

The Spiritual War Behind World History (Part 2)

Daniel 10

January 19, 2020

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Daniel chapter 10 is where we come to Scripture tonight. Scripture teaches that there is a unique order of beings as real as the person sitting next to you tonight. Beings who operate throughout the universe in this world and in each of our lives. These beings were all created as holy angels. Many of them sinned and followed Satan in his rebellion against God and so now there are two distinct groups of these beings. The holy angels devoted to God and his cause, and Satan and his demons, the enemies of God and the enemies of all that is good and all that is holy. In Daniel once again tonight we encounter a holy angel.

Now last time we began our study of Daniel's final vision. His last vision actually runs from chapter 10 verse 1 all the way through the end of chapter 12 and the end of the book. The prophecy of this vision extends from Daniel's time and the Persian Empire until the future Kingdom of God on this planet, when Jesus Christ our Lord will reign and rule from Palestine. Daniel chapter 10 is really, however, just the introduction to this final vision. In this chapter we discover some fascinating insights into the activity of angels and of demons in our world. It actually describes for us the spiritual war that lies behind world history. As we began to look at this 10th chapter we began with the introduction. It is the introduction to Daniel's final vision, chapter 10 verse 1 through chapter 11 verse 1. This introduction starts by relating the difficult setting of the vision in verses 1 to 3. Notice verse 1: "In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belshazzar; and the message was true and *one of* great conflict, but he understood the message and had an understanding of the vision."

This final revelation came to the prophet Daniel in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, that's in the year 535 or 536 BC. It's just a short time after the first group of Jewish captives had returned from Babylon back to the land of Israel. Verses two and three, notice he continues: "In those days, I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks. I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all until the entire three weeks were completed." That's the setting of this vision. We continued in observing a terrifying vision of a

heavenly being in verses 4 to 9. Notice verse 4: “On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I was by the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris.” The first month of the Jewish calendar is the month Nissan which is our March/April. Daniel had begun his prayer and fasting three weeks before then on the third of Nissan, that meant that he was fasting and praying during two of Israel’s great feasts: Passover and the feast of Unleavened Bread. And of course Passover celebrates the release of the Israelites from their captivity in Egypt, and certainly that prompted Daniel to remember the recent exodus of Israelites from Babylon who had returned home to Israel; but undoubtedly also had considered the difficult circumstances they had encountered once they arrived. Verse four goes on to say: “While I was by the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris, I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a certain man.” Daniel was standing on the Bank of the Tigris River and he looked up and he saw this being in the form of a man hovering in the air above the river. Verse five goes on to describe him:

He was dressed in linen, whose waist was girded with *a belt of pure gold of Uphaz*. His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult.

Who is this magnificent person? Well, we learned last time that it has to be one of two: either an angel or the eternal Son of God. Although we can't be certain I argued last time and I'm inclined to believe that the man dressed in linen verses 5 through 9 is a preincarnate appearance of Jesus Christ. Then beginning in verse 10 we meet a separate person. This appearance of Christ, verses 5 through 9, He sends his angel beginning in verse 10 to assist Daniel. But notice Daniel's response to this vision of the second person of the Trinity. Verse 7:

Now I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, while the men who were with me did not see the vision; nevertheless, a great dread fell on them, and they ran away to hide themselves. So I was left alone and saw this great vision; yet no strength was left in me, for my natural color turned to a deathly pallor, and I retained no strength. But I heard the sound of his words; and as soon as I heard the sound of his words, I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.

