

Daniel 10 and the Notion of Territorial Spirits

—
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A plethora of books and articles testify to a renewed interest in the mysterious realm of celestial powers and their relationship to the terrestrial world.¹ In spite of such interest the study of this important theme has often been ignored or relegated to the periphery of serious biblical and theological study.² In the 1950s Scottish theologian James Stewart noted that the study of the celestial powers—and in particular malevolent powers—was a neglected aspect of New Testament theology.³ More recently, however, the writings of such authors as Walter Wink and Peter Wagner have highlighted the existence of cosmic powers and “territorial spirits” that exert influence in the world.⁴

In the 1989 Lausanne Congress on World Evangelism, held in Manila, five workshops were devoted to the subject of “territorial spirits.” Since then many books and articles have been published on this much-debated topic,⁵ and they frequently refer to Daniel 10

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¹ See, for example, Frank E. Peretti, *This Present Darkness* (Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1986); and idem, *Piercing the Darkness* (Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1989); see also note 5 of the present article.

² G. B. Caird, *Principalities and Powers: A Study in Pauline Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956), viii; and George M. Landes, “Shall We Neglect the Angels?” *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 14 (1959): 19-25.

³ James Stewart, “On a Neglected Emphasis in New Testament Theology,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 4 (1951): 292.

⁴ Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984); idem, *Unmasking the Powers* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1998); and idem, *Engaging the Powers* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1994). For the writings of Peter Wagner, see note 5 of this article.

⁵ John Dawson, *Taking our Cities for God How to Break Spiritual Strongholds* (Orlando, FL: Creation House, 1989); C. Peter Wagner and F. Douglas Pennoyer, *Wrestling with Dark Angels: Toward a Deeper Understanding of the Supernatural Forces in Spiritual Warfare* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1990); Cindy Jacobs, *Possessing the Gates of the Enemy: A Training Manual for Militant Intercession* (Grand Rapids: Chosen, 1991); George Otis, *The Last of the Giants* (New York: Chosen, 1991); idem, *The Twilight Labyrinth: Why Does Spiritual Darkness Linger Where It Does?* (Grand Rapids: Chosen, 1997); C. Peter Wagner, *Engaging the Enemy: How to Fight and Defeat Territorial Spirits* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1991); idem, *Warfare Prayer: Strategies for Combating the Rulers of Darkness* (Kent, UK: Monarch, 1992); idem, ed., *Breaking Strongholds in Your City: How to Use Spiritual Mapping to Make Your Prayers More Strategic, Effective and Targeted* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1993); idem, *Confronting the Powers: How the New Testament Church Experienced the Power of Strategic-Level Spiritual Warfare* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1996); idem, *Confronting the Queen of Heaven* (Colorado Springs: Wagner Institute for Practical Ministry, 1998); idem, The World Congress on Prayer, Spiritual Warfare and Evangelism, *Prayer Track News* 6 (July-September 1997): 1, 7; and Art Moore, “Spiritual Mapping Gains Credibility among Leaders,” *Christianity Today*, January 12, 1998, 55.

Recent books and articles that present an opposing opinion are Chuck Lowe, *Territorial Spirits and World Evangelisation?* (Kent, UK: OMF, 1998); Robert A. Guelich, “Spiritual Warfare: Jesus, Paul and Peretti,” *Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 13 (1991): 33-64; Mike R. Taylor, “Territorial Spirits: The New Mythology,” *Evangel* 11 (1993): 61-65; Clinton E. Arnold, “What about Territorial Spirits?” *Discipleship Journal* 81 (1993): 47; idem, *Three Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), 14399; Gerry Breshears, “The Body of Christ: Prophet, Priest, or King?” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 37 (1994): 3-26; Robert J. Priest, Thomas Campbell, and Bradford A. Mullen, “Missiological Syncretism: The New Animistic Paradigm,” in *Spiritual Power and Missions: Raising the Issues*, ed. Edward Rommen (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1995), 29; Mike Wakely, “A Critical Look at a New Key to Evangelization,” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 31 (April 1995): 152-65; Duane A. Garrett, *Angels and the New Spirituality* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 21533; and John F. Hart, “The Gospel and Spiritual

