

Soldier Up!

Saints & Spiritual Warfare

"The Prince Who's Not Your Pal"

When I was in elementary school, we learned a few spelling tricks.

The one general rule that most people remember from school is not a very good rule at all: *I before E except after C* - but not in "eight," or "protein," or "efficient," or "glacier," or lots of other exceptions.

The rule does get better with extra qualifications. You may have learned it as follows:

*I before E except after C,
Or when sounded as "a"
As in "neighbor" or "weigh."*

If so, then you will have accounted for a range of exceptions. Still, you'll be out of luck on "weird" and "ancient."

One other rule I remember was the difference between *principle* and *principal*. One spelling means, *a fundamental truth*, and the other means, *the most important*, used of the head administrator at a school. The rule I learned was, "the principal is your 'pal.' "

As a Christian, I find there are principals who are not so palsy-walsy.

They are the "principalities and powers" mentioned by the apostle Paul in a list of demonic forces that aid the devil in his assault on believers.

We get our most complete look at such a demon in the Book of Daniel. We need to read all of Daniel chapter ten to get the complete picture.

Dan 10:1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message was true, but the appointed time was long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision.

Dan 10:2 In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks.

Dan 10:3 I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

Dan 10:4 Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that is, the Tigris,

Dan 10:5 I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz!

Dan 10:6 His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.

Dan 10:7 And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

Dan 10:8 Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength.

Dan 10:9 Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.

Dan 10:10 Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands.

Dan 10:11 And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling.

Dan 10:12 Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words.

Dan 10:13 But **the prince of the kingdom of Persia** withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with **the kings of Persia**.

Dan 10:14 Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come."

Dan 10:15 When he had spoken such words to me, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless.

Dan 10:16 And suddenly, one having the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke, saying to him who stood before me, "My lord, because of the vision my sorrows have overwhelmed me, and I have retained no strength.

Dan 10:17 For how can this servant of my lord talk with you, my lord? As for me, no strength remains in me now, nor is any breath left in me."

Dan 10:18 Then again, the one having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me.

Dan 10:19 And he said, "O man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace be to you; be strong, yes, be strong!" So when he spoke to me I was strengthened, and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."

Dan 10:20 Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with **the prince of Persia**; and when I have gone forth, indeed the **prince of Greece** will come. Dan 10:21 But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince).

From the description in verses five and six, we know that the person dispatched to Daniel was an angel. We believe it to be Gabriel, who had made contact with Daniel twice before (8:16 & 9:21).

Gabriel states plainly that he was hindered from coming to Daniel for twenty-one days by "the prince of the kingdom of Persia."

He also leans that there is a "prince of Greece."

It is obvious, in the context, that these princes are not the human rulers of Persia and Greece. They are somewhat equal in power to angels like Gabriel and Michael.

Such princes are hinted at elsewhere in the Bible. In Isaiah 24:1 we read,

Isa 24:21 It shall come to pass in that day That the LORD will punish on high **the host of exalted ones**, And on the earth the kings of the earth.

"The host of exalted one's" could be translated "the powers in the heaven's above." They are the supernatural beings, the demons, who are behind certain "kings of the earth" who they influence to serve their nefarious purposes.

These may have been viewed, and worshipped, as gods by these nations, but it's clear that they are fallen angels out to hinder the unfolding drama of redemption.

The Prince of Persia, and the Prince of Greece, are two specific examples.

Daniel had been in prayer and had been fasting for three weeks. Out of nowhere, Gabriel appeared to him, and proceeded to tell Daniel that he would have arrived sooner if he hadn't been hindered by the Prince of Persia.

Only tapping-out to Michael, who had come to aid Gabriel, set him free to arrive when he did.

After explaining to Daniel what was in store for the Jews, Gabriel revealed he would return to fight the Prince of Persia, and afterward, the Prince of Greece.

We can conclude from the Bible that Michael and Gabriel have been assigned authority over angels who administer God's affairs for the nation of Israel. Michael, in particular, is the Prince of Israel.

In Daniel 12:1 we read,

Dan 12:1 "At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.

Michael is clearly identified in Revelation 12:7 as a leader of an angelic host: "Michael and his angels."

Satan has also apparently assigned high-ranking demons to positions of authority over certain kingdoms. I say "certain" because it's unclear if every nation on earth has a demonic prince, or just those nations that have to do with hindering Israel.

The nations in the Bible that are especially involved with Israel are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. All these, in succession, were spoken of by Daniel in his prophecies.

Two of those six clearly have demonic princes over them, and I'd wager the other four do, too. But I'm not sure if there is sufficient info in the Bible to say that every nation on earth has a demonic prince assigned to it.

