human leaders, the context of Daniel 10 suggests otherwise. The intervention of "Michael, first of the chief heads" (Dan 10:13 YLT) or "one of the chief princes" (Dan 10:13 NRS) indicates a leader other human prince. More so, elsewhere in Daniel the termשַׂר obviously refers to angelic beings e.g. Michael an angelic figure is called, "your prince" (Dan 10: 21), and "the great prince" (Dan 12:1). Two other usages of שַׂר make it clearer: "commander of the host" (Dan 8:11) and "prince of princes" (Dan 8:25). These are strong proof examples in the same book where שַׂר refers not to human princes but to God Himself, an angelic prince, or the Messiah (Strugnell, 1960:324. Jastrow, 1950:1627). More so, Shea argues that the term "king" in Dan 10:13 is crucial in ascertaining the meaning of the term "prince" in the same verse. While he rightly notes that מלך is never used in the OT to refer to angels, the term שַׂרis seldom used in reference to those who are kings. This difference between שַׂר and מלך is seen in many Old Testament passages (e.g., Lam 2:9, Ezek 17:12, Neh. 9:32, Jer 25:18. Stevens, 415).

Third, The famous inscription on the clay barrel of Cyrus, otherwise known as Cyrus cylinder, now in British Museum "constitute strong proof of the authenticity of the Cyrus' decree," (Nichol, 1980:3.328) and his generous policies. The edict reads:

> I am Cyrus, king of the world, great king, mighty king, king of Babylon, king of the land of Sumer and Akkad, king of the four quarters, son of Cambyses . . . whose rule Bel and Nabu cherish, whose kingship they desire for their hearts' pleasures. . . . I did not allow any to terrorize the land of Sumer and Akkad. I kept in view the needs of Babylon and all its sanctuaries to promote their wellbeing. The citizens of Babylon . . . I lifted their unbecoming yoke . . . At my deeds Marduk, the great Lord, rejoiced, and to me, Cyrus, the king who worshipped, and to Cambyses, my son, the offspring of my loins, and to all my troops he graciously gave his blessing, and in good spirit before him we glorified exceedingly his high divinity. All the kings who sat in the throne rooms, throughout the four quarters, from the Upper to the Lower Sea, those who dwelt in . . . all the kings of the West Country who dwelt in tents, brought me their heavy tribute and kissed my feet in Babylon. From . . . to the cities of Ashur and Susa, Agade, Eshnuna, the cities of Zamban, Meurnu, Der, as far as the region of the land of Gutium, the holy cities beyond the Tigris whose sanctuaries had been in ruins over a long period, the gods whose abode is in the midst of them I returned to the places and housed them in lasting abodes. I (also) gathered together all their inhabitants and restored to them their dwellings. The Gods of Sumer and Akkad whom Nabonidus had, to the anger of the Lord of the Gods, brought into Babylon, I, at the bidding of Marduk, the great Lord, made to dwell in peace in their habitations, delightful abodes (Carr, 211, Translation: ANET 316).

Although Cyrus does not mention Judah in his cylinder, it is clear from the Bible that the Judean exiles also rejoiced at the shift in power. Car affirms this when he said, "Even before Cyrus had conquered Babylon, Second Isaiah had seen him on the horizon and quoted Yahweh as anointing Cyrus to subdue nations and rebuild Jerusalem" (Isa 44:28 – 45:1, Carr, 211). Thus, Cyrus could not have fitted such identity let alone playing an opposing role that prince of Persia displayed in Daniel 10.

Prince of Persia as the Crown Prince Cambyses

Among the proponents of this claim are Calvin, Stefanovic and Shea. Shea observes that "character wise, Cambyses fits well the kind of problem that his angelic antagonists encountered with him, since his opposition to foreign cults is well documented from ancient records, especially those which deal with his conduct in Egypt" (Shea, 1983:255-256). Shea seems to lean on the work of John Calvin, who examined the implications of the title "prince" in the third year of Cyrus. He acknowledges Calvin Commentary on Dan 10: 13; "But I think the angel stood in direct opposition against Cambyses, to prevent him from raging more fiercely against God's people. He had promulgated a cruel edict preventing the Jews from building their temple, and manifesting complete hostility to its restoration" (Calvin, 1948: 2:252).