As soon as the Son of God spoke Daniel went into shock. He was left unconscious with his face on the ground just like John in Revelation 1. Now tonight we come to the next part of this introduction, that was the terrifying vision of a heavenly being. Thirdly we see the unsettling explanation of the angel. This is verses 10 through 14. At this point, understand this, in verse 10, if we're interpreting it correctly, then in verse 10 the vision of the Messiah is over and we meet a second person, and angel who comes to interpret the vision. Without question the person beginning in verse 10 must be an angel because he is clearly not equal to God. Remember in verse 13 he requires the help of Michael to fight against demonic forces. There is almost universal agreement among commentators and scholars that the person we meet beginning in verse 10 must be an angel. It may be Gabriel who's appeared several times before, if so it's surprising that he's not named like he is before. Or more likely this is another angel who simply remains unnamed. Now the angel actually appears to Daniel in bodily form because in verse 10 he touches him. Notice: "Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees." Remember in verse 9 Daniel was unconscious on his face before the son of God; and here an angel touched him, brought him to consciousness and raised him from prostrate on the ground on his face to resting on his hands and knees; but he's still trembling in fear and weakness from what he has just experienced.

Verse 11: "He said to me, "O Daniel, man of high esteem". Again I love that reference. One who is highly favored with God, not because of who Daniel is but who because of who God is, just like with us. "Oh man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." "Understand Daniel", in other words "Daniel you need to listen and you need to contemplate carefully what I'm about to tell you." Truly not surprising, if you you've read further in the book of Daniel, and you've read the vision in chapter 11, it's pretty difficult to understand. No wonder that the angel says "listen up Daniel, you need to focus because of what I'm about to tell you." Not only is it incredible historical detail; but it's presented in such a way that would have made it very difficult for someone who isn't looking back on those things like we are to have fully and completely comprehended it, as we can today. Daniel really needed to give his attention to this.

The angel says also "stand up", you have, I've comforted you, I've encouraged you and so stand up. God had sent this angel specifically for Daniel's benefit. Verse 11 goes on to say: "And when

he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling.” Daniel found the strength to stand on his feet but he’s still trembling with fear and weakness. Verse 12: “Then he said to me, ‘Do not be afraid, Daniel.’” Why? Why would you not be afraid? “For”, because, here's why: “Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding *this* and on humbling yourself before your God”, that is from the beginning of his prayers and fasting four weeks before, from the beginning of that “your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words.” From the beginning of that “your words were heard”, God heard your prayer, “and I have come in response to your words.” Again, folks, we have seen again and again in Daniel's life God's response to prayer. You know some people talk about the power of prayer. Prayer has no power, the God to whom we pray has power and He responds and that's exactly what He does here. Daniel prays, he prays the same kind of weak, inadequate prayers that we all pray; although certainly a holy man with many years of experience, and God heard his prayer and God responded just as He will hear our prayers and respond. His great heart was moved. Notice God sent this angel in answer to Daniel's prayer. In fact in Hebrew what the angel says here is emphatic. Literally it reads this way: “I myself have come in response to your words.” The clear implication is that God would not have sent his angel if Daniel had not prayed. Just think about in your own life what you have forfeited because of a failure to simply ask God for what you really need. We have not because we ask not, and sometimes it's because we ask in the wrong way to satisfy our lusts; but often it's because we don't ask. Daniel prayed, God responded. Dale Ralph Davis writes: “Daniel prayed and angels went to war.”

What follows in verse 13 and following is one of the most unusual and potentially, if you don't understand it, potentially one of the most unsettling passages and explanations in all of Scripture. Look at verse 13: “But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days.” In other words this angel says: “Daniel when you first began to pray three weeks ago God sent me to you, specifically in answer to your prayer, but I was delayed for 21 days.” Why? Notice what he says: because “the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days.” Who is this person who can stand against a powerful angel sent from God? It can't be a man since he's able to withstand an angel for 21 days, it must be another angel. Also by the way in verse 21 Michael is called the Prince of Israel so the Prince of Persia here in the same passage must have also been an angel. Secondly, it cannot be a holy angel since he stands opposed to God’s angel, it

must be an evil angel or, as we have come to call them, and the New Testament does, “demons”, and the Old Testament does as well. So the Prince of the Kingdom of Persia then must have been a demon. A demon with a very specific assignment. His assignment, his territory, his special area of responsibility was Persia.

