

# Lesson 8 | January 23, 2022

## Spiritual Forces in High Places

**Study Text:** Daniel 10:1–21

**Central Truth:** God is supreme over all spiritual forces.

**Key Verse:** Daniel 10:14

Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days (KJV).

“Now I am here to explain what will happen to your people in the future, for this vision concerns a time yet to come” (NLT).

### Learning Objectives

- Students should recognize that there are spiritual forces behind earthly powers.
- Students should appreciate that spiritual warfare is a natural part of living out the Christian life.
- Students should be challenged to submit to the authority of Jesus Christ no matter the battles they face.

## Introducing the Lesson

**Say:** God is always active in our lives and in the world around us, even when we cannot see Him at work. **In the busyness of life, we are often unaware of the spiritual battles—and victories—taking place around us. Have you ever considered God has delivered you from enemies and circumstance you were not aware of at the time?**

### Opening Activity—Spiritual Battle

*Ask: What is the biggest battle you have faced in your life, and why? What advice would you give someone who is going through a similar battle?*

**Say:** Everyone faces battles in life, whether they be physical, emotional, or spiritual.

**Today’s lesson focuses on the Christian’s battle against spiritual forces.** The visions recorded in the Book of Daniel are important in that they help us understand spiritual forces at work around us.

**Spiritual Forces at work in government. You are racist if you don’t agree with changing voting laws. You are a hateful person if you say anything about homosexuals or transgender people. Our military is paying for sex changes. It is illegal in Canada for anyone to try and talk a transgender person into changing their ways. In Canada,**

**pastors are going to jail for holding services during mandated closures and not wearing masks.** (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Daniel 10 begins a passage (chapters 10–12) recording the final of four visions that describe events leading up to the coming of Christ and the end times. (These visions record the future with such accuracy that theologians who deny divine inspiration of Scripture insist that Daniel was written centuries after its actual date because they cannot believe he could have been this accurate.)

**In this vision, Daniel was told of a severe spiritual battle. Amid this struggle, we are reminded of the nature and character of Satan and the demonic realm. We also gain a sense of the kinds of unseen struggles taking place as we seek victory over satanic forces. We must grasp the nature of such battles. In gaining this understanding, we are reminded that while the battle is very real, God will bring the victory, for He is supreme over all spiritual forces.**

## **Part 1—Daniel’s Vision**

### **Daniel Humbles Himself**

Daniel 10:1–3

**[Dan 10:1-3 KJV] 1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing [was] true, but the time appointed [was] long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision. 2 In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. 3 I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.**

**Say:** At the time of this writing, the people of Judah, including Daniel, were in exile in Babylon. Some had been allowed to return, but there was still much to do to restore the worship of God in the temple in Jerusalem. Daniel’s fervency in prayer is a good example for us as we pray for all nations—including our own—to come to God. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**Daniel 10 opens by giving the time frame for the vision Daniel was about to receive. The third year of the reign of King Cyrus of Persia was approximately 536 bc, significant because so much of what Daniel prophesied throughout his Book represented specific details of things that had not happened yet, including the rise and fall of kings and empires. Note also that Daniel wrote from Babylon during the Babylonian Exile of Judah. This is why he had been given the Babylonian name of Belteshazzar, which was derived from the name of a pagan god (see Daniel 4:4–8; conversely, the name “Daniel” means “God is my judge”).**

Truly, Daniel lived in a time and place of great spiritual challenge during those days of exile.

Daniel 10:2–3 goes on to describe how Daniel was personally moved and impacted by the vision he had received. (One might see these first three verses as an introduction to what follows.) **Three weeks of mourning was often associated with how people would lament the death of a loved one. Unsurprisingly, Daniel’s mourning was accompanied by intense, heartfelt prayer.**

Daniel abstained from certain foods, as well as some matters of personal care, during this intense time of prayer. He was clearly consumed by the desire to intercede for God’s people, that they as a nation would survive and continue to carry out their mission of fulfilling God’s purposes. Already, more than 42,000 people had returned to Jerusalem from exile, with Zerubbabel, and had reinstated worship at the site of the temple (see Ezra 2). No doubt Daniel deeply desired to see the nation continue in worship until the coming of the Messiah. Furthermore, he may have heard that construction on the temple had stopped (see Ezra 4) and had become disappointed. It is easy, then, to imagine why Daniel was so fervent in his intercession.

### *Discuss*

? What words might you use to describe what Daniel’s emotions seem to be in Daniel 10:1–3?

? Describe a time when you fervently sought the Lord. Why were you praying, and how did you feel during this time of intercession?

