

• *The last and longest of Daniel's five visions*

• *A distressing vision of a great war*

The angel of the Lord

• *A special angel represent God in his glorious character*

• *The nearest anyone ever came to seeing God*

• *Overcome - He fell face-down into a trance*

• *Daniel gets an answer*

Territorial Spirits?

• *Demons over anti-Israelite regimes*

We come now, in Daniel 10:1–12:13, to the last and longest of the five prophetic visions of the Book of Daniel. It has a section dealing with the preliminary preparation of the prophet^{□1}. Then comes the prophetic vision^{□2}, and then there is a conclusion^{□3}.

Daniel is given a fifth vision^{□1}. A new revelation was given to Daniel in Cyrus's third year – about 536 BC. It was a vision about a great war^{□2}. *Its message was true and it concerned a great war*, says Daniel 10:1. It caused Daniel a lot of distress^{□3}. We have seen that Daniel was a man of great prayerfulness (see 1:17, 20; 5:11–12; 9:23; 10:1). So it comes as no surprise that Daniel's new vision led him into another time of sustained prayer. He went on a light diet for three weeks while he spent time in meditation and prayer^{□4}.

Daniel meets the angel of the Lord. After Daniel's time of sustained prayer, on a day which he remembered vividly, an angelic being appeared to him by the River Tigris^{□1}. He was clothed in white linen, and wore a golden belt^{□2}. His body shone with the yellow light of beryl or chrysolite. His face was bright. His eyes were like fire. His arms and legs were like bronze. His voice sounded like the sound of a large crowd of people^{□3}. These phrases are all ways of speaking of this angel's great power, purity, strength and beauty. It was a visitation from 'the angel of the Lord', a special angel whose task it was to represent God in his glorious character. No one can see God, and yet the 'angel of the Lord' represented God to such an extent that to see the angel of the Lord was the nearest anyone ever came to seeing God.

No one but Daniel saw the vision but his companions experienced something that made them run for fear and hide^{□1}. Daniel himself was overcome. ⁸*So I was left alone, seeing this great vision. I had no strength left in me. My face showed its confusion, and I was helpless.* He fell face-down into a trance^{□2}.

Daniel gets an answer. He was able to rise a little when a hand touched him^{□1} and the angel assured Daniel that he was much loved. From the beginning of his praying God had been answering his prayers and this angel was sent to him^{□2}. ¹³*But,* says the angel, *'the prince of Persia has been fighting against me for twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief angelic princes, came to help me...'* The angel goes on to say how he has been sent to Daniel to give him further revelations concerning the future^{□3}.

These verses have been quoted to defend the idea of 'territorial spirits'. Certainly there is reference to demonic beings here, but they are not demons over territories; they are demons over anti-Israelite regimes. The 'prince of Persia' means the prince of the Persian **authority**, not prince over Persian **territory**. Later on we have reference to the prince of Greece. But these are the same place! The Persian empire was taken over by the Greek empire and (roughly speaking) the two empires occupied the same area. The demons here are not over separate territories. Rather the point is this. Behind the anti- Israelite kingdom of Persia there was demonic power. Behind the anti-Israelite kingdom of Greece there was demonic power. At times the Persians and the Greeks fought against each other. But this did not mean that Satan's kingdom was divided or that demon was fighting against demon! There is in fact

□1 10:1-11:1
□2 11:2-12:3
□3 12:4-13

□1 10:1-3
□2 10:1

□3 10:2

□4 10:3

□1 10:4

□2 10:5

□3 10:6

□1 10:7

□2 10:9

□1 10:11

□2 10:12

□3 10:14



• *Little evidence for territorial spirits*

little evidence in Scripture for territorial spirits, and the idea should be dropped. Pagans often **thought** of demons as local, but Scriptural writers **oppose** the pagan ideas they mention. A lot of ideas that are currently popular in this connection need to be dropped. That there are three levels of demon is without clear proof. (No doubt there are categories of demons but I doubt whether we can say what they are.) That we have to get the names of demons I doubt. That prayer consists of shouting at Satan I doubt. There are a lot of ideas and habits around that have a **tiny** bit of truth in them but have been developed into seminars and systems and new habits most of which cannot find any clear support in Scripture. There is no evidence that 'strategic level spiritual warfare' has produced any greater success in evangelism than the older kind of spiritual warfare and the more ordinary kind of praying. Often in the Christian church a new movement arises and we are tempted by it for a while but then it proves to have been a by-path and we have to drop it. Much talk about interceding against territorial spirits is a case in point. It develops too big a system of shouting at Satan from too small a base in Scripture.

• *In practical Christian living what this means is that we often have to persist in prayer without knowing why*

The 'prince of Persia' was a demonic being sent to resist the angel's message from getting to Daniel. In practical Christian living what this means is that we often have to persist in prayer without knowing why. Prayer-answers might be delayed by opposition from the Satanic realm. A lot goes on in the spiritual realm that we know little about. When something big is about to happen in the kingdom of God, we often find extraordinary opposition and much needless delay. We do not always know why there is the delay and we may suspect it is Satanic. Daniel simply kept on praying. 'People ought always to pray and not lose heart' ¹.

¹ Luke 18:1

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