

Ministry and Warfare of the Holy and Evil Angels

Someone has defined humility like this: whenever weight lifters want to strengthen their legs, there is nothing like squats. First you put the weights on your shoulders; then you squat down and then rise up in order to build your hamstrings. In order to build strength in your legs, you must do squats. Most of us do not get down low enough. You are not going to grow stronger if you are unwilling to bend. That is a true statement, both in the physical world as well as in the spiritual world. If pride is what makes you function, then you are spiritually immature. Humility is a mark of spiritual maturity. In fact, it should be a mark of any leader in a church.

It was clearly a mark of Moses. If you recall from Numbers 12, we are told that Moses was the humblest man of his day. What an interesting epitaph for Moses, being an extremely humble person. You would not think that would be true of a prominent leader like Moses.

The illustrations of humility are scattered throughout Scripture. Some people have described humility as a person who is honest in their view about themselves. In other words, you are humble if you have a correct view about yourself. That is one dictionary's definition. Someone else has defined humility as putting one's self down low. In other words, you just think less of yourself and say so. Some people use deprecating statements such as. "I am not

really a great singer," when they are a fantastic singer. But such negative statements are not the biblical definition of humility.

Definition of Humility. Let me give you a biblical statement of humility. The biblical definition of humility is not having a correct view of yourself. It is not choosing to take a low view of yourself. Philippians 2:3 gives us a good definition of humility. Paul and the Holy Spirit are writing.

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves. Philippians 2:3 (NASB)



Two Angels Fighting

Paul defined humility as considering someone else as being more important than yourself. Now that is a choice. This is a principle. That means if you are a husband, you consider your spouse as more important than yourself. Do you

consider your spouse to be more important? Let us make this practical for a second. Let us say that you really like cherry pie. I like cherry pie. Let us say there is one piece left. The question is, who gets it? What is your decision? Is it your decision to give it to her? Do you ask her, "Would you like it?" What happens if she says yes? Do you let her have it? We can apply this principle to many situations.

Verse 4 reveals how a humble person responds,

do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Philippians 2:4 (NASB)

Now what is the definition of humility here? The definition of humility is not a negative one. It is positive.

Jesus Was an Example of Humility. Now notice verse 5,

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus . . . Philippians 2:5 (NASB)

The message is that Jesus is our example. He considered us to be more important than Himself. Remember verse 3 says, "Regard one another as more important than yourselves." Look at verse 8:

Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Philippians 2:8 (NASB)

That is the ultimate sign or example of denial. Jesus took the low position. He regarded us as being more important than Himself. Remember how He struggled in the garden? He begged the Father to let the cup pass. Yet He willingly died on a cross for you and for me. He is our great example of humility.

Daniel Was an Example of Humility. In this study, we are going to find that Daniel was also an outstanding example of humility. Our study is from Daniel 10. In Daniel 1 we surmise he was between fourteen to seventeen years of age. At this point we understand that he is about eighty-five years of age. In chapter 1 he obeyed God when he denied himself the best food. He did not eat filet mignon. He did not drink the best wine. He ate vegetables. How many of us enjoy eating our vegetables? Daniel ate vegetables because he considered God to be more important than himself. He wanted to obey God's dietary laws as opposed to yielding to temptation.

In chapters 2, 4, and 5, Daniel gave credit to God for the interpretation of the dreams. He went overboard to make

sure that each person who heard the interpretation of each dream knew the interpretation came from God - not from him. What an example of putting God above himself! He considered God as more important.

In chapter 9, he was a man of the Word of God because he read Scripture. He was reading the book of Jeremiah. In the first part of chapter nine, he confessed the sins of Israel. He included himself as a sinner. He confessed his own sins. Imagine the millions of people who have read Daniel's confession of sin. They have learned that Daniel was a humble man. They have learned that he was a man of prayer. Ezekiel 14:20 says he was a righteous man. That was the man Daniel. In this chapter, I want you to look for marks of his humility.