## **A Messenger Appears to Daniel**

Daniel 10:4–8

**[Dan 10:4-8 KJV] 4 And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which [is] Hiddekel; 5 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins [were] girded with fine gold of Uphaz: 6 His body also [was] like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. 7 And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. 8 Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.**

**Say:** The details of this vision were so important that Daniel wrote down specifically when and where it happened. God still speaks to us through His Word. As we walk with God, we must learn to listen for His voice in every situation and struggle. We might consider writing down these “God moments” to encourage ourselves in the future when difficulty comes. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Daniel 10:4 provides us with the date and place of this vision: **It was the twenty-fourth day of Nisan, the first month of the Hebrew lunar calendar, during the third year of Cyrus (verse 1). As a result, we can derive that this likely happened on April 23, 536 bc, on the bank of the Tigris River.** We also learn that Daniel was away from the city of Babylon, in the eastern part of Mesopotamia, in what is now southeastern Iraq.

Suddenly, a man appeared before Daniel. **Clearly this man was more than a human being. It has been noted that verses 5–6 may be the most vivid description of an angel in Scripture (compare with Judges 13:6; Luke 24:4; Acts 1:10). This angel was clothed in white linen (a sign of purity), he shone with a luminous glow of a precious stone (beryl, KJV, was a stone with a aquamarine color). The details of the angel’s appearance speak of him having great power.**

Further adding to the drama of this moment, we learn that while Daniel was not alone, only he could see the vision that was unfolding before him. **However, others clearly sensed that something incredible was going on, and they fled in fear. Verses 7–8, then, might remind us of the story of Paul’s conversion (see Acts 9:1–20), as the men with Daniel only had a vague sense of what was happening.**

This scene reminds us that God’s people must be spiritually alert, walking with God to the extent that he or she can sense God’s workings. And so, Daniel was left alone in the presence of this mighty angel. **We might be interested to observe that such an experience left him weak and pale (similar to what happened to Daniel in 8:27, after an encounter with the angel Gabriel).**

The Book of Daniel is certainly one of the most dramatic books in Scripture, from the basic perspective of human experiences, and chapter 10 is a prime example. However, it might leave us wondering what we are to do with what we are reading. **How should we absorb this? How might we understand the relevance of this drama in the life of a great man of God in light of our own lives?**

**Daniel reminds us that, as people of God, we exist between two realms. We live in this natural world, but we must always seek to perceive the spiritual world as well.** This becomes important as the Spirit of God moves in our lives, directing and empowering us. But this “dual residency” of the material and supernatural worlds also reminds us that there are spiritual battles happening all around us. We must be a people who are willing to humble

ourselves in the presence of God, recognizing that the battle belongs to Him. At the same time, we know that we will ourselves confront evil forces—and even evil ideas and temptations—in the strength of the Lord. We must be ready to exist and thrive in this spiritual realm.

### ***Discuss***

? How can we become better prepared to walk as God’s people in the spiritual realm as well as the physical realm?

? What does it mean to be humble before the Lord and to entrust every battle to Him?

### **Resource Packet Item 1: Fasting and Prayer**

Distribute the work sheet, and ask someone to read each of the listed passages aloud. As a class, look for the principles regarding fasting and how those principles can be applied today.

## **Part 2—Daniel Encounters a Heavenly Visitor “I Have Been Sent to You”**

Daniel 10:9–11

**[Dan 10:9-11 KJV] 9 Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground. 10 And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and [upon] the palms of my hands. 11 And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.**

**Say:** While it is likely that we have not been personally visited by an angel, we certainly have many opportunities to encounter God. *[Invite class members to share a time they have heard from God, and describe how it caused them to react in awe and reverence.]* (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**Daniel 10:9–12 records the magnificent angel speaking to Daniel, as well as Daniel’s response. As the angel began, Daniel fell to the ground on his face and entered a kind of comatose state. It appears that the solemn trauma and overwhelming emotion of the angel’s appearance, perhaps combined with Daniel’s three-week fast, greatly affected him.**

Such an experience was not new to Daniel. A similar experience is seen in Daniel 8:18,27. **Daniel 8 describes the critical vision of the ram and the male goat that foretold of Alexander the Great and the Greek Empire with amazing precision and**

detail. God was doing incredible things through the life of Daniel—providing visions that described the future and thus declared the glory of the Lord.