Shea argues unconvincingly that "the use of the word "prince" elsewhere in Daniel indicates that it can refer to either a supernatural prince or a natural human prince. The context of its use in Dan 10 favors the latter usage. He argues further that if one seeks for an earthly human

prince of Persia in the third year of Cyrus, Cambyses, the son and crown prince of Cyrus fits one specific candidate for that historical position (Shea, 1983:176, 255-250). Stefanovic is of the same opinion; he posits that in Persia, Cyrus had temporarily elevated his son, the crown prince Cambyses, to the status of coregent. (Stefanovic, 2007:377). He states further that Cambyses was neither favorable nor have a good disposition towards the provinces and "may have even been religiously hostile toward people like the Jews." (Stefanovic, 2007:377). In a bid to make good his claim, Stefanovic avers that since in the book of Daniel, there is "a synergism between events in heaven and on earth," (Lucas, 2002:298), there is a possibility that the prince of Persia is a person on earth, someone like the crown prince of Persia, a devout Zoroastrian, (Stefanovic, 2007:237)

who opposed God's plan at the instigation of his spiritual counterpart. While Stefanovic's observation is instructive, he did not give detail account of the synergism between events in heaven and on earth nor offer any biblical or historical support for his claim. Baur in his reaction to the claim that Cambyses was coregent king of Babylon and crown prince (שַׂר) to the throne of his father- Cyrus, said שַׂרis never used to denote royal parentage (Baur, 1939:4:2453-2454, cf. 1 Chr 29:24).

Stefanovic seems to favors Shea's submission that if some counselors hired by the Samaritans came to Babylon and met Cambyses, he probably would have been happy to accede to their request, (ibid) although he acknowledges that unseen forces were at work. The heavenly powers being brought to bear upon the unyielding Persian prince as angels of God labored to fulfill His will, he maintains that the choice is still Cambyses' who never yielded to these influences.In a bid to rule out the usage of prince as a malevolent angelic figure, he said, "even when 'prince' is used of an angelic character, else-where in Daniel, it is consistently used only of such angelic beings who are godly and dissident ones (fallen angels, demons, or Satan).This is the one interpretation which takes cognizance of both (a) the potentiality for interpreting the word "prince" as a human being, and (b) the actual political situation that was seen in the third year of Cyrus.Cambyses, the son of Cyrus and crown prince of Persia, was the particular obstructionist based on first, his own personal attitude and hatred toward foreign cults; and second, the position of political power he held in Babylon at this time. This is evident in the desecration by burning the body of Amasis, the Pharaoh who died before Cambyses' arrival in Egypt, the burning of the Oracle of Zeus at Siwa, his intrusion into the court of Hephaestus and mocked at the god's statue. Cambyses also entered the temple of the Cabiri, which no go area to anyone but the priest is allowed to do, made fun of the images there, and actually set them ablazed. Other historical reasons put forward to argue for Cambyses as the prince of Persia include the looting of, and damage to, Egyptian temples caused by Cambyses' troops, the infliction of a deadly wound upon the selected Apis Bull on the occasion of its enthronement as god.(Shea, 1983:26, 176, 237).

Another argument in favor Cambyses in order to connect him with the obstinate prince of Persia in Dan 10 is that by the time indicated there, he must have attained a position of great power and influence to have had the importance and impact attributed to that obstructionist prince. Shea maintains that Cambyses was not king of Persia, since Cyrus was still ruling at this time. This leaves open to Cambyses but one main office of authority through which he could have been the opposing power attributed to the prince of Persia in Daniel 10; namely, the position of King of Babylon, superior in power to the governor of Babylon; but a vassal to

his father as king of Babylon (Charles, 1929, 254). Cambyses would also have been able to exercise authority over all of Syria and Palestine-including Judah- which were in territories controlled by Persian satrapy of 'Babylon and Beyond the River.' The power available to Cambyses as king of Babylon would fit the position of power necessary for the influence exercised by the "prince of Persia" in Daniel 10 (Tatford, 1953, 175).

As plausible as this argument is, it seems to lack depth and merit as far as Biblical narrative is concerned. Babylon hegemony ended with the death of Belshazzar. Daniel, while interpreting the mysterious handwriting on the wall said "Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." (Dan 5:28). Apparently, the claim is prone to assumption as there is want of evidence in regard to Cambyses occupation of the throne at that time.While, Shea offers profound history on the sacrilegious acts of Cambyses as found in the work of Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus nevertheless, his argument is less satisfactory based on the following: First, his sources lean on historical conjectures as he himself acknowledged. The overlap between the burial and birth dates on the sarcophagi of two bulls known from the Serapeum to have served as god, Herodotus is principal source, supplemented on occasion by Egyptian texts and by the statements of later classical historians are among many other reasons that required close investigation. The submission of Cambyses as the prince of seems to fall short of principle that guides sound exegesis which put premium on what the text says in its context.

It is evident that Cambyses as the prince of Persia is grounded on his opposition to foreign cults as documented in ancient records, especially those which deal with his conduct in Egypt. Based on Cambyses sacrilegious activities Shea conclude that "it would only have been natural for him to oppose the temple building project in Jerusalem" (Shea, 1983:237).