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as a chapter that speaks explicitly of territorial spirits. For example Wagner states, "The Bible teaches that the things we today call 'territorial spirits' do exist. A key passage is found in Daniel 10 where the 'prince of Persia' and the 'prince of Greece' are mentioned specifically"⁶ in verse 20. Speaking of the spirit princes of Persia and Greece, Otis writes, "Here we have a well-defined case of an evil spiritual being ruling over an area with explicitly defined boundaries."⁷

Priest, Campbell, and Mullen underscore the determinative nature of this passage in relation to the contemporary notion of territorial spirits. "All other passages which advocates of spiritual mapping, and spiritual warfare based on that mapping, have appealed to, are read in the light of this passage as well as in the light of anecdotes, native beliefs and demonic revelations. This passage is crucial. If this passage is discovered not to teach the notion of demonic territoriality—the notion that demonic power is

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linked to and exercised over territories—then the other passages fail to persuade."⁸

Daniel 10 is crucial for the study of cosmic powers over the peoples of the earth. Driver affirms that the doctrine of tutelary angels set over the nations is found explicitly for the first time in the Old Testament in Daniel 10:13.⁹ Delcor is of the same opinion. "This verse supposes, on the one hand—the notion of guardian angels over the nations—and on the other, the existence of angelic warfare in the heavens. For the first time the idea is expressed that each people has a protective angel, but the origin of this speculation is not clear."¹⁰

On the other hand Calvin, Clarke, d'Enviu, and Shea¹¹ hold that the "prince of Persia" (Dan. 10:13, 20)¹² was one of the political authorities in Persia who opposed the

Warfare: A Review of Peter Wagners *Confronting the Powers*", *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 10 (1997): 19-39.

⁶ Wagner, *Confronting the Powers*, 72-73.

⁷ George Otis, "An Overview of Spiritual Mapping," in *Engaging the Enemy: How to Fight and Defeat Territorial Spirits*, 35. The appeal to Daniel 10 in support of the notion of territoriality is a frequent theme in the above-mentioned literature.

⁸ Priest, Campbell, and Mullen, "Missiologial Syncretism," 23.

⁹ S. R. Driver, *The Book of Daniel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1900), 157. The angelic interpretation of Daniel 10:13 can be dated at least to the time of Origen (*Homilies on Luke* 35). For an overview of all the passages where Origen spoke of the angels of the nations see Jean Daniélou, *Origène Le Génie du Christianisme* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1948), 22235; and idem, "Les sources juives de la doctrine des anges des nations chez Origène," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 38 (1951): 132-37. On this topic see David E. Stevens, "Does Deuteronomy 32:8 Refer to Sons of God or Sons of Israel?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 154 (April-June 1997): 131-41. Since the writing of that article, however, new evidence was brought to my attention, which has led to a decisively different conclusion. See my more recent doctoral dissertation *La notion juive des anges des nations à la lumière du texte biblique* (Vaux-sur-Seine: Faculté Libre de Théologie Evangélique, 1999), 2899. See also Michael S. Heiser, "Deuteronomy 32:8 and the Sons of God," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 158 (January-March 2001), forthcoming. Driver denies that Deuteronomy 32:8 refers to angelic beings over nations.

¹⁰ M. Delcor, *Le Livre de Daniel* (Paris: J. Gabalda et Cie Editeurs, 1971), 205. All citations from French are my translations.

¹¹ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Daniel* (reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 2:252; Adam Clarke, *The Holy Bible with a Commentary and Critical Notes* (Londres: W. Tegg, 1851), 606; J. Fabre d'Enviu, *Le Livre du Prophète Daniel* (Paris: Ernest Horin, 1891), 1339; and William H. Shea, "Wrestling with the Prince of Persia: A Study on Daniel 10," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 21 (1983): 234.

¹² Verse 20 refers to שַׂר־יָוָן (prince of Greece). Given the parallel between the two designations, the meaning of שַׂר in פָּרְסָה שַׂר (prince of Persia) applies equally to the designation שַׂר־יָוָן.

reconstruction of the Jewish temple. Shea writes, "If one looks for an earthly human prince of Persia in the 3rd year of Cyrus, there is one specific candidate for that historical position: Cambyses, the son and *crown prince* of Cyrus... This is the one interpretation which takes cognizance of both (a) the potentiality for interpreting the word 'prince' as a hu-

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man being, and (b) the actual political situation that obtained in the 3rd year of Cyrus. In my opinion, therefore, Calvin was correct in this identification."¹³

Do Daniel 10:13 and 20 speak of demons governing their respective nations? Or was the one who transmitted this revelation to Daniel referring to *human* princes who opposed God's intervention in favor of Israel?