Now we can't be more specific than that. This may be a demon that Satan assigned to the empire of Persia, or possibly it's Satan himself. Since Persia was at that time the dominant world power in the Mediterranean, it would have been a special interest to Satan, and probably the place where he would have concentrated his efforts. So it is either one of his demons assigned to this role, or Satan himself. Verse 13 says: “the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me.” That doesn't mean that this demon was trying to keep the holy angel from delivering his message to Daniel. How do we know that? Because as soon as this angel finishes delivering his message he goes back and engages in the conflict again. It's more likely that the delay was because of the larger battle between the forces of God and the forces of Satan, and that's where the curtain is drawn back here and allows us to glimpse something of what's happening around us all the time. Sinclair Ferguson writes: “Chapter 10 contains vital biblical insights into the nature of reality. It emphasizes that human causes and effects are not the only forces or influences operative in the history of the world.” End of quote. Have you ever thought about that? Satan, according to this passage, appoints high ranking demons to individual governments, especially the most powerful and influential to influence their leaders against God and His people. Abraham Kuyper writes this:

If once the curtain were pulled back and the spiritual world behind it came to view, it would expose to our spiritual vision a struggle so intense, so convulsive, sweeping everything within its range that the fiercest battle ever fought on earth would seem by comparison a mere game. Not here, but there, that is where the real conflict is waged. Our earthly struggle drones in its backlash.

Verse 13: “the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes.” Notice that expression “one of the chief princes.” Scripture is clear that among the angels as well as the demons there is a hierarchy of leadership, and among the angels, the holy angels, Michael is certainly one - if not *the* most powerful and

important angel. He is one of two angels that are named in Scripture (Gabriel being the other.) Michael's name means 'Who is like God?' And here he's called one of the chief princes. In Jude 9 he's called 'the Archangel.' Since Michael here is called *one* of the chief princes, it does suggest there may be other archangels that aren't named in Scripture, so it's possible – another is Gabriel, the only other angel mentioned by name in the Bible - but Michael is the only angel called an Archangel. The title Archangel just means 'Chief' or 'First angel'. The apocryphal book of Enoch names a total of seven archangels, with four of those seven as the principal ones. You've heard their names because they are out there in sort of mythology: Michael, Gabriel, which are biblical names, and then Raphael and Uriel. But Scripture only calls one angel an Archangel and that's Michael. The title indicates that Michael has authority over most if not all the other angels. In fact in Revelation 12 verses 7 and 8, Michael is described as the leader, the captain of the angelic army under Christ of course. In 1 Thessalonians 4:16 we're told that "Christ will return with the voice of the Archangel", it could be the voice of Michael at the return of Christ. Daniel goes on in verse 13 to quote the angel then "Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia." According to verse 21, Michael has incredible power. He "stands firmly against these forces", it says in verse 21. Incredible, tremendous power. And Michael came to help this angel because Daniel's prayers concerned Israel and Michael has the primary responsibility to protect the Jewish people. Notice he is called in verse 21 "Michael your Prince", meaning the Prince of Israel. Donald Miller in his commentary writes

Israel has a mighty angelic supporter in the heavenly realm. Therefore, regardless of Israel's political, military, and economic weaknesses, its existence is assured because no earthly power can resist their great prince.

At the end of Daniel's life the great world superpower was Persia, and so it was perfectly natural for Satan, either himself or through one of his demons, to try to influence the decisions of those in leadership in Persia in order to accomplish his ends. There was a spiritual battle raging behind the political decisions happening in Persia. Michael came to the aid of this angel as he battled. Notice the plural "the *kings* of Persia." Since this battle is a spiritual one, these kings were the spiritual rulers, the demons - multiple ones now, we're not talking about just the one Prince, but multiple rulers at the spiritual level who were seeking to influence the human rulers of Persia and to bring them under control. It's possible, you remember we saw last time that that there was opposition

that was aroused in Palestine, the Samaritans against rebuilding - the Jewish people rebuilding their city and their temple, and you remember the leaders of Persia at the time responded and shut down the building. It's possible that behind that was this spiritual struggle that we're reading about here. Now having explained why he was delayed the angel explained the purpose for his coming, verse 14: "Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days." Daniel, you remember, had prayed for insight concerning the future of Israel, specifically what would happen in the latter days, that expression referring to the events coming in conjunction with the Kingdom of God, and God sent his angel to answer Daniel's prayer to give him insight and knowledge about those end time events. As a bonus Daniel is also going to learn in chapter 11 about other important events in Israel's history as well.