Among many questions that reveal flaws this interpretation includes, must assumption be allowed to take place of sound exegesis? (C.f. Adeoti, 2022, 138, 14). John Calvin's *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Daniel* on which Shea follows is apparently based on reason and extra-biblical literature without putting the context into the consideration. Calvin who wrote: "But I think the angel stood in direct opposition against Cambyses, to prevent him from raging more fiercely against God's people. He had promulgated a cruel edict, preventing the Jews from building their temple, and manifesting complete hostility to its restoration."(John Calvin, 1948: 2.252).Without doing any injustice to Dan 10:13, human prince might have been probable if Daniel 10 is cast in literal narrative form and in historical perspective. But the context suggests otherwise. The apocalyptic nature of Daniel 10 which involves Michael, "the first of the chief heads" (Dan 10:13 YLT) coming to assist another heaven-sent messenger who was held by one designated prince of the kingdom of Persia apparently suggests prince other than human as it is examine in chapter 4 of this study. While the place of historical facts cannot be underestimated, study has shown that they have their limitation as it has been honestly acknowledged in an endeavor to push for human prince-Cambyses. More so, the proponents of human prince will do well if they do not ignored what Rowley described as esoteric character of the apocalyptic.(Rowley, 1947:14, Green, 1984:63).

Metaphorical/Symbolical Interpretation: Malevolent Angel as of Persia

Among these proponents are Anderson and Nelson (Anderson, 1975, 127; Nelson, 2010:110, 111).Nelson posits that the opponent of Michael in the warfare is not human being but rather

the spiritual prince or ruler of Persia. He added that Judah's neighbours, who were under the influence of Satan, the real prince of Persia, tried to influence the king of Persia to withdraw his help and retract his decree to rebuild Jerusalem. This opposition influenced Cyrus and impacted the warfare for three weeks. Nelson drives home his claim by emphasizing that, "the term Michael (who came to defeat the Prince of Persia) is always the name given Christ when in battle against Satan, and always victorious against Satan" (Nelson, 2010:110, 111). In the same vein, Smith opines that the king is torn between conflicting emotions; he hesitates and delays till one mightier than Gabriel joins him in the palace of the king and counteracts opposing forces mustered by Satan (Smith, 1944, 228, 229).

While Nelson's identification of Satan as prince of Persia is plausible, yet his claim that Satan's influence was upon Cyrus the king of Persia is less satisfactory because a closer study will prove this view to be untenable as follows (1) the claim is contrary to the prediction of prophet Isaiah. More than a century before Cyrus's birth, prophecy had mentioned him by name, and had caused a record to be made of the specific work he should in preparing the way for the release of the Jews in exile (White, 1917:551). (2) Cyrus is widely known for his generous policies towards the Jews in exile (Stefanovic, 2007:289) and commended by many classical authors (Aeschylus, Herodotus, Xenophon, Plutarch, Cicero and others). According to Abe, Cyrus demonstrated his religious liberality by allowing the returning Jews to take with them the captured treasures of Solomon's Temple and made needed provision for the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem (Abe, 2005:79).

Prince of Persia as Territorial Spirit/Guardian Angel

Russelles notes that the notion of guardian angels appointed to rule nations of the earth takes different forms made up of the background to both Jewish and Gentiles during the inter-testamental period (Russelles, 1964:245).Russelles identifies the prince of Persia as the guardian angel of Persia in Jub 5:15 (ibid). While he makes reference to Daniel 10:13 and identifies Michael as the archangel and guardian angel of God's own people, Israel and invariably sees prince of Persia as guardian angel of Persia, his claim seems to lean on extra-biblical sources, e.g. the book of Jubilees where it is written 'There are many nations and many people, and all are his, and overall hath he placed spirits in authority to lead them astray from him. But over Israel he did not appoint any angel or spirit, for he alone is their ruler' (Jub 15:31 c.f Ben Sira 17:17).