This article proposes that (a) the use of the term "prince" (שָׂר) in the Old Testament as well as certain contextual indications underline the angelic nature of these princes; (b) the historical context of Daniel 10 helps explain the malevolent intentions and strategy of these demonic "princes" in relation to the Jewish nation; and (c) the influence exerted by these angelic princes is personal and sociopolitical in nature and not territorial.

The View that the Princes of Persia and Greece Were Human Leaders

Shea's view that the princes in Daniel 10 were human political leaders is based on two principal arguments: the use of the term "prince" in Daniel and other biblical passages to refer to *human* leaders, and the plural expression "with the kings of Persia" (v. 13).

The Hebrew term שָׂר, used more than four hundred times in the Old Testament, carries the following meanings: captain, leader (Num. 21:18; 1 Sam. 22:2); vassal, noble, official under a king who functions (a) as a ruler or counselor (Gen. 12:15; 1 Kings 20:14-17), (b) the sovereign or magistrate of a region (2 Chron. 32:31), or (c) the ruler of a city (Judg. 9:30; Neh. 7:2); commander (Gen. 21:22, 32); head of a group of people, that is, an official (Neh. 4:10; Ps. 68:27 [28, Heb.]; Dan. 1:7-11, 18); one who carries a certain religious responsibility (Ezra 8:24, 29; Isa. 43:28); or a person in an elevated position (Ps. 45:16 [17, Heb.]; Isa. 23:8).¹⁴ The common denominator in these diverse uses is the concept of "one who commands." As van der Ploeg summarizes, "The *sar* is everywhere the one who commands; it is thus clear why the term is preferentially applied to military commanders."¹⁵

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Given these examples, it is not surprising that certain commentators say that the princes of Persia and Greece were human leaders. In fact in the Book of Daniel the term שָׂר is found nine times outside the angelic references and often carries the meaning of "one who commands." Six times in chapter 1 the term refers to a Babylonian officer (vv. 7-11, 18); on two occasions in Daniel's prayer the term designates the princes of Judah (9:6, 8); and once (11:5) the term is applied to Seleucus I Nicator, chief officer under the command of Ptolemy I.

Shea proposes a second argument in favor of seeing these princes as humans. While conceding that the term שָׂר in Daniel may in certain passages designate celestial beings,

¹³ Shea, "Wrestling with the Prince of Persia," 234, 249 (italics added).

¹⁴ Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, eds., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, vol. 3 (ש-ש), rev. Walter Baumgartner and Johann J. Stamm (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 1350-53.

¹⁵ J. van der Ploeg, "Les chefs du peuple d'Israël et leurs titres," *Revue Biblique* 57 (1950): 40.

Shea insists that in such cases the term *always* indicates *benevolent* angels. "Even when 'prince' is used of an angelic figure, elsewhere in Daniel, it is consistently used only of such angelic beings on God's side, never for fallen angels, demons, or Satan... the powers opposing God are identified in other ways in Daniel, not by this term."¹⁶

Shea's third argument is that the title שׂר is equivalent to the modern-day term "crown prince." He then attempts to demonstrate that Cambyses could have been simultaneously the king of Babylon and *crown prince* to the throne of his father, Cyrus, king of Persia.¹⁷ Shea further concludes that the phrase "with the kings of Persia" (v. 13, אֲצֵל מְלָכֵי פָּרְסָה) means that those kings were at the same place the angel encountered the "prince of Persia." If Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, was named king of Babylon *before* the third year of Cyrus (v. 1), he would be considered both "crown prince" (of Persia) and "king" (of Babylon) at the moment of the struggle described in verse 13. In this case the title "kings of Persia" would refer to two "kings"—Cambyses, king of Babylon, and Cyrus, king of Persia.¹⁸

According to this interpretation Daniel 10 says nothing about the intervention of *malevolent angelic powers*. Instead, Cyrus (the view of Clark and d'Enviu) or Cambyses his son (the view of Calvin and Shea) were the ones who resisted Gabriel and Michael.