Daniel's deep sleep was temporary, however, as he was stirred by the very touch of the angel—a touch that left him trembling (10:11). Once again we are reminded that the visitor was an angel, and not a mere human being. **Daniel was renewed, preparing him for the incredible supernatural experience that was to come.**

**We can learn much from Daniel's experience. We will not encounter the kinds of visions he had, or be overwhelmed by a mighty angel, but we do live in a world surrounded by the supernatural. May we, like Daniel, be sensitive to the move of the Lord and receptive to what He may want to say to us, or do through us.**

### ***Discuss***

? How can studying Bible prophecy in the light of history strengthen our faith?

? What are some ways our lives might change when God says something to us or does something through us?

## **“Don't Be Afraid, Daniel”**

Daniel 10:12

**[Dan 10:12 KJV] 12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.**

**Say:** Daniel had been fervently praying for three weeks, and God had answered. His prayer for understanding and his humility were rewarded with a visit from an angel. Notice that Daniel kept on praying over the course of time. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**The angel's message to Daniel might be called a “good news/bad news” situation. Daniel 10:12 provides some marvelous news to the prophet. This great angel informed Daniel of what had been happening in heaven during the three weeks he had been in prayer—and the description was surely a blessing to Daniel.**

God had heard the desire of Daniel's heart, and that desire was about to be answered. However, it is important to see what undergirded his request. Note the focus of Daniel's prayer: **He asked God for understanding. He did not pray that God would cause things to go the way he thought they should go. Such a prayer called for trust in the midst of difficult spiritual battles.**



**Second, Daniel prayed in humility. He recognized who he was in comparison to God. He knew that God is in control and worthy of all trust.** And so, even amid all the trials of exile, and the emotional turmoil of the visions he was seeing, Daniel did not lose his sense of God's greatness and his need to place himself and the people in His hands. **The battle was taking place on a spiritual plane, ultimately, and the God he served was greater than any other spiritual forces.**

### ***Discuss***

? In what ways does the Lord strengthen believers when they are facing oppressive conditions?

? How has God strengthened you in difficult times? What people, circumstances, or blessings has He brought your way?

## **Part 3—Spiritual Forces at Work Spiritual Powers Clash**

Daniel 10:13–19

**[Dan 10:13-19 KJV] 13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. 14 Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision [is] for [many] days. 15 And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb. 16 And, behold, [one] like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. 17 For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me. 18 Then there came again and touched me [one] like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me, 19 And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace [be] unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me.**

**Say:** Daniel was fighting a spiritual battle for the Jewish people as he prayed fervently for them. Now, his physical strength was gone. At that point he could have been vulnerable, but God's messenger encouraged and strengthened him. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Daniel 10:13 likely describes spiritual forces at work within the Persian government, which ruled over the exiles. Scripture teaches that a demonic hierarchy exists (see Ephesians 1:21; 6:12; Colossians 2:15). In Daniel we see that the archangel Michael had joined in the battle, which allowed the messenger to come to Daniel, though delayed.

**America has spiritual forces at work in our government. We must pray like Daniel for our country and for victory over evil.**

The message presented by this angel who came to Daniel in 10:13 concerned the future of Daniel's people (verse 14; the Jewish people). First the angel touched Daniel's lips, giving him strength to speak (verse 16). **Note also that Daniel humbly acknowledged the weakness he felt as a result of the vision. Battle in the spiritual realm clearly can have an impact, even on the strength of a human being. That the angel strengthened Daniel with a touch reminded him that he was loved and highly esteemed by God (see also verses 11,19). While the battle of spiritual forces going on around him was very real, Daniel had no need to be fearful. He could instead find peace and strength from God (verses 17–19).**

### **Resource Packet Item 2: Angels and Demons**

Distribute the work sheet and divide the class into small groups. Have half of the groups work on the first question and the other half on the second question. Then ask for a few responses to each question.

#### ***Discuss***

? Read Ephesians 6:12, and describe how a spiritual battle differs from a physical battle.

? What can Ephesians 6:13–18 teach you about the way a believer prepares for the spiritual battles going on all around? (Note that much of the weaponry is defensive or protective; even the sword—the Word of God—is not made effective by us. We must keep in mind that the battle belongs to the Lord.)

### **More Battles Are Coming**

Daniel 10:20–21

**[Dan 10:20-21 KJV] 20 Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. 21 But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and [there is] none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.**

**Say:** Sometimes we might be tempted to feel as if we are the only ones fighting a spiritual battle, especially if we are dealing with a particularly difficult and/or long-lasting personal struggle. However, we can find assurance in knowing that godly spiritual forces are all around us. Much like Elisha's servant, whose eyes were opened to see



the army of God in 2 Kings 6:16–17, we can believe God for His gracious protection. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**The angel told Daniel that he had come to reveal what was written in the Book of Truth (Daniel 10:20–21; see verse 1). Elsewhere, Scripture mentions books of record written by God (see Daniel 12:1; also, Exodus 32:32; Psalm 69:28).**

[Dan 12:1 NLT] 1 "At that time Michael, the archangel who stands guard over your nation, will arise. Then there will be a time of anguish greater than any since nations first came into existence. But at that time every one of your people whose name is written in the book will be rescued.

