

The Spiritual War

Daniel 10:4-14 (NIV)

On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, ⁵ I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist. ⁶ His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.

⁷ I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; the men with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. ⁸ So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. ⁹ Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground.

¹⁰ A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. ¹¹ He said, "Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you." And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling.

¹² Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. ¹³ But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. ¹⁴ Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."

Daniel 10:20-21 (NIV)

So he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come; ²¹ but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince.)"

What do you think of the above passage? How would you paraphrase this story?

This passage must raise many questions for you. To help bring clarity, let's first explore the nature of angels in general and then progress to a better understanding of the spiritual conflict as expressed in the story.

Angels

What are angels?

Greek word: aggelos (pronounced ang' el os) =

Hebrews 1:14 (NIV)

Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

Where did angels come from; did they always exist?

Colossians 1:16 (NIV)

For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him [Jesus].

Job 38:4-7 (NIV)

Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. ⁵ Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? ⁶ On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone-- ⁷ while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?

Are there different types of angels? Can angels have different appearances?

Read the following passages in your Bible and describe the type of angel seen there.

Jude 1:9

Isaiah 6:2

Ezekiel 10:12-14

Hebrews 13:2

(Genesis 18-19)

Other angelic descriptions:

Invisible	2 Kings 6:15-17
Fiery	2 Kings 6:15-17
Dazzling	Luke 24:4

Angels are not people who have died and gone to heaven.

One caution with regard to angels:

Colossians 2:18 (NIV)

Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.

What are some ways we might be tempted to worship angels or give them undue attention?

The apostle John was even tempted to give an angel undue attention:

Revelation 22:8-9 (NIV)

I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. ⁹ But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the words of this book. Worship God!"

How does the angel refocus John in the right direction?

Evil Spirits

What are the other creatures that opposed the messenger angel in Daniel 10?

Mark 1:32-34 (NIV)

That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. ³³ The whole town gathered at the door, ³⁴ and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

What are demons and where did they come from?

Revelation 12:7-9 (NIV)

And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. ⁸ But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. ⁹ The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

Jude 1:6 (NIV)

And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home...

2 Peter 2:4 (NIV)

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned...

Where are evil spirits now?

Job 1:6-7 (NIV)

One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them. ⁷ The Lord said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the Lord, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it."

1) Roaming freely through _____

Revelation 9:13-14 (NIV)

The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the horns of the golden altar that is before God. ¹⁴ It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates."

2) Bound on _____

Luke 8:30-31 (NIV)

Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him. ³¹ And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.

2 Peter 2:4 (NIV)

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to Tartarus, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment;

Jude 1:6 (NIV)

And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home--these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.

3) Bound in the _____

Back to Daniel 10

How are we to understand the prince/king of Persia in this story?



As there are various angelic roles in heaven, there is also a hierarchy in the demonic realm. Look at how Paul names these various positions in descending order.

Ephesians 6:12 (NIV)

*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but
against the **rulers**,
against the **authorities**,
against the **powers** of this dark world and
against the **spiritual forces** of evil in the heavenly realms.*

If the rebellious angels were defeated, then why are they still able to resist God's righteous angels?

In light of the reality that evil spirits are present around us, what implication does that have for us this week?

PASSAGE	THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER	APPLY 1 POINT TODAY
<p>DAY 1</p> <p>Genesis 3:1-6 (NIV) <i>Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made.</i></p> <p><i>He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"</i></p> <p><i>² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"</i></p> <p><i>⁴ "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."</i></p> <p><i>⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it.</i></p> <p><i>She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.</i></p>	<p>In what ways was the serpent crafty?</p> <p>How has Satan been crafty in your life? What ways has he used to entice you to sin?</p> <p>What does Satan cause Eve to question?</p> <p>Have there been times when Satan has tried to get you to question what God has clearly spoken in scripture?</p> <p>Have you ever pursued something because it seemed to promise you something God would not provide?</p> <p>Sin is always attractive. What sinful things are you attracted to right now?</p> <p>Your past sins are already forgiven in Christ. You are now guilt free with regard to them. The consequence has been paid. You don't need to be trapped in shame any longer.</p> <p>The question is, "Are you allowing Satan to deceive you right now in an area of your life?" Is there any sin in your life you need to turn from right now so as not to be deceived by Satan all over again?</p> <p>In what ways did Satan strike a victory over mankind in this encounter?</p> <p>Spend some time thanking God for his forgiveness, and also ask him to reveal areas where you may still be holding on to Satan's lies.</p>	

PASSAGE
THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER
**APPLY 1 POINT
TODAY**
DAY 2
Genesis 19:1-26 (NIV)

The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. 2 "My lords," he said, "please turn aside to your servant's house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning." "No," they answered, "we will spend the night in the square." 3 But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate. 4 Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom--both young and old--surrounded the house. 5 They called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them." 6 Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him 7 and said, "No, my friends. Don't do this wicked thing. 8 Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don't do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof." 9 "Get out of our way," they replied. And they said, "This fellow came here as an alien, and now he wants to play the judge! We'll treat you worse than them." They kept bringing pressure on Lot and moved forward to break down the door. 10 But the men inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house and shut the door. 11 Then they struck the men who were at the door of the house, young and old, with blindness so that they could not find the door. 12 The two men said to Lot, "Do you have anyone else here--sons-in-law, sons or daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of here, 13 because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the Lord against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it." 14 So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were pledged to marry his daughters. He said, "Hurry and get out of this place, because the Lord is about to destroy the city!" But his sons-in-law thought he was joking. 15 With the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished." 16 When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the Lord was merciful to them.