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The View That the Princes of Persia and Greece Were National Angels (Demons)

While the word "prince" may seem to allow for the view that the princes of Persia and Greece are human leaders, a study of the term and its use in Daniel 10 demonstrates otherwise. While שׂר designates "leaders," "vassals," "captains," or "heads of groups" (in 1:7–11, 18; 8:11, 25; 9:6, 8; 11:5), elsewhere in Daniel the term obviously refers to celestial beings. The angel Michael is called "one of the chief *princes*" (10:13), "your prince" (v. 21), and "the great prince" (12:1). Two other usages of שׂר are of particular interest: "commander of the host" (שׂר־הַצְּבָאָה, 8:11) and "prince of princes" (שׂר־שָׂרִים, 8:25). These are three irrefutable examples in the same book where שׂר refers not to human princes but to God Himself, an angelic prince, or the Messiah. Outside the Book of Daniel the use of שׂר as an appellation of celestial beings is also found in the expression "captain of the host of the Lord" (שׂר־צְבָאָה־יְהוָה, Josh. 5:14–15). Also the expression "prince of peace" (שׂר־שָׁלוֹם, Isa. 9:5) refers to the Messiah.

As already noted, Shea contends that when the term שׂר refers elsewhere to angelic powers, it always designates good angels, not evil ones. The context, however, must remain the decisive factor. For example the term employed most frequently in Daniel to speak of the dominion of God (שְׁלֵטָן, 6:26 [27, Aramaic]; 7:6, 12, 14, 26) is also used of evil powers that will one day serve and obey God (7:27).¹⁹ Moreover, the use of שׂר in

¹⁶ Shea, "Wrestling with the Prince of Persia," 234. Unfortunately Shea does not specify which terms are used to designate the demonic powers.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 249.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 242. Shea admits that, according to his proposed chronology, Cambyses was considered at this time the king of Babylon and only the *prince* of Persia. He suggests, however, that the relationship between the two rulers was sufficient to justify the designation kings of Persia.

¹⁹ In Daniel 7:27 four of these evil powers (אֲרָב, Septuagint) are depicted by beasts that come out of the sea. The fourth one will directly oppose the Most High (v. 25).

reference to evil celestial powers is abundantly attested in late Hebrew usage.²⁰ Though the interpretation of the term in Daniel 10 must not depend entirely on these extrabiblical examples, they at least demonstrate the versatility of the Hebrew term.

In this regard the evident parallel between the שַׂר of Persia and Michael, the guardian angel of Israel, must not be overlooked. This same parallel is also found in 10:20–21 between the “prince of Greece” and “Michael your prince.” If שַׂר refers in a *context of con-*

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flict to the benevolent angel Michael, who represented God’s interests, it is not surprising to find the same term used to designate a malevolent angel (a demon) representing the interests of an earthly kingdom. Many commentators conclude that this parallelism in itself is sufficient to assert that the prince of Persia is of a demonic nature.²¹ As already noted, the immediate context is important in determining the meaning of terms.²²

By saying that Cambyses was simultaneously king of Babylon and crown prince (שַׂר) to the throne of his father, Cyrus,²³ Shea attributes to the term שַׂר a meaning that is foreign to the Old Testament usage of this appellation.²⁴ Furthermore even if it could be shown that שַׂר carried the meaning “crown prince,” such an interpretation could not apply in verse 20 to the שַׂר of Greece. Alexander the Great was no other than the *king* of Greece from the age of twenty and during his military campaigns.²⁵

Shea further argues that the term “king” (מֶלֶךְ) in verse 13 is crucial in determining the meaning of the designation “prince” (שַׂר) in the same verse.²⁶ While he rightly notes that מֶלֶךְ is never used in the Old Testament in reference to angels, he does not take into account that the term שַׂר is *never* used to designate those who are kings. This clear distinction between שַׂר and מֶלֶךְ is seen in many Old Testament passages (e.g., 2 Chron. 30:2, 6, 12; 36:18; Neh. 9:32; Esth. 3:12; Isa. 10:8; Jer. 24:8; 25:18; Lam. 2:9; Ezek. 17:12;

²⁰ O. J. Strugnell, “The Angelic Liturgy at Qumran-4Q SEREK SIROT `OLAT HASSABBAT,” *Vetus Testamentum Supplements* 7 (1960): 324, n. 1. See also the examples cited in שַׂר, in *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, ed. Marcus Jastrow (New York: Pardes, 1950), 1627. The term is also used in Assyrian in reference to various demons and angels who protect geographical regions (*The Assyrian Dictionary* [Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1992] 17/2, 86).

