

## Angelic Battles in Earthly Kingdoms #1

Daniel 10:10-15

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We tend to focus only upon problems and solutions that we can see with our eyes and hear with our ears. That is a very natural approach since we are human beings that live and move about in physical/material bodies. Even as Christians we may not think very often about the influence of angelic beings (godly or ungodly) in the affairs of our lives or in matters related to nations, wars, laws, culture, religion etc.

The text before us today brings home that there is another world of the unseen that is very real and that has a significant role in influencing/shaping what happens every day. As moral agents, we are always responsible for our own desires, words, and deeds, but there are invisible forces beyond the physical/material world that are used by the Lord or used by Satan to intervene in the affairs of people, families, churches, and nations. The Bible gives insight into these matters—not in a spooky, creepy way, but in a very real and truthful way.

There is not only a visible creation of God which can be seen with our natural eyes, but there is also an invisible creation of God that cannot be seen with our natural eyes (Colossians 1:15-16). Let's explore this spiritual world of good and evil over the next couple weeks as we consider our text from Daniel 10:10-15.

The main points from our text are: (1) The Help Given to Daniel by an Angel (Daniel 10:10-11); (2) The Explanation Given to Daniel for the Delay to His Prayer (Daniel 10:12-15).

### I. The Help Given to Daniel by an Angel (Daniel 10:10-11).

#### A. Review

1. This is the last recorded vision/revelation in the Book of Daniel. It covers the last three chapters (Daniel 10-12).
2. When Daniel received this vision, he was likely in a more isolated location (near the Tigris River many miles from Babylon). Daniel began a partial fast that lasted 21 days. The reason for the fast is not explicitly given, but we might deduce that since it was now about two years since Cyrus issued his decree for the Jews to return to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem that Daniel's deep concern for God's people and the opposition that they were facing from the Samaritans (Ezra 4) was likely what troubled Daniel and led him to fast and pray at this time.
3. Daniel was given a vision of the glory of the Lord Jesus (in Daniel 10:5-6) in order to encourage him that God's people were protected by and cared for by this glorious and exalted Priest and King.
4. Daniel responded to this amazing vision of Christ by falling into an unconscious state of sleep, prostrate with his face to the ground.

B. While Daniel is in this unconscious state after beholding the Lord of glory in a vision, an angel physically touched him. This was most likely the angel, Gabriel, who had already appeared to him on two previous occasions: Daniel 8:15-18 and Daniel 9:20-23.

1. Gabriel first awakened Daniel and set him upon his hands and knees to give him gradually time to collect himself and to regain his strength. God still sends His angels to help and strengthen us (Hebrews 1:14). They are very involved in our lives. God could have immediately restored Daniel, but He did so in degrees by an angel to remind us that bodily and spiritual restoration do not always come at once, but often come in degrees that we might praise Him for the progress He has given and yet hope in Him for a full recovery/insight (Jesus healed a blind man in degrees—Mark 8:23-25).

2. The angel then gave the reason for his appearance.

- a. He began by assuring Daniel of His accepted and beloved state before the Lord so as to subdue Daniel's fears ("a man greatly beloved" Daniel 10:11; Daniel 9:23). How tender is the Lord

(even through His angels) to calm Daniel's fears (and to calm our fears by so many promises of His presence, Isaiah 41:10, and of our acceptance Ephesians 1:6). There is a holy fear in which we stand in awe and wonder of God's glory and might. We take His promises and His warnings seriously. There is also a sinful fear in which we rest not in God's promises but listen to the enemy that God will not be merciful, will not be with us, will not provide all we need which brings us to sinfully fear everything that is out of our control.

b. The angel then informed Daniel that he was sent to give Daniel understanding of what was about to be revealed to him. And even with the assurance of God's love and the truth God, Daniel yet stood trembling. Even the saints of God that were most honored in Scripture were yet weak, feeble men/women. They were not great, but believed in a Great God. How patient is the Lord with us, His trembling, faltering servants (that is the reason God reveals the weaknesses and sins of the heroes of faith—to remind us that He is the Great One).

## **II. The Explanation Given to Daniel for the Delay to His Prayer (Daniel 10:12-15).**

A. Gabriel now explained (Daniel 10:12) that when Daniel began to pray and to fast 21 days earlier that Daniel's prayer was heard at that moment and acted upon by God in sending Gabriel to reveal to Daniel God's plan for the future of God's people. But if God heard and acted immediately, why the delay in getting the answer to Daniel?

B. There was a battle in the invisible, spiritual world that no mere human being could see with the natural eye that prevented Gabriel from coming to Daniel any sooner than he did. Who was this spiritual battle between? The battle was between Gabriel and "the prince of the kingdom of Persia" (Daniel 10:13). Let's understand who these opposing forces were.