The Final Dream Introduced. This study is from Daniel 10:1. This is the last vision that was given to the prophet and recorded in the book of Daniel. It ends in chapter 12 and the last part of the chapter is a concluding comment, or final instructions. The outline of the rest of the book follows: Daniel 10:1 thru Daniel 11:1 is the ministry and warfare of holy angels. Daniel 10:2 to verse 3 of chapter 12 is the vision explained. So Daniel is going to be given the vision in this study. We are going to discover in chapter 11 many details about the prophecy. Then from Daniel 12:4 to the end of the book are the final instructions.

Verse 1 says,

In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia. . . Daniel 10:1a (NASB)

This is Cyrus the Great.

. . . a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar; and the message was true and one of great conflict, but he understood the message and had an understanding of the vision. Daniel 10:1b (NASB)

Here we are told it is the third year of Cyrus the Great. Daniel did it again when he gave us a date marker. He has been doing this all through the book of Daniel. The third year of Cyrus the king would be 536 B.C. Then we are told

that the message we are going to be reading is true and one of great conflict.

Verse 1 summarizes everything that is going to follow from here to the end of the book. When we are told the message was one of great conflict, the Hebrew word for “conflict” has the idea of wars and battles. So he is going to be describing military conflicts or wars between nations.

Verse 2 states,

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. Daniel 10:2 (NASB)

Daniel told us immediately that he mourned for three weeks. If you wonder why he mourned, the answer is given to us later. Let me not spoil it by giving it away. This is like a good mystery movie—the conclusion comes later.

So Daniel had been mourning for three weeks. In verse 3 we are told that he did not eat any tasty food. Tasty food was food that is delightful, something he enjoyed. When was the last time you denied yourself something tasty, something that you enjoyed? But Daniel was not dieting. His purpose was to avoid his favorite foods. He did not eat any meat or drink any wine.

This was not a total fast. There are two kinds of fasts in Scripture. One fast was to not eat anything or to drink wine. Some examples can be found in the Old Testament. But Daniel’s fast was the denial of things he really liked. He did not eat meat, drink wine, perhaps sweets. The point is that he denied himself his special foods, not everything. He did this for three weeks. Now that is a commitment! Some of us can do this for one or two days. But some of us have a hard time doing it past one meal! Daniel did it for three weeks.

He said that he did not use any ointment. In Daniel’s day, the ointment was like a cologne. Rather than taking a bath, they just splashed on cologne so they would smell nice. Daniel must have really smelled badly after three weeks.

In Daniel 9:3, we are told that he fasted in sackcloth and

ashes as he prayed. We are not told that he did that here in chapter 10 as he prayed.

As I was thinking about this passage, I wondered when was the last time that I prayed and fasted together. That is something that is missing in my prayer life. May I ask you a question? Is it missing from your prayer life? When is the last time you felt so strongly about something, that you included fasting along with your prayer to communicate to God that you were serious? When was the last time you did that for three weeks?

Once we asked the church to pray for a week. That was great for all those who did it. I would encourage us as a congregation to do it again as we are looking forward to choosing leadership for the next year. Pick some time, a week, two weeks, three weeks and fast and pray as Daniel did.

Psalm 35:13 says:

But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled my soul with fasting, And my prayer kept returning to my bosom. Psalm 35:13 (NASB)

In the first part of this verse, David was praying for someone who was sick, and he chose to wear sackcloth. Sackcloth is a very scratchy material - really scratchy! Wearing it was supposed to communicate that he was very serious.

Now watch what Daniel said.

... I humbled my soul with fasting.

Fasting is a sign of humility. Now notice what he said:

And my prayer kept returning to my bosom.

He reveals that he was emotional. This implies that Daniel was really praying for the people who were sick, and so he wore sackcloth and fasted along with his prayer to communicate that he was serious.

Do you think Daniel was humble? Yes, he was a humble man. We have been seeing him pray. In the last chapter,

he fasted and in this chapter he fasted. Daniel was an incredible person. He put God and others above himself.