²¹ For example Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 226-27; and Chrys C. Caragounis, *The Son of Man: Vision and Interpretation*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 38 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1986), 70.

²² Anthony C. Thiselton underscores this principle in this way: The meaning of a word depends not on what it is in itself, but on its relation to other words and to other sentences which form its context. Dictionary-entries about words are rule-of-thumb generalizations based on assumptions about characteristic contexts. Nevertheless, the most urgent priority is to point out the fallacy of an atomizing exegesis which pays insufficient attention to context (Semantics and New Testament Interpretation, in *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods*, ed. I. Howard Marshall [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977], 75104).

²³ Shea, “Wrestling with the Prince of Persia,” 249.

²⁴ William Baur, “Prince,” in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1939), 4:2453-54. However, נַגִּיד may carry this meaning in 2 Chronicles 11:22.

²⁵ Alexander the Great is called the mighty king in Daniel 11:3 (cf. 8:21). Interestingly Shea makes no reference whatever to the prince of Greece in his article.

²⁶ The term kings occurs in connection with prince in v. 13, and commentators do not view that former term as a reference to tutelary deities of Persia (Shea, *Wrestling with the Prince of Persia*, 234).

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Hos. 3:4). The only exception to this may be in Isaiah 10:8: “Are not my princes [שָׂרִי] all kings [מְלָכִים]?” However, the context here is poetic. According to Young the term שָׂר is chosen in this passage in order to reflect the Akkadian *sarru*, even though the exact relationship of the two terms is not certain.²⁷

This distinction between שָׂר and מְלָךְ is also seen in Daniel 9:6, 8; and 11:5. Moreover, other terms were available to the author if he had wanted to convey a meaning comprising the two concepts of “prince” and “king.” For example the terms נָגִיד (9:25–26) and נְשִׂיא (1 Kings 1:35; Ezek. 12:12) can include the two meanings.²⁹ If, according to Shea, the “prince of the kingdom of Persia” (Dan. 10:13) and the “prince of Greece” (v. 20) designate Cambyses and Alexander the Great, respectively—both of whom are called מְלָךְ in 8:20–21—why did Daniel not use here one of the synonyms of שָׂר, such as נָגִיד or נְשִׂיא? Instead it seems that Gabriel carefully chose the term שָׂר in order to distinguish clearly in this context between human kings and angelic princes.

Theodotion, who best reflects the original reading of the Septuagint,²⁹ translates שָׂר by αἰρε and not by στρατηγός.³⁰ Beginning in the intertestamental period the literature has many examples in

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which αἰρε and αἰρε are used to designate celestial powers.³¹ Furthermore Paul and other New Testament authors employ these terms in reference to angelic powers (e.g., John 12:31; Rom. 8:38; 1 Cor. 15:54; Eph. 1:21–22; 2:2).

In conclusion several factors indicate that “prince” (שָׂר) in Daniel 10:13 refers to a demon, not to a “human ruler”: (a) the use of the term שָׂר in the Old Testament as a designation of celestial beings; (b) the use of שָׂר to designate malevolent angels as attested in later Hebrew and Assyrian usage and supported by the immediate context of Daniel 10; (c) the clear parallel between the prince of Persia and the angel Michael; (d)

²⁷ Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, 1:361, n. 36.

²⁹ The term נְשִׂיא is found 128 times in the Old Testament, of which 60 designate various leaders in Israel (Num. 1:16 and chapters 2, 7, 34). While in many passages the term is translated prince, in at least two passages נְשִׂיא refers to a king: Solomon in 1 Kings 11:34 (cf. 1 Kings 1:35, where מְלָךְ and also נָגִיד refer to Solomon) and Zedekiah in Ezekiel 12:10. Several times the term נָגִיד (the one who is in front) also designates a king (1 Sam. 9:16; 2 Sam. 7:8 [cf. 1 Sam. 10:1; 13:14; 25:30; 1 Chron. 29:22]; 2 Kings 20:5; etc.). See especially Daniel 9:25, an anointed king [נָגִיד], and 9:26, the people of a king [נָגִיד] who is to come. See J. van der Ploeg, *Les chefs du peuple d'Israël et leurs titres*, 4061; and Iain M. Duguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders of Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 1057.