Verse 14: "For the vision pertains to the days yet *future*." So there is the unsettling explanation by the angel of what has been going on. That brings us then to the gracious preparation of the prophet, beginning in verse 15 and running through chapter 11 verse 1. God prepares Daniel to receive this vision that we're going to see in chapters 11 and 12 and to benefit from it, to understand it to benefit from it. And notice how he graciously prepares in verse 15: "When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless." Daniel is again overcome with fear and emotion, unable to continue to stand upright or even to speak. Verse 16: "And behold, one who resembled a human being was touching my lips." The angel touched his lips which allowed him to speak. Verse 16 goes on:

Then I opened my mouth and spoke and said to him who was standing before me,
"O my lord, as a result of the vision anguish has come upon me, and I have retained no strength. For how can such a servant of my lord talk with such as my lord? As for me, there remains just now no strength in me, nor has any breath been left in me.

Daniel says "listen how can a mere mortal like me carry on a conversation with such a powerful heavenly being." He says "I'm struggling even to breathe, to stay upright." Verse 18: "Then *this* one with human appearance touched me again and strengthened me." For the third time the angel touched Daniel and infused him with strength, and for the second time the angel encouraged Daniel. In verse 19: "He said, 'O man of high esteem, do not be afraid. Peace be with

you’.” Normally when peace be with you occurs first in a conversation it's just a gracious greeting. Here it's buried in the middle of what the angel says, and so he simply reassuring Daniel of his well-being. “You're safe Daniel, you don't need to be concerned. In light of that take courage and be courageous.” Literally the Hebrew reads “be strong and be strong”, repeats the same expression twice. This was not a command, and I love this, don't think that this is some kind of a command for Daniel to pull himself up by his own bootstraps. “Just get over it Daniel and be strong act like a man.” No, this was a declaration by the angel of a divine infusion of strength. Be strong and be strong. Verse 19: “Now as soon as he spoke to me, I received strength.” Notice the passive. God gave him strength to this angel, “and said, ‘May my lord speak, for you have strengthened me’.” Verse 20: “Then he said, ‘Do you understand why I came to you?’” Now that's an interesting question because the angel had already explained the purpose for his visit twice, back in verse 12 and in verse 14. So why does he ask Daniel this question? It's because he recognizes Daniel's weakness, he recognizes Daniel is having a hard time staying up and keeping up here. He's overcome with emotion and so he's asking Daniel if he has really heard what he's been told. “But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth.” The angel says, “listen Daniel, as soon as I'm done explaining this vision to you I'm going to leave to wage war.” In that one short line this angel described a spiritual battle, a spiritual war that would rage over Persia for the next two centuries of Persian rule, from the year 536 when this vision occurred to the year 331 when the empire of Greece showed up with Alexander the Great. Miller writes:

The struggle involved all of the decisions and relationships pertaining to the Jews during the Persian period. For example the reconstruction of the temple, deliverance for the Jews during the time of Esther, permission for Ezra and Nehemiah to return and their subsequent construction of the city. Of course even in the Old Testament the scope of God's activities reached beyond the affairs of the Jews.

