

## SPIRITUAL WARFARE

**“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Eph. 6:12).**

Yes! We are in a war, but the enemy is not “flesh and blood”. Since you cannot overcome a spiritual enemy with a worldly weapon, “the weapons we fight with are not the weapons of this world” (2 Cor. 10:4).

Perhaps no passage of Scripture is more explicit in this regard than the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter of Daniel. We are told in verses 3 and 4 of this passage that Daniel mourned for three weeks, consumed no choice food, meat, or wine, and used no lotions at all for three weeks.

Then we are told that it was the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the first month. God established the first month of their calendar in connection with their deliverance from Egypt (Ex. 12:2). On the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month they were to slay the Passover Lamb and put its blood on the door frames of their houses. Their obedience in this regard caused the Lord to “Pass over” their homes and preserve the lives of their firstborn. Then followed the Feast of Unleavened Bread that lasted for seven days.

So, when Daniel ended his 21 day fast we are told it was just after the Passover (Dan. 10:4). The association between Egyptian bondage and Babylonian bondage must have been on Daniel’s mind. Then, as Daniel was standing by the banks of the Tigris River he saw a man dressed in linen with a golden belt around his waist. His supernatural appearance was enhanced by his voice that sounded like a multitude.

Even though Daniel’s companions did not see the man they sensed the presence of the supernatural and fled in terror. Daniel himself was so overcome that he fell into a deep sleep with his face to the ground. When Daniel felt a hand touch him he rose to his hands and knees and trembled. He was commended for seeking God and commanded to stand. The trembling prophet was told: **“Do not be afraid, Daniel, Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days”**

The impasse involving Daniels’s prayers was broken, not by the “weapons of this world,” but by “Michael, one of the chief princes”. The presence of Michael turned the tide and Daniel’s prayers were heard and answered.

With this story fresh in our minds let us return to our text. After years of mistreatment and persecution Paul was a prisoner in Rome. Yet, he never blamed men for his problems. Paul realized that the problems we “see” are caused by forces we “cannot see”. As believers we are citizens of heaven and experience spiritual reality in the “heavenly realms”.

The expression “heavenly realms” is found five times in this brief letter.

- We are blessed in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ (1:3).
- Christ is seated at the right hand of God in the heavenly realms (1:20).
- We have also been raised up to sit with Christ in the heavenly realms (2:6).
- The church displays the manifold wisdom of God to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms (3:10).
- Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, authorities, powers of this dark world, and spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (6:12).

Are you struggling today? Probably so! Our initial temptation is to lash out at someone who is “flesh and blood”. This is a mistake! Both the cause and the cure to our struggles involves a different dimension. Our solution, like that of Daniels, will come from the heavenly realms.