²⁹ Wink, *Naming the Powers*, 27, n. 43. Concerning the translation of the Septuagint of Daniel, Bruce M. Metzger says, The translation of the Book of Daniel was so deficient that it was wholly rejected by the Christian church, and a translation made in the second century A.D. by Theodotion was used from the fourth century onward in its place (“Important Early Translations of the Bible,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 150 [1993]: 39).

³⁰ The Septuagint employs αἰρε only in reference to Michael, and it designates the princes of Persia and Greece by the term στρατηγός meaning military commander or governor (Otto Bauernfeind, *Stratēuōma* et al., in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich and Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971], 7:704). On the other hand Theodotion used the term αἰρε six times in Daniel 10, of which five designate the guardian angels of Persia, Greece, and Israel (Gerhard Dellling, αἰρε, in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 1 [1964], 488).

³¹ For examples that predate the New Testament see *Jubilees* 10:113; *Testament of Judah* 19:4; *Testament of Simeon* 2:7; *Testament of Dan* 5:6; *1 Enoch* 21:5, 75:1, 80:67. For other examples see *Ascension of Isaiah* 4:24; 10:1115; *1 Enoch* 61:1011; *2 Enoch* 7:32; 18:32; and *Apocalypse of Baruch* 59:11.

the absence of the use of שָׂר in the Old Testament to designate a "crown prince" to the throne; (e) the clear distinction between the terms מַלְאָךְ and שָׂר in verse 13; and (f) the translation of שָׂר by αἰχμ (Theodotion).

According to this interpretation the princes of Persia and Greece were demonic princes established over their respective nations. Their intentions were malevolent, standing in opposition to the angels Gabriel and Michael, the latter being one of the "chief princes" and defender of the Jewish nation.

The Interpretation of the Angelic Battle

Beyond the identity of these princes, it is important to understand the nature of the angelic battle as explained by the two descriptive phrases found in verse 13: עָמַד לְנַגְדִּי "[he] was withstanding me" and נֶאֱנִי נֹחֲרָתִי שָׁם "I had been left there." Certain commentators conclude concerning the first phrase ("[he] was withstanding me") that, if the angel sent to Daniel was (during twenty-one days) "withstood, held back, or deterred" from the accomplishment of his primary mission, then it is reasonable to believe that the "prince of Persia" is no other than a malevolent angelic power. For example Bruce concludes that these "princes," "who are powerful enough to impede an angel of the divine presence in the execution of his commission, are plainly not the human rulers of the empires mentioned; they are superior angel-princes."³²

Apparently the mission of the angel Gabriel had at least a twofold objective: to strengthen the prophet Daniel (v. 12) and to con-

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vey the revelation of chapters 11 and 12. But was there more than this? Was the struggle nothing more than an impediment to the angel's primary mission?

Daniel 8:25 shows that it is certainly possible for a human being, in this case Antiochus IV Epiphanes, to "oppose" (עָמַד with עָל) a celestial being, whether it be an angel or the Messiah Himself ("Prince of princes"). Given this fact, the argument of Bruce cited above is not convincing. That the "prince" of Daniel 10:13 is powerful enough to oppose the angel of God does not, *in and of itself*, lead one to the conclusion that this prince is angelic. As has been demonstrated, the angelic interpretation of the princes of Persia and Greece depends rather on the use of שָׂר in this context. On the other hand 1 Chronicles 21:1 ("Satan stood up against [עָמַד with עָל] Israel and moved David to number Israel") does not exclude the possibility that these malevolent, celestial powers are working through the intermediary of a man or a nation so as to oppose the will of God.³³

If then the phrase עָמַד לְנַגְדִּי he "was withstanding me," Dan. 10:13) does not help in defining the *identity* of the prince of Persia, it does explain the *reason* for the delay of twenty-one days. Gabriel was doing more than simply strengthening the prophet or conveying the revelation of chapters 11–12. He was also engaged in spiritual warfare, opposing the malevolent influence of the angelic prince of Persia on human political

³² F. F. Bruce, "Paul and The Powers That Be," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 66 (1983-84): 86.