This angel says “after I tell you what's going to happen Daniel, I'm going back to my spiritual struggle with the demons who are struggling to control Persia, and I'm going to fight with them. They want Satan's purposes to be done, but I fight for God's purposes to be accomplished. “

But that isn't the end of the story. Verse 20 goes on to say, “and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come.” The angel says “after Persia passes from the stage of human history, after I have

fought with the Prince of Persia for two more centuries and Persia goes into the trash heap of history - at least as an empire - then I along with all of God's forces will fight a new Prince. Satan will designate a Prince of Greece and I along with all of God's forces will fight that Prince as well.” Think about that. The angel here is describing that this spiritual war that goes on between the forces of God and the forces of Satan, that influences events on the stage of world history, that is a constant ongoing reality. In fact chapter 11 is going to describe many of the struggles that God's people would have during the Greek empire two centuries later. That would begin two centuries later. Those struggles, just like the ones in Persia, would be initiated by demonic influence and would require angelic support and defense. Listen folks: it doesn't matter what nation or what empire dominates human history, the conflict between holy angels and Satan and his demons constantly rages.

Verse 21: “However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth.” Literally “I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth.” It's the book in which God has written the plan for Israel and the world, it's the history of the world, not like you and I take it in history class where we read what has already transpired, it's the history of the world yet to be fulfilled. Verse 22: “Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these *forces* except Michael your prince.” This doesn't mean no one else is willing or available to help God's people, it's not like God is running short of helpers. Instead, it emphasizes that God had assigned Michael to assist and protect the nation Israel, therefore it would be Michael who supported this angel in this spiritual war on behalf of the nation. Now the last part of the introduction to this vision comes actually in chapter 11 verse 1: “In the first year of Darius the Mede, I arose to be an encouragement and a protection for him.” Who's him? For Michael. This angel who appears says “in the first year of Darius the Mede, I arose to be an encouragement and protection for Michael.” In chapter 10, we learned that Michael had come to the aid of this angel, now we learn that this angel had come to the aid of Michael. It happened in the first year of Darius the Mede, about 538 BC, about two years before these events. During the first year of Darius, what was happening? It was the change of empires. An intense spiritual battle was raging in that time. Since Michael - Israel's Prince - was involved, this conflict obviously had to do with the Jewish people. The fall of Babylon and the decree of Cyrus the Persian allowing the Jews to return to Palestine both took place within the first year of Darius. And what Daniel wants us to see, what the angel wants us to see, is that those events in human history were

the outcome of a spiritual war between angelic and demonic beings. I think the primary event that the angel refers to here was Cyrus decree to allow the Jews to return to the land of Israel. Again listen to Miller, he writes:

In this passage we get a glimpse of the behind-the-scenes activity that took place in the Persian government. Cyrus releases the Jews, but unknown to the Persian monarch angelic forces play a part in this decision. Satan and his demons had been bound so that the will of God would be accomplished.

Why? Why would this matter so much? Why would the return of the Jewish people in their nation matter so much to Satan? Another author, Archer, writes this:

Knowing that such a development would lead to the ultimate appearance of the Son of God as the Messiah for God's redeemed, Satan and all his hosts were determined to thwart the renewal of Israel and the deliverance of His people from destruction.

What an amazing account. What incredible insight. The Lord pulls back the curtain and allows us to see what's really happening in the world around us. Now, I want us to leave the flow through the passage and I want us to turn for a few minutes to the important spiritual lessons for us. And there are several of them. First of all - and this is obvious but I just want to remind you of this - angels are real. There is indisputable biblical evidence. They appear throughout biblical history and Scripture. In fact, the Old Testament refers to angels more than 100 times. The New Testament mentions them over 150 times, including 65 times in Revelation. Thirty-four different biblical authors including 17 books in the Old Testament and 17 books in the New Testament refer to angels. And if all of that wasn't enough, our Lord himself refers to angels as being real. Matthew 25:31 "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne." How many edges are there? Well, Jesus told us that they don't propagate or reproduce according to Matthew 22, so that means the number of angels is fixed. Creation is done, the number is fixed. Daniel 9:10 we saw that thousands upon thousands that angels were attending the ancient of days and myriads upon myriads were standing before Him. As I pointed out to you then, myriads of myriads in Aramaic is literally 10,000 times 10,000. Ten thousand was the largest number for which ancient people had a word, so 10,000 times 10,000 was the square of that number. Literally 100 million angels; but there's even more than that because in Revelation

5:11 John says, “I saw around the throne, the number of those around the throne was myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands.” By adding thousands of thousands, John implies that there were more than 100 million angels. all of the angels, both those that remain holy and those that rebelled, were created. Psalm 148 verse 2 says: “Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts!” Verse 5: “Let them praise the name of the LORD, For He commanded and they were created.” Specifically they were created by Christ, by the second person of the Trinity. John 1:3 “All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.” And Colossians 1:16 is explicit: “For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities.” That's a reference for this the spiritual beings that are angels and demons. “All things have been created through Him and for Him.” So angels are real.