Man in Linen Arrives. Daniel 10:4 states,

On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, 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 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. Daniel 10:4-6 (NASB)

Here Daniel told us that on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, or Nisan 24, he was by the Tigris River when he looked up and saw a man. Daniel 12:6 explains that the man was hovering in the air above the river. Then Daniel described that the man was dressed in linen with a gold belt. His body looked like beryl. Beryl appears like topaz. Some descriptions say it is translucent. We are told that his appearance was like lightning, and his eyes were like flaming torches. His arms and his feet were like polished bronze. This reminds me of Revelation 1:12-18 where the Apostle John wrote,

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength. When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I

was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." Revelation 1:12-18 (NASB)

Who is this? Jesus Christ. Because of the similar descriptions in Daniel 10 and in Revelation 1, I believe the man who visited Daniel here in chapter 10:4-6 was either a theophany or perhaps a Christophany, an Old Testament appearance of Christ.

Daniel 10:7 says.

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. Daniel 10:7 (NASB)

Now we are told that some men were with Daniel and they became so fearful that they ran away in order to hide. Why did the men run away? The Hebrew in verse 7 helps us answer the question. It says, "And now I, Daniel..." The "I" is emphatic. Daniel is making the point that, "I, and I alone, saw the vision—no one else."

Verse 8 gives us some additional information.

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. Daniel 10:8 (NASB)

Notice that the vision is not described. All that is given to us later on is the interpretation. Why was Daniel alone given the vision? Daniel was a seriously godly man. God chose to give only Daniel the vision. The other men may not have been believers.

In verse 9 Daniel said,

But I heard the sound of his words; and as soon as I heard the sound of his words . . . Daniel 10:9a (NASB)

That is, he heard the words of the man dressed in linen.

... I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground. Daniel 10:9b (NASB)

Do you know what Daniel did? He fell flat with his face to the ground and went to sleep. This reminds me of a man who on one occasion visited our house. He told me that on a particular morning he was looking in a mirror and saw Jesus. Jesus was talking to him. So I asked him, "How often has that happened?" "Oh, it has happened a lot since the first time." He said he frequently had a conversation with Jesus. He had told Jesus that he wanted to marry a particular girl. Then he added that he was disappointed in Jesus because Jesus had made a mistake! I asked, "Why do you think Jesus made a mistake?" He answered, "Jesus told me that if I asked her for a date, she would date me and become my wife." So I said, "What happened?" He said, "I went to her, and she told me she did not want to see me ever again. I have to talk to Jesus and tell Him that He made a mistake." I said, "Do you think God makes mistakes? Do you think God lies? Do you think God is not all-knowing and knew this was going to happen?" Therefore, I told him that he was not talking to Jesus at all. Maybe he was talking to a demon who was trying to impersonate Jesus. Do you know what this young man did not do? He did not fall flat on the ground, and he did not go to sleep.

I am always amazed when people are so excited about an experience they have had that has had no impact on their life. In almost every example in Scripture, when someone has an encounter with Jesus, there is an impact on their life. Daniel fell to the ground and went to sleep.

An Angel Arrives. Verse 10 adds,

Then behold. . . Daniel 10:10a (NASB)

We do not know how much time passed between verses 9 and 10. We know there are sometimes gaps in Scripture between chapters, verses, and even in the middle of some verses. There is time here between verses 9 and 10.

... a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. Daniel 10:10b (NASB)

We are not immediately told to whom this hand belongs. It belongs to an angel. I believe the angel may have been Gabriel, but I cannot prove it. But we are told that when the angel touched Daniel, he woke up and was able to stand up. The angel did that for him.

Verse 11 continues with,

He said to me, "O Daniel, man of high esteem. . . Daniel 10:11a (NASB)

There is our statement again. We saw that Daniel was a man of "high esteem" in Daniel 9:23. Precious means "treasure." Daniel is referred to three times as being a man of high esteem or as precious. I am amazed that we are told three times in the pages of Scripture that Daniel was precious to God. I would like to know if God considers me to be precious. Now precious does not just mean that someone is a Christian. Yes, precious means that you are a believer in God, but there is something special about you. This is not said of anyone else in the Old Testament. Daniel was precious. He was a treasure to God.

The angel then said,

O Daniel, 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." And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. Daniel 10:11b (NASB)

Verse 12:

Then he said to me, "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, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words." Daniel 10:12 (NASB)

The angel told Daniel that as soon as he started praying, he was sent to Daniel. He had been trying to get to Daniel for twenty-one days, or for three weeks. Have you ever repeatedly prayed and then wondered why God did not answer?