³³ Such direct influence of malevolent spiritual powers on religious and spiritual authorities is also illustrated in *Ascension of Isaiah* 2:24: And Manasseh ceased from serving the God of his father and served Satan and his angels and powers for the *prince* of unrighteousness who rules this world is Beliar Now this Beliar rejoiced in Jerusalem over Manasseh and *strengthened* him in his leading to apostasy and in the lawlessness which was spread abroad in Jerusalem (italics added).

authorities. This celestial conflict is an integral part of Gabriel's mission. The angelic prince of Persia, who in this case is working through the intermediary of human political authorities, must be countered in his destructive schemes against Israel; this is the first objective of Gabriel's mission. This seems to be confirmed by the clause "for I [Gabriel] had been left there with the kings of Persia" (v. 13).

The New International Version renders this clause, "because I was detained there with the king of Persia." According to this translation the angel sent to Daniel was "detained" from accomplishing his primary revelatory mission. However, the verb *נָתַר* in the Niphal never carries this meaning in the Old Testament; the primary meaning is "to stay, to remain."³⁴ The King James Version

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reads, "As I remained there with the king of Persia." In this rendering Gabriel stayed with the king of Persia either in order to continue to influence him in favor of Israel (d'Envieu)³⁵ or to counteract his malevolent enterprises against Israel (Shea). However, as has been demonstrated, this interpretation of the text does not take into account the clear distinction of meaning of the two terms *שָׁר* and *נָתַר*. On the other hand the term *נָתַר* can carry the meaning "to have advantage over."³⁶ Young translates the phrase, "I had the advantage," adding, "the Speaker prevailed and was left near the kings of Persia (i.e., victorious), the Prince having been worsted."³⁷ Driver's translation is "[I] was left over there" (i.e., I had nothing more to do),³⁸ and Wood comments, "The word ... carries the thought of being left in a position of preeminence."³⁹ It seems then that, with the help of the archangel Michael, Gabriel was in an advantageous position with respect to the angelic prince of Persia. Michael moved to the front of the battle, leaving Gabriel free to accomplish another aspect of his mission, now⁴⁰ toward Daniel.

In conclusion the two phrases he "withstood me" and "I was left over there," though not crucial in determining the *identity* of the prince of Persia, contribute to an understanding of the *reason* for the twenty-one-day period of prayer and fasting by Daniel. Spiritual warfare was being waged in the heavenly places and the angel Gabriel was encountering the malevolent influence of the angelic (demonic) prince of Persia on the contemporary political situation. As Boyd states, "Daniel 10 clearly affirms not only the existence of powerful angelic beings but also their ability

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either to cooperate with or to resist God's will. This passage further implies that at least part of what may be in the balance, as these beings either cooperate with or resist

³⁴ T. Kronholm, *נָתַר*, in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 6:48291. Occasionally the Hiphil carries this nuance (2 Sam. 8:4; Ruth 2:18; 1 Chron. 18:4).

³⁵ D'Envieu, *Le Livre du Prophète Daniel*, 1345.

³⁶ Wilhelm Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament* (reprint; Berlin: Springer, 1987), 515.

³⁷ Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, 227. The New English Bible has seeing that I had held out there, Michael, one of the chief princes .

³⁸ Driver, *The Book of Daniel*, 159.

³⁹ Leon Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), 273.

⁴⁰ The term *עַתָּה* (now) is not found in verse 14, but is inferred. This understanding of the narrative seems to be confirmed by the renewed spiritual battle mentioned in verses 20-21.

God's will, is our welfare."⁴¹ The particular historical and political circumstances of Daniel 10 will now be examined in order to better understand the strategy of the angelic prince of Persia as he stood in opposition to the welfare of God's people.

The Historical Analysis of Daniel 10 by William Shea

Daniel mourned for three weeks in the "third year of Cyrus" (10:1–2), three weeks that ended on the twenty-fourth day of the first month (v. 4), that is, Nisan 24, 535 B.C.⁴² Based on this historical precision Shea proposes four arguments in favor of identifying the "prince" of Persia with Cambyses, the son of Cyrus: (a) the opposition in question in Daniel 10, (b) the reputation of Cambyses as an adversary of foreign religions, (c) the position of Cambyses at that time in the Persian government, and (d) the significance of the expression "with the kings of Persia" (אֲצֵל מְלָכֵי פָּרְסָה, v. 13).⁴³ Though these princes, as already discussed, are demonic—and thus Shea's view that the "prince" of Persia was Cambyses is to be rejected—a historical analysis of the contemporary context is helpful.