Secondly there are both good and evil angels. Mark 8:38 says “The Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” And Matthew 25:41 says “He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels’.”

Thirdly, by God’s permission these powerful angelic and demonic forces influence human governments and their leaders. It was true of Persia, we’ve just seen it, it was true of Greece, we’ve just seen that, it was true of Israel we’ve just seen that in Daniel 10 as well. Understand folks, that's not ancient history. The same spiritual conflict exists today in individual nations like North Korea and Iran. It is equally true of the world great superpowers China, Russia, and the US. Satan continues his relentless efforts to affect human history by influencing human rulers and he focuses his efforts I believe on the most powerful and influential nations in the world. At the same time, Daniel tells us that holy angels are working to influence the decisions and policies of government toward God's own ends and designs. Now I know what you're thinking. Don't look at one of our parties and say “demons”, and the other party and say “angels”. It doesn't work like that. In fact, I suspect - well I'm not going to go there. You get the point. Don't try to assign a political label to the sides. The bottom line is all of those who are involved in leadership who do not know Christ, most of them, are at the disposal of Satan and God and his holy angels are at work to accomplish his purposes. So understand these battles are real. Back of all that happens on the stage of human

history is an invisible spiritual war waged between angels and demons. Again listen to Dale Ralph Davis, I love this quote, he says speaking of Daniel 10:

What are we to make of this? One must not sensationalize the text, nor yet mute its testimony. The teaching seems to be that unseen evil powers influence and control the kingdoms and governments of this world in order to inflict harm and havoc on the people of God.

By the way, the same spiritual war also explains in part spiritual realities. Remember what Paul said in Ephesians 6:12, he said “we don't wrestle against flesh and blood.” The enemies we fight are not people. Get that through your head. He said “our struggle is against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.” Folks, your enemy is not unbelievers, your enemy is not a group of unbelievers with a certain cause that's contrary to God in his Word. They are mere pawns in a much larger spiritual war. They are being used; they are being victimized. They are responsible for their choices but in the end there's a much larger battle raging. I mean, think of it this way: why don't people believe when you share the gospel? Well obviously each person has his or her own answer to that question to some extent, and the answer in every case in part is because of their dead spiritual soul, they can't believe because they're dead to God. But there's another answer as well, and that's found in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verses 3 and 4: “If our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.” So understand that and at an international level, at a national level this battle rages. But let me just say it rages at a personal spiritual level as well. We don't go where those in the charismatic movement go, and stake everything on the activity of demons; but understand at the same time we can't overreact and act like that isn't a reality. Satan tempts, both through the world system that he's created and as we can see personal temptation. We see it in the New Testament, we see it with the apostle Peter and others who are tempted by the work of the evil one. So understand your own life is caught up in this battle as well.

Number 4, in this war angels constantly act on behalf of and minister to God's people. In fact Hebrews 1:14 says angels are “ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those

who will inherit salvation.” You realize God has designated not a guard, one guardian angel for you, that's not found anywhere in Scripture, that exact concept. But the idea that God has assigned his angels to care for his people is a biblical concept. They are to render service. What kind of service? Well generally they minister to us in whatever way God chooses. The Greek word for ministering means they have the responsibility to assist or to help believers. In what ways? Well they're help includes physical protection. In Psalm 91 “my angels will bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.” In Acts 5:19 an angel released the apostles from prison. In acts 12 an angel rescued Peter from prison. Wayne Grudem writes in his systematic theology:

When a car suddenly swerves from hitting us, when we suddenly find footing to keep from being swept along in a raging river, when we walk unscathed in a dangerous neighborhood, should we not expect that God has sent his angels to protect us? Does not Scripture promise “For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone?”