1. We know that Gabriel was an angel of God (Luke 1:19,26).

a. Angels are created spirit beings (they may assume bodies, but they are complete as spirits). They were created by God in order to serve and praise Him. Those angels that fell away in apostasy from God followed Satan—hell was prepared for them (Matthew 25:41).

b. Angels are not mere observers of God's creation, but are vigilant and watchful to carry out God's mighty works by God's power in ministering to God's people (2 Kings 6—a great host of angels protected Elisha from the Syrian troops; Daniel 6—lion's den; Acts 12:7—rescued Peter; Hebrews 1:14) and in judging God's enemies (2 Kings 19—slayed 185,000 Assyrians outside Jerusalem in one night; Acts 12—destroyed Herod with worms). How many times have God's angels preserved and protected us and our children from so many dangers? Paul even states that God's angels come at times disguised as strangers in ministering to God's people (Hebrews 13:2).

c. Angels are not omniscient (1 Peter 1:12). They are not omnipresent (they are sent). They are not almighty (they are servants). They are quick (not lazy) to do God's will (Matthew 6:10—"thy will be done"; Daniel 10:12-13). There is an amazing number of angels (Daniel 7:10; Hebrews 12:22). Angels are not to be worshipped or to be prayed to (the Apostle John learned that lesson twice, Revelation 19:10; Revelation 22:8-9). Yet they join us for worship (1 Corinthians 11:10).

2. Who was "the prince of Persia" that withstood Gabriel?

a. Some divines (past and present) have suggested that "the prince of Persia" was an earthly Persian prince—namely, Cambyses, the son of Cyrus. However, we have no biblical or historical testimony that Cambyses offered resistance to the Jews while he was yet a prince and before he became a king. This is unlikely since his father, Cyrus, had decreed and provided for the Jews to rebuild the temple. Why would Gabriel have such a difficult time overcoming a mere human king for 21 days when an angel from God slew 185,000 Assyrians in one night?

b. Other divines (past and present) have proposed that "the prince of Persia" was an evil angel sent by Satan to influence King Cyrus against the Jews and to side with the Samaritans (Ezra 4).

(1) Michael (identified as an archangel in Jude 1:9) is an angelic "prince"

(Daniel 10:13,21 and Daniel 12:1). Thus, “the prince of Persia” is likewise an angelic prince (though a fallen angel). Michael (who is clearly not an earthly prince, but a heavenly prince) was called to assist Gabriel in the conflict with “the prince of Persia”. Satan is also called a “prince” (Matthew 9:34; John 14:30; Ephesians 2:2). There is a hierarchy among angelic beings—both godly and wicked (Daniel 10:13; Ephesians 6:10-12). An angelic “prince” is then an angel that holds a higher rank than other angels.

(2) Likewise, we see another spiritual battle portrayed for us between Michael and Satan in Revelation 12:7-8. The effects of these spiritual battles are seen in the affairs of men. Behind events that occur on earth are spiritual battles between God angels and Satan’s demons which Jesus has already won (Colossians 2:15)

(3) How are such spiritual battles as we find in Daniel 10:13 fought? By the powerful influence exercised over people through suggestions and temptations in leading them to make particular decisions (1 Samuel 16—an evil spirit was sent to stir up Saul against David; 1 Kings 22—an evil spirit was sent to influence the false prophets to lie to King Ahab). We may be tempted from within by sinful desires (James 1), or from without by evil suggestions/temptations. That’s the spiritual battle that is waged in Daniel 10:13. We will have more to say about this spiritual battle in the sermon next week. Presently, I only want to establish that there is a real spiritual realm in which such battles occur.

(4) When it appears that the wicked spirits have won the day, does that mean that Satan is more powerful than God? Absolutely not! God controls Satan and gives him enough rope to hang himself at times (as it was as in the case of Job, Peter, Christ), and at other times God restrains Satan from doing what he wants to do (Job 2:6 “but save his life”).

3. What was the spiritual battle about between the angel, Gabriel, and the angelic “prince of Persia” here in Daniel 10:13? Since this wicked spirit was called “the prince of Persia”, he was likely dispatched by Satan to seek to influence the King of Persia (Cyrus) over a period of 21 days. Gabriel together with Michael wrought by God’s power a victory for God’s people in leading the Cyrus to show himself most favorable to the Jews in supporting them in rebuilding the temple rather than supporting the Samaritans (Ezra 4) who sought to use the King to stop the rebuilding of the temple.

C. In Daniel 10:14, Gabriel informs Daniel that the vision that shall be given to him (which we will consider in Daniel 11-12) concerns events that are yet to come many days in the future to the time of Daniel. Daniel needed an interpreting angel to give him understanding of this revelation.

#### D. Application.

1. Delays in our prayers do not mean they have not been heard, received, or even acted upon by God. There are so many connections that God may be working out just as was true here in Daniel 10. But ultimately, God always answers our prayers (Yes, No, Wait). Ultimately, it is a matter of trust. Do we trust the Lord to know what is best for us? Is He trustworthy? Is He good? Is He wise and almighty?

2. Let us realize our battle is not supremely with earthly rulers, but with spiritual rulers in high places and that we do not fight this battle alone. We cannot lose (1 John 4:4). The mighty hosts of God will prevail, for our Sovereign God will prevail (Psalm 33:10-11).

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