[Psa 69:28 NLT] 28 Erase their names from the Book of Life; don't let them be counted among the righteous.

[Exo 32:32 NLT] 32 But now, if you will only forgive their sin--but if not, erase my name from the record you have written!"

After delivering this message, the angel was to return to battle alongside Michael for the sake of the Jewish people. The messenger had been part of this ongoing struggle before, for he had assisted and strengthened Michael since the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede (Daniel 11:1). This may be a reference to Darius being favorably predisposed to the Jewish people as they were allowed to return to the Promised Land and rebuild the walls and temple at Jerusalem. **The mention of the prince of Greece joining the struggle (10:20) speaks of Greece's role in future events, which further confirms the supernatural and prophetic nature of Daniel's ministry.**

**It is clear, then, that Daniel was given insight into the future—including future kingdoms. However, he was also introduced to the concept of spiritual warfare between angelic beings and the demonic realm, a struggle that would continue throughout the unfolding of history. This is a good reminder that we are also surrounded by spiritual forces in high places—and we must think and act accordingly.**

**We must pray and play an active role in our government.**

### **Resource Packet Item 3: Title**

Distribute the work sheet, and suggest that students use it in their personal time with God this week. Encourage them to prayerfully consider how they can apply the principles they discover to their relationship with God.

### ***Discuss***

? How can knowing that there are unseen battles around us—battles that impact our lives as history unfolds—affect our commitment to walk with God?

? What have you observed to be common ways that spiritual battles can impact the lives of Christians? (For example, a Christian might face temptation or challenges to

their faith because of circumstances. Or they might need to pray on behalf of a loved one who is not a follower of Jesus.)

## **What Is God Saying to Us?**

**Say:** God gave Daniel visions that revealed the intense spiritual battles raging around him. We also live amid unseen spiritual battles—a reminder that life in the last days will be difficult. The spirit of Antichrist is already at work in this world (1 John 4:3). Rather than cower in fear, or compromise our beliefs, we can stand strong for Christ. By His grace we can live godly in an ungodly world, proclaiming Christ as we look for His return.

## **Living It Out**

### **Ministry in Action**

- Examine your life, asking God to show you how you might walk more closely with Him.
- Find someone you know who is experiencing a battle, and take time to pray for and with that person.
- Pray that God will help you prepare for spiritual battles in the future.

## **Daily Bible Readings**

### **Monday:**

Delivered by Angels.  
Genesis 19:12–22

**[Gen 19:12-22 KJV] 12 And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring [them] out of this place: 13 For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it. 14 And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law. 15 And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. 16 And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. 17 And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. 18 And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord: 19 Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die: 20 Behold now, this city [is] near to flee unto, and it [is] a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, ([is] it not a little one?) and my soul shall live. 21 And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the**

which thou hast spoken. 22 Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

**Tuesday:**

Strengthened by an Angel.  
1 Kings 19:1–8

**[1Ki 19:1-8 KJV] 1 And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do [to me], and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. 3 And when he saw [that], he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which [belongeth] to Judah, and left his servant there. 4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I [am] not better than my fathers. 5 And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise [and] eat. 6 And he looked, and, behold, [there was] a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. 7 And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise [and] eat; because the journey [is] too great for thee. 8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.**

**Wednesday:**

Celestial Nature of Angels.  
Psalm 104:1–4

**[Psa 104:1-4 KJV] 1 Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. 2 Who coverest [thyself] with light as [with] a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: 3 Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind: 4 Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:**

**Thursday:**

Christ's Birth Announced by Angels.  
Luke 2:8–14

**[Luk 2:8-14 KJV] 8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. 10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. 12 And this [shall be] a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling**

clothes, lying in a manger. 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

**Friday:**

Encouraged by an Angel.  
Acts 27:21–25

**[Act 27:21-25 KJV] 21** But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, **Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. 22** And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of [any man's] life among you, but of the ship. **23** For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, **24** Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. **25** Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

**Saturday:**

Satan Bound by an Angel.  
Revelation 20:1–3

**[Rev 20:1-3 KJV] 1** And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. **2** And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, **3** And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.