Physical protection, physical provision. In 1Kings 19, angels provided food for Elijah. Assistance and answers to prayer. We see that here in Daniel. Aid in getting the message, the gospel message to the lost. In Acts 8 to the Ethiopian official an angel assists. In acts 10 and angel assists in getting the gospel to Cornelius. They provide encouragement according to Acts 27 verses 23 and 24. So they are ministering spirits, they are involved in this war on our behalf.

Number 5, greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world. Make sure you don't misinterpret what's going on in Daniel 10. It's not teaching that God is somehow equal to Satan and that Satan and his demons actually have the capacity and power to thwart the will of God. God can choose at any moment to override and overcome the resistance of all the forces of hell to crush them if He chooses. Instead He allows them to endure for his own purposes, to accomplish His own ends. But he never allows Satan and his demons to go beyond His perfect will and control. You see that in Job 1, don't you? Satan has to show up and ask permission to do what he does to Job. So as you reflect on the spiritual war that surrounds us between angels and demons, don't ever forget the words of John the Apostle in 1 John 4:4 “You are from God, little children, and have overcome them, because greater is He who is in you”, the Spirit of Christ in you is greater, “than he who is

in the world”, that is Satan. The battle is never in question. Martin Luther understood that just beneath the human struggles of the Reformation there was a great spiritual warrant with raising across Europe. And that awareness prompted him at times to do some surprising things, you remember that the famous episode in which he threw an ink bottle across the room at Satan and it splashed against the wall, because he was aware that there was more at stake than his fight against the Pope. It was a spiritual war raging. But Luther also knew that this spiritual war, in the spiritual war, it was absolutely impossible for God to lose. And that's why he wrote that great anthem of the Reformation

A mighty fortress is our God,
a bulwark never failing;
our helper He, amid the flood
of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe
does seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great,
and armed with cruel hate,
on earth is not His equal.
Did we in our own strength confide,
our striving would be losing,
were not the right Man on our side,
the Man of God's own choosing.
You ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth his name,
from age to age the same;
and He must win the battle.
And though this world, with devils filled,
should threaten to undo us,
we will not fear, for God has willed
his truth to triumph through us.

The prince of darkness grim,
we tremble not for him;
his rage we can endure,
for lo! his doom is sure;
one little word shall fell him.
That Word above all earthly powers
no thanks to them abideth;
the Spirit and the gifts are ours
through him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go,
this mortal life also;
the body they may kill:
God's truth abideth still;
His Kingdom is forever!

May that be the cry of our hearts and the confidence of our lives. Our God reigns in the person of His son, and always will, and He must win the battle. Let's pray together. Our Father we are so grateful that in your goodness you have pulled back the curtain and allowed us to see into the spiritual war that rages around us. A war that affects our individual lives, a war that affects what plays out on the in the headlines of our news, what happens in the capitals of the most influential countries in our world. Ultimately behind those headlines is this spiritual war that rages. Lord, we thank you that the outcome of that war is not in question, that our Lord Jesus Christ must win the battle and He will. Help us to live, Father, like those who know we've won in Christ. And help us to anticipate the day when those enemies that He's already defeated at the cross, when He triumphed over them at the cross, the day will come when He will crush them beneath his feet, and everything here that causes us to stumble, every trap Satan has laid, every part of the world system that he has made that sucks us into its bitter honey that in the end wrecks our lives, someday our gracious King will destroy them all. Lord we long for that day, when you put an end to your enemies, and you alone will reign forever. Help us to live in light of eternity, help us to live eager for that day, help us to enjoy the gift of life you've given us; but Lord don't let us sink our roots

too deeply here. Remind us that this world is not our home, we're just passing through, that we long for a Kingdom that is unshakable, a Kingdom that is forever. We pray in Jesus's name, Amen.