These verses reveal that in this situation, there was something happening in the angelic world. Here we are told an angel had been trying to get to Daniel for three weeks to answer his prayer.

He says, “I have come in response to your words.” But notice what he says about Daniel. He describes him as humble. That is a mark of Daniel’s character. Daniel was a humble man. He considered others more important than himself. When Daniel was put in the lions’ den, the king came and wanted to know whether or not Daniel was safe. Daniel did not respond by disparaging the king. Instead he said, “O King, live forever!” He was gracious. He considered the king with respect, as better than himself. Daniel was a humble man. The angel said he had humbled his heart before God.

In verse 13 the angel says,

But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. Daniel 10:13 (NASB)

The angel told Daniel that it has taken him three weeks to reach him. He had started the very first day that Daniel started praying! Now I want you to consider something. Go back to verse 4. I want you to see the date that Daniel gave us. He said that on the twenty-fourth day of the first month—that would be Nisan 24—he was by the river and saw the vision. The message was that Daniel had been waiting for a while. In fact, we are told in verse 3 that three weeks were completed. Notice the way it is phrased. It says, “were completed.” Then all of a sudden, the theophany occurred and give him the vision.

Now backtrack three weeks. If we start at Nisan 24 and go back three weeks or twenty-one days, we arrive at Nisan 3. Jews celebrate Passover on Nisan 14. Do you know what Daniel did? Daniel fasted right through Passover! Talk about commitment! Passover was very important to the Jews. Daniel missed Passover. That means Daniel’s fasting was really serious. Amazing! Daniel gives us all these little

bits of information. They reveal he was very humble.

In verse 13 the angel said that the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding him so that his trip to Daniel was delayed. The Hebrew word for “withstanding” has the idea of standing in front or blocking him.

Have you ever watched a basketball game? Players are running around shooting baskets. We get excited about slam dunks. There is an important aspect to basketball that we do not always take time to consider. It is called defense. When a player comes down the court with the ball, the opposing team is supposed to block him. You cannot physically touch him because that would be a foul. He is trying to go one way, so you run over to stop him. He goes another way, and you try again to stop him. You are supposed to always be right in front of him to block him. The Hebrew word for “withstanding” has the idea of face-to-face. So the idea is that the angel was trying to get to Daniel, but the prince of Persia was always moving to oppose him so the angel could not reach Daniel.

