

Cosmic Encounters

DANIEL 10:1–11:1; REVELATION 12:7–12

It is wrong to reject the existence of the powers of darkness, but it is equally wrong to believe in them in the wrong way.

—NIGEL WRIGHT, *The Satan Syndrome*

In the United States we have seen a tremendous resurgence of interest in angels and the supernatural. From television programs to best-selling books, our culture has a fascination with angels, though not necessarily the biblical variety. They are not seen as God's ministering spirits, but are often described as an advanced, nonearthly race that is looking out for humankind. Demons, if mentioned at all, are portrayed as little more than the "dark side of the force," spirits who are the equal of angels and are necessary for balancing the universe.

What is the true picture of encounters between angels and demons? Scripture affords us only a few glimpses into the domain of good and evil spirits, and the passages under consideration in this study are two of the clearest in detailing some of the events that take place out of human sight. Understanding the issues involved between good and evil spirits is another important foundation for spiritual warfare.

1. What are some of the benefits and dangers of the increased interest in angels in our culture?

READ DANIEL 10:1-11:1.

2. The nation of Israel was in captivity in Babylon when the events of this passage took place. As the passage opens, what was Daniel doing for his people (10:2)?

Why do you think he was doing this (see Daniel 9:4-11, 19-20)?

3. Daniel was not expecting an angel to appear in response to his prayer. In your own words, describe how Daniel responded when he saw the angel (10:8-9, 16-17).

4. Look again at the description of this angel in 10:5-6. How would you have responded to him?

5. Most commentators see the princes of Persia and Greece as powerful demons. What are some things we learn from this passage about Satan's strategy against God's angels (10:12-14; 10:20-11:1)?

READ REVELATION 12:7-12.

6. Who are the main characters in this final heavenly battle?
7. *Dualism* is the concept of two equal powers opposing each other. Is this scene a picture of dualism? Explain your answer.

8. To fight successfully, we must know our enemy.
What do we learn about Satan in this passage?

9. What role do Christians have in overcoming Satan
(verse 11)?

✎ 10. What is your understanding of the phrase “the
blood of the Lamb”?

Based upon what you see in these verses, why do
you think this is an important idea for spiritual
warfare?

11. What hope do you find for the ultimate victory of
good against evil in the message of verses 10-12?

✎ 12. If you feel comfortable doing so, share some of your
own “word of testimony” about Christ.

How might your testimony be used as a weapon in
the spiritual battles you face?