Have you ever wondered what angels must think about the human race as they come down from heaven and experience our sinfulness?

If angels were to give a report of what they have seen with regard to your life, your priorities, your actions, and your love of God, what would they say?

It's sad to think that Lot had slipped so far into the cultural perspective without realizing it. How might that be true of you as well?

2 Peter 2:7 (NIV)

and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men.

Lot believed in God, but continuously made choices to adapt to the culture he was in instead of changing the culture.

Fortunately, God sent angels to his rescue.

Have you allowed yourself to get into circumstances that distort your thinking?

Have you embraced relationships that are pulling you further from God?

When God tells you to do something, do you hesitate?

PASSAGE	THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER	APPLY 1 POINT TODAY
DAY 3		
1 Samuel 16:14-16 (NIV) <i>Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him. ¹⁵ Saul's attendants said to him, "See, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. ¹⁶ Let our lord command his servants here to search for someone who can play the harp. He will play when the evil spirit from God comes upon you, and you will feel better."</i>	<p>Why do you think music soothed Saul's soul when he was tormented by the evil spirit?</p>	
1 Samuel 16:23 (NIV) <i>Whenever the spirit from God came upon Saul, David would take his harp and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.</i>	<p>David's songs were ones of praise to God. Have you ever tried listening to praise music when you were feeling troubled?</p> <p>What effect does it have on you?</p>	
	<p>Praise is powerful because it puts God in proper perspective and creates an environment distasteful to evil spirits.</p>	
	<p>Would you characterize your life as a life of worship and praise to God that is an inhospitable environment to evil spirits?</p>	
	<p>Are there areas of your life that evil spirits would find quite acceptable?</p>	

PASSAGE
**THOUGHTS TO
CONSIDER**
**APPLY 1 POINT
TODAY**
DAY 4
2 Kings 6:8-23 (NIV)

⁸ Now the king of Aram was at war with Israel. After conferring with his officers, he said, "I will set up my camp in such and such a place." ⁹ The man of God sent word to the king of Israel: "Beware of passing that place, because the Arameans are going down there." ¹⁰ So the king of Israel checked on the place indicated by the man of God. Time and again Elisha warned the king, so that he was on his guard in such places. ¹¹ This enraged the king of Aram. He summoned his officers and demanded of them, "Will you not tell me which of us is on the side of the king of Israel?" ¹² "None of us, my lord the king," said one of his officers, "but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the very words you speak in your bedroom." ¹³ "Go, find out where he is," the king ordered, "so I can send men and capture him." The report came back: "He is in Dothan." ¹⁴ Then he sent horses and chariots and a strong force there. They went by night and surrounded the city. ¹⁵ When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh, my lord, what shall we do?" the servant asked. ¹⁶ "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." ¹⁷ And Elisha prayed, "O Lord, open his eyes so he may see." Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. ¹⁸ As the enemy came down toward him, Elisha prayed to the Lord, "Strike these people with blindness." So he struck them with blindness, as Elisha had asked. ¹⁹ Elisha told them, "This is not the road and this is not the city. Follow me, and I will lead you to the man you are looking for." And he led them to Samaria. ²⁰ After they entered the city, Elisha said, "Lord, open the eyes of these men so they can see." Then the Lord opened their eyes and they looked, and there they were, inside Samaria. ²¹ When the king of Israel saw them, he asked Elisha, "Shall I kill them, my father? Shall I kill them?" ²² "Do not kill them," he answered. "Would you kill men you have captured with your own sword or bow? Set food and water before them so that they may eat and drink and then go back to their master." ²³ So he prepared a great feast for them, and after they had finished eating and drinking, he sent them away, and they returned to their master. So the bands from Aram stopped raiding Israel's territory.

Have you ever felt the odds were stacked up against you? Has your situation ever seemed hopeless?

What do these times of anxiety indicate about our trust in God?

Have you ever seen God come through and provide in ways you never anticipated?

Wouldn't it be great if, similar to Elisha's servant, we could see what is happening around is on the spiritual plane?

If you knew there were angels fighting on your behalf, would it give you a bit more confidence as you go through your day?

If the servant had not seen the angels, would that have changed the spiritual reality?

Could the servant have been at peace without having seen the angels?

Just because we don't see what God is doing, doesn't mean he is not active. How can you start to exercise a greater trust in God this week?

Why did Elisha not destroy the army that came to destroy him?

What do you learn about grace through this story?

PASSAGE	THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER	APPLY 1 POINT TODAY
DAY 5 Luke 4:1-13 (NIV) <i>Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, ² where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.</i> ³ <i>The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."</i> ⁴ <i>Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone.'"</i> ⁵ <i>The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. ⁷ So if you worship me, it will all be yours."</i> ⁸ <i>Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"</i> ⁹ <i>The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. ¹⁰ For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; ¹¹ they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"</i> ¹² <i>Jesus answered, "It says: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"</i> ¹³ <i>When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.</i>	<p>Why would God allow Jesus to be tested in this way?</p> <p>Why does God allow you to be tested?</p> <p>What is Satan's goal whenever he brings a temptation your way?</p> <p>In what ways have you been tested as Jesus was?</p> <p>What was the key to Jesus' success at resisting temptation?</p> <p>What scriptural truths do you fall back on when you undergo temptation?</p> <p>Have you memorized any verses that will help you in your specific areas of struggle?</p> <p>Did you notice how even Satan knows the Bible? But does he use it properly?</p> <p>Do you know the Bible well enough to counter such attacks?</p> <p>What was Satan's reaction to Jesus' defense?</p> <p>How can you better prepare yourself for future attacks?</p>	