It's no secret Satan was opposed to Israel on account of her being the nation through which the Savior was promised to come. The study we do on Christmas, and the biblical text of the booklet we wrote, *The Girl with the Dragon Antagonist*, is the depiction in Revelation twelve of the devil seeking to devour the Savior born to the world through Israel.

Persia, for example, would be incited to stop the construction of the Temple. On earth, enemies of the Jews appealed to the Persian king, Artaxerxes, who commanded the work be stopped - apparently influenced by the demonic prince over his realm and rule.

Ezr 4:24 Thus the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem ceased, and it was discontinued until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

As for Greece, after Alexander the Great died, his vast empire was divided, and eventually the Jews came under the control of Antiochus Epiphanes.

He is the ruler who would make desolate the Temple by offering a sow on its altar, and by erecting a statue in it. He prefigures the future antichrist.

All of this prompted one commentator to say,

The portrayal of the princes of the nations in Daniel reveals that the unfolding of human history is not determined solely by the decisions made by human beings, for there is an unseen dimension of reality that must also be taken into account. In particular, there are malevolent forces in the universe that exercise a baneful influence in the sociopolitical realm, especially where the people of God are concerned.

What should we do with this information? We should do exactly what Daniel did: Nothing.

Don't get me wrong. Daniel kept right on praying, and fasting, and serving The Lord. But he neither modeled, nor suggested, any direct strategy we adopt towards the princes of the kingdoms of the world - or any such territorial demons.

As we mentioned at length in a previous *Soldier Up!* session, recently there has been a resurgence in teaching about territorial demons, and suggestions about how Christians must identify and oppose them if people are to be delivered from satanic bondage.

There is nothing like that anywhere in your Bible - and certainly not in Daniel, where you'd expect to find it.

There's no evidence Daniel prayed for Gabriel, or Michael, or for the overthrow of the Prince of Persia, or of Greece.

Neither should we. Don't get caught-up in that sort of sensationalism.

What we can say is that there is a relationship between spiritual warfare in the heavenlies and prayer on the earth. Daniel's three weeks of fasting and prayer coincided with the Prince of Persia hindering Gabriel for three weeks.

Daniel praying, for his people, influenced God to dispatch Gabriel, to encourage Daniel with some information about things to come. And it caused the devil to try to interfere.

Many people don't engage much in prayer simply because they have embraced a worldview in which prayer simply doesn't make sense. If God is going to do whatever He's going to do anyway, what's the point?

They pray because it changes you, *not* things.

James sums up the general teaching on prayer when he says that "the prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective" (5:16). The example he gave is that Elijah's praying affected the rainfall.

We must conclude that prayer is powerful and effective not just in changing us but also in affecting God and therefore in changing the world.

While it's true prayer changes you, Scripture consistently depicts prayer as significantly influencing God's interaction with us.

As an example, I could cite King Hezekiah.

2Ki 20:1 In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live.' "

2Ki 20:2 Then he turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the LORD, saying,

2Ki 20:3 "Remember now, O LORD, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done what was good in Your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

2Ki 20:4 And it happened, before Isaiah had gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying,

2Ki 20:5 "Return and tell Hezekiah the leader of My people, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD.

2Ki 20:6 And I will add to your days fifteen years. I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for My own sake, and for the sake of My servant David."

Commentators are split on whether or not living an additional fifteen years was a good idea, because Hezekiah did some things in those years which put the Kingdom of Judah in jeopardy. Namely, he showed a contingency from Babylon all the treasures of the Temple.

The point is: Hezekiah's prayer certainly affected God and changed things.

Another example, more along the lines of repentance but certainly showing how our prayers change things is in Jeremiah's example of the potter and the clay.

Jer 18:7 The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it,

Jer 18:8 if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it.

Jer 18:9 And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it,

Jer 18:10 if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.

God, Who is immutable and cannot change as to His eternal attributes, nevertheless has sovereignly chosen to allow prayers to affect the world and to change things.

Prayer remains somewhat ambiguous. We cannot know, unless God chooses to tell us, why some prayers change things, and others seemingly do not.

A lot of my most fervent prayers are not changing the things I'm praying for. The same is probably true for you.

One commentator answers it by saying,

Among other things, God must respect the necessary stability of the world and the irrevocable freedom of vast multitudes of free agents. Prayer makes a difference, but so do the necessary regularity of the world and every free choice humans and angels make. We have no way of knowing how the power of prayer intersects with these and other variables... We pray and God responds in the context of an unfathomably complex creation that is racked by cosmic war.

Prayer must remain ambiguous, but that doesn't mean we should not approach it with passion and persistence.