One difference Rusellel aptly pin points between extra-biblical and the Danielic passage is that in the former only Gentile nations are under the dominion of angels. Israel is shepherd by God (ibid, 245). Baldwin, in the same vein says "a representative of Persia in the heavenliest is intended" (Baldwin, 1978, 179). Walvoordand Arnold also argue that the prince of Persia in Daniel 10:13 is not reference to human ruler but to angelic force who has a specific connections to the successive empires of Persia and Greece. Arnold grounds his argument on the fact that the archangel Michael is also referred to as "prince" the one who appears to have guardianship over Israel. He maintained that the Septuagint (Theodotion) translation of the Hebrew term שַׂר is *archon*, a word that was used by Paul (1 Cor 2:6, Eph 2:2) and early Christian writers for angelic force (Walvoord, 2015; Arnold, 2005:153-154; Wallace, 1979:179). While there are several proofs why this interpretation is less than satisfactory, the strength of the territorial spirit or guardian angel as the prince of Persia in Dan10:13 lies in recognition of symbolical interpretation—a supernatural being who opposed the messenger of God. Daniel

chapters 10-12 provides a window into the reality of the conflict that rages in the supra-terrestrial scene (cf. Isa 24:21).As Lincoln states, these chapters depict "war in heaven between the angels of the nations which has its counterpart in events on earth" (Clines and Davies, 1995).

However, the notion of territorial spirit appears weak in the context of Daniel chapters 10-12. Stevens is thus correct on non-delineation of domain of princes in Daniel 10-12 and expresses the concept so clearly:

> Angelic princes mentioned in Daniel do not rule over geographical areas with "explicitly defined boundaries." The archangel Michael, for example, is described as "the great prince who protects your people" (12:1, NIV, italics added). This emphasizes the protective role of Michael in relation to the people of God rather than with respect to a given territory. Michael remained the guardian angel of the people of God, whether Israel was in the Promised Land or was dispersed in exile among the nations. And in view of the parallel between Michael and the angelic princes of Persia and Greece, one can conclude that the same correspondence exists for the latter, that is, the "princes" are over the people of Persia and Greece and their sociopolitical structure rather than their respective geographical boundaries. (Stevens, 2000:248).

The above assertion is conceivable when considered similar emphasis on peoples and sociopolitical structures that is evident throughout the Book of Daniel. The Babylonians conquered Judah (Dan 1–5), but were soon supplanted by the Persians (Dan 6–10), who in turn were subdued by the Greek Empire (Dan 11:2). Furthermore, the Greek Empire disintegrated into four kingdoms (Dan 11:4–36).As Lowe posits, 'The princes of Daniel 10 rule not over … fixed geographical regions, but over imperialistic empires whose boundaries expand and contract….So the respective princes may be tutelary powers, but if so, then they are expansionistic—not geographical—spirits' (Lowe, in Stevens, 2000:429). "Taken in this sense", says Stevens, "they are better termed 'empire spirits' rather than territorial spirits" (ibid).

Concluding Remarks: A Metaphor

The various interpretations reviewed could be group into two categories; literal (human view) interpretation and metaphorical (angelic view). As shown above some claim that the prince of Persia who withstood the divine messenger is human while other assert the prince of Persia symbolically represent supernatural or angelic being. Meanwhile, the human view such Cambyses, Cyrus is suggestively defective when considering the genre of apocalyptic characteristics of the book of Daniel which makes use of metaphors and symbols as representations of the real identities. For instance in Daniel's interpretation of image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in Daniel 2, the symbol of the "head of God" represents king Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2:38). In Dan 4:2, fruitful tree represents the same king. In the same vein, animals as symbols are used to depict kingdoms; "Those great beasts, which are four, *are* four kings*which* arise out of the earth" (Dan 7:17). In Dan 8:1, Daniel says,"And the male goat *is* the kingdomof Greece. The large horn that *is* between its eyes *is* the first king." These examples attest to the esoteric character of the apocalyptic which indicates a message that is represented as something to be kept from general knowledge, and to be handed down in

secret. Thus, human prince might have been probable if Daniel 10 is cast in literal narrative form and in historical perspective. But the context suggests otherwise. The apocalyptic nature of Daniel 10 which involves Michael, "the first of the chief heads" (Dan 10:13 YLT) coming to assist another heaven-sent messenger who was held by one designated prince of the kingdom of Persia apparently suggests prince other than human. This assertion reveals that that literal interpretation of the prince of Persia requires close investigation.

The only option that is probable is that which takes the term prince of Persia as a metaphor; a metaphor that represents malevolent angelic power. The following reasons make symbolic assertion to be suggestive; "prince" in Dan 10:13 refers to a superhuman being, not to a "human ruler": (a) the use of the term in OT to refer to a celestial being; (b) the clear parallel between the prince of Persia and Michael the prince; (c) the non-existence of the use of שַׂר in the Old Testament to designate a "crown prince" to the throne, (d) The prince of Persia did not only standing over-against the heavenly messenger but also held him in hostage for twenty one days until one mightier than the messenger was sent to intervene before answer is delivered to Daniel as he later reported. All these put together makes the symbolic interpretation of the prince of Persia to be suggestive as it in tandem with apocalyptic features of the book of Daniel.

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