

**Welcome to the
Common Ground Café!**



Sunday, March 18, 2018

**Soldiers in a Great War, Part 1
A Study of Daniel 10-12**

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Choose the best way to describe your “war experience”:

(a) combat veteran (b) family member or friend of a combat veteran (c) refugee from conflict (d) concerned citizen trying to stay current on news (e) history buff collecting memorabilia or doing re-enactments (f) playing “soldier” as a kid or video war games as an adult (g) other.

Read Daniel 10:1.

The last three chapters of the book, Daniel 10-12, form a single unit. Roughly, chapter 10 *introduces* the vision, chapter 11 *recounts* the vision, and chapter 12 *closes* the vision with instruction. The main message is that we are soldiers in a great war. The war is **far larger** and **far longer** than we ever imagined. This week we’ll see how **large** the battle really is. Next week we’ll see how **long** we should expect the battle to last.

Pastor Tom said that Daniel was troubled over experiences at the end of the Babylonian exile. When Persia conquered Babylon, King Cyrus allowed the Israelites to return. Read Daniel 10:2-3 and then answer the following questions:

- ❖ Cyrus allowed the exiles to return to Jerusalem in the first year of his reign. According to verse 1, how many years had passed since then?
- ❖ What does Nehemiah 1:1-3 say about the experiences of those who returned home to rebuild Jerusalem?
- ❖ Psalm 126 is a song about returning from exile. Which verses describe the joy of those returning? Which verses describe their sorrow at all the hard work required to rebuild?
- ❖ If Daniel was hearing the same things that would later be reported in Nehemiah 1:1-3 and Psalm 126, how was his response in Daniel 2-3 similar to the response of Nehemiah and the writer of Psalm 126?
- ❖ Another possible reason for Daniel’s mourning: Few of his people returned to Jerusalem. In fact, most stayed in Babylon. What reasons might they have given?
- ❖ Another possible reason for Daniel’s mourning: He was still in Babylon. Why do you think this was so? (Hint: How long had he been in exile, according to Daniel 9:1-2?)

Read Daniel 10:4-7, 12-14, 20-21, and Hebrews 1:14. Answer the following questions:

- ❖ Though some readers assume this is an Old Testament appearance by Christ, what information in 10:13 and 12:7 helps us conclude that this is an angel and not the divine Son?
- ❖ Verses 13 and 20 refer to the “prince of Persia” and the “prince of Greece.” Are these earthly rulers or demonic rulers? Explain.
- ❖ From these verses, is it reasonable to assume that Satan has assigned evil spirits to influence certain territories?
- ❖ The angel said he had come to Daniel with an important message in response to Daniel’s distressed prayers. According to verse 20, what activity had the angel left in order to deliver the message? According to verses 12-13, who tried to detain the angel from bringing the message to Daniel, and for how long?
- ❖ We’ll look at the angel’s message next week when we study Daniel 11-12. It’s meant to *prepare* God’s people and to *encourage* them. God still wants his angels to deliver a word of encouragement to us today, and Satan still wants to block that word of encouragement from coming to us. Why? In what ways does God send us encouragement? In what ways does Satan try to block it?

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:18. What was Paul prevented from doing? Whom did he blame?

Read 1 Thessalonians 3:2-5. What did Paul fear might happen as a result of the persecution of his friends? Whom did he blame?

Explain how Satan could use the following situations to his advantage:

- ❖ Rain washes out a bridge a missionary has to cross to get to a remote village church.
- ❖ A young adult in college prays that her mother would be healed but her mother dies
- ❖ Two members of the church’s student ministry dislike each other and are always arguing.

Read 1 Thessalonians 3:10-13. According to these verses, what did Paul do when he recognized Satan's interference in his travel plans and in the believers' spiritual growth?

What is the relationship between prayer and spiritual warfare? How can you use your prayers to engage in spiritual battle?

The worldview we see in Daniel 10 and 1 Thessalonians 2-3 might seem strange to us in twenty-first century Western culture. In *The Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis wrote, "There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors."

- ❖ What is the danger in each error?
- ❖ Which error are you more likely to fall into?

As you take prayer requests and prepare to pray for the requests, think about how Satan might be using those troubles to his own advantages, and ask God to send his angels to fight on behalf of your group members.



Close with praise reports and prayer requests