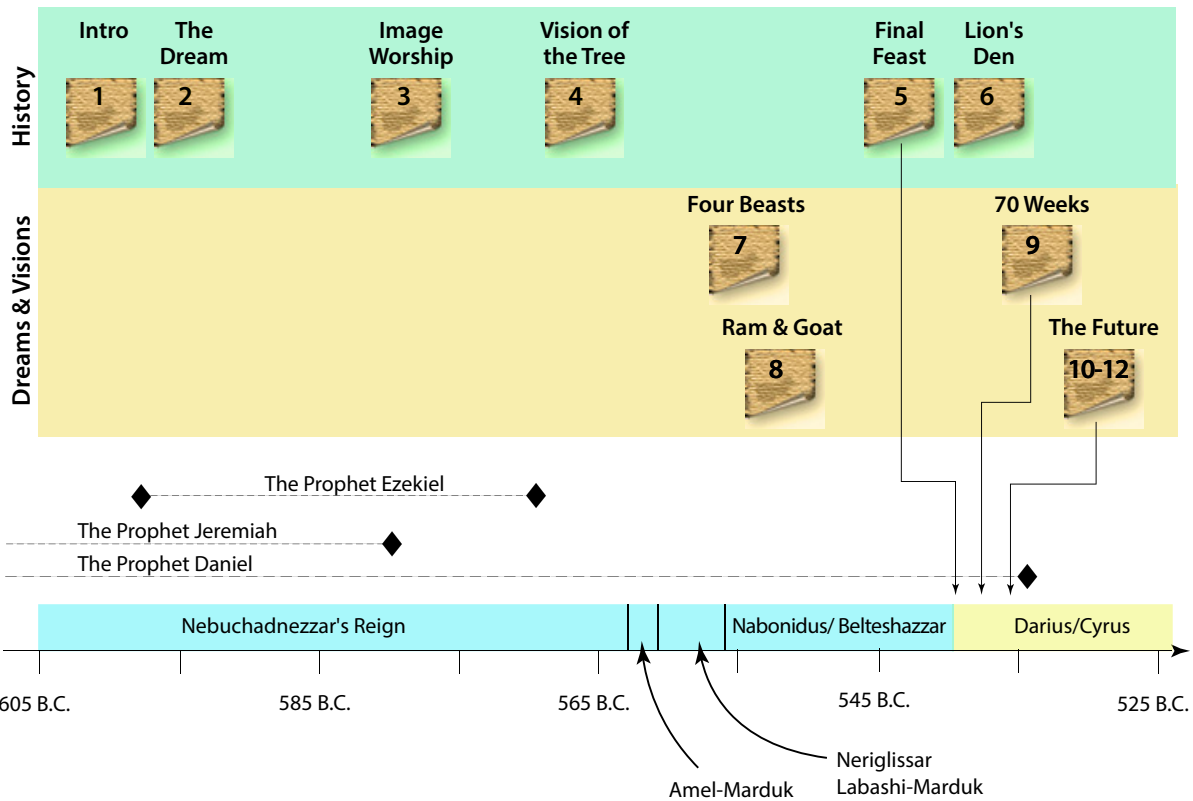
Verse 14 adds,

Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future.” Daniel 10:14 (NASB)

Daniel wanted to know what the future would be like for his people. So a theophany gave him the vision, and an angel is going to give the interpretation. Verse 15:

When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. And behold, one who resembled a human being was touching my lips; 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 10:15-17 (NASB)

Outline of Daniel



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I find this fascinating, because this angel showed humility also. Consider the response of the angel. The angel was sent by God to minister to Daniel. The book of Hebrews tells us that angels are greater than humans. This angel proved to be humble. He came and he treated Daniel better than himself. Humility is all over this chapter. The angel illustrates humility. Obviously he is being obedient, but he also illustrates humility. Daniel is a good example of humility as he treated others as better than himself whether or not they were. How you treat other people is a sign of your spiritual maturity.

In verse 18 we are told someone who looked like a human touched Daniel.

Then this one with human appearance touched me again and strengthened me. Daniel 10:18 (NASB)

Have you ever wondered if an angel can give you strength or potentially heal you?

Verse 19:

He said, “O man of high esteem . . . Daniel 10:19a (NASB)

There it is again—precious.

. . . do not be afraid. Peace be with you; take courage and be courageous!” Now as soon as he spoke to me, I received strength and said, “May my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.” Then he said, “Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth,

and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come.

Daniel 10:19b-20 (NASB)

The angel said, “I am going to leave you. In addition to the prince of Persia, the prince of Greece is going to come. I have to fight both of these angels.”

Verse 21 now tells us the angel will need help against these two evil angels.

However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince. In the first year of Darius the Mede, I arose to be an encouragement and a protection for him. Daniel 10:21-11:1 (NASB)

The angel is going to need help from Michael. He is an archangel (Jude 9). If you also check out Revelation 12:7, you will find that Michael leads an army of holy angels. Apparently an archangel leads a troop of holy angels. In Revelation 12:7, he fights Satan. This gives us interesting insight into Michael.

In Daniel 11:1, we are told that in the first year of Darius—that would be two years earlier—Daniel helped Darius the Mede. What an incredible picture! What does it mean that Michael provided protection for this first angel? The implication is that in some way evil angels can impede or attack holy angels. This is an incredible insight into the angelic world.

Daniel had an amazing experience with this angel. What did the angel look like? He appeared as a powerful man - not at all how many artists tend to portray angels as feminine. It is incredible what you find in this chapter. The angel might be powerful, but he is still humble. Humility is illustrated throughout the chapter. There is profound theology in this chapter about angels, and there is incredible application about humility. The humble person will always consider others as more important than oneself.