The Opposition In Question

What opposition was Israel facing in Daniel 10? When the events

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recorded in that chapter are read in their historical context, it seems that the *reconstruction of the temple* was the primary preoccupation of Daniel and his people (Ezra 1–4).⁴⁴ Though Cyrus had already allowed some of the Jewish exiles to return to their homeland, many were still dispersed in the Mesopotamian cities of Babylon, Persepolis, Susa, and Ecbatana. The first wave of returnees to Jerusalem encountered opposition in their efforts to rebuild the temple. According to Ezra 4:4–5 certain counselors from among the local inhabitants had been hired by the Persian government. Cyrus, either directly or by means of his representatives, yielded to the pressure of these counselors and suspended the reconstruction of the temple. As indicated in Haggai, Zechariah, and Ezra 5–6, this delay stemmed from local opposition.

In this regard it is significant that the theophany in Daniel 10:5–9, which manifested the glory of God, was situated to the east of the Tigris River. Why? For the simple reason that the temple, the abode of God, had not yet been reconstructed. According to Ezekiel the abominations committed in Israel caused the Shekinah glory of God to leave His

⁴¹ Gregory Boyd, *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 11.

⁴² Shea, "Wrestling with the Prince of Persia," 225-43. Probably Daniel employed here his own Hebrew fall-to-fall calendar. In this case the first year of Cyrus would not have begun until the autumn (the month of Tishri) of 538, since Cyrus was named the king of Babylon *after* Tishri 1, 539. So his *third* regnal year mentioned in Daniel 10:1 would have begun in the autumn of 536. The first month (10:4) would have been the first month of the Babylonian calendar and of Israel's religious calendar, that is, Nisan. The Julian equivalent of Nisan 24, 535, is May 11 of that year. See R. A. Parker and W. H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C.-A.D. 75* (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1956), 29; and A. F. Johns, "The Military Strategy of Sabbath Attacks on the Jews," *Vetus Testamentum* 13 (1963): 482-86. For the details concerning the different calendars, see D. J. A. Clines, "The Evidence for an Autumnal New Year in Pre-exilic Israel Reconsidered," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 93 (1974): 22-40; S. H. Horn, "The Babylonian Chronicle and the Ancient Calendar of the Kingdom of Judah," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 5 (1967): 22-25; Edwin R. Thiele, *A Chronology of the Hebrew Kings* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), 1420; Leslie McFall, "Has the Chronology of the Hebrew Kings Been Finally Settled?" *Themelios* 17 (October-November 1991): 7-8; and idem, "A Translation Guide to the Chronological Data in Kings and Chronicles," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 148 (January-March 1991): 3-45.

⁴³ Shea, "Wrestling with the Prince of Persia," 231-32.

⁴⁴ Daniel 9:25 alludes to the reconstruction of the city: It will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.

sanctuary (Ezek. 8:6; 10:18–19; 11:23). Later, however, the prophet said this same glory of God will once again fill the temple (Ezek. 43). It seems then that the mourning of Daniel and the vision of God's glory in Daniel 10:5–9 took place between these two critical events, that is, between the departure of the Shekinah glory from the temple (Ezek. 10) and the return of the Shekinah glory (Ezek. 43) to the temple.⁴⁵ However, who was responsible for this opposition? Was it Cyrus himself or one of his representatives?

The Reputation Of Cambyses

Shea includes several citations from Herodotus, certain Egyptian texts, and later classical historians in an effort to demonstrate the intense antagonism of Cambyses with respect to foreign religions.⁴⁶ Shea and others have rightly noted that the reconstruction of the temple was interrupted during the entire reign of Cambyses and not undertaken again until the more conciliatory reign of Darius I Hystaspes (521-486 B.C.). Dandamaev concurs. "If we can believe the information which is provided by Josephus Flavius in his

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'Jewish Antiquities' (II 249, 315), it was Cambyses, when he had become king, who even forbade the rebuilding of the temple. The building was only started at the commencement of Darius' reign."⁴⁷

The Position Of Cambyses In The Persian Empire

A third important factor in Shea's historical analysis concerns Cambyses' political position at that time in the Persian Empire. The question of the coregency of Cambyses and Cyrus has been debated by biblical historians. While Briant places the coregency at the beginning of Cyrus's reign,⁴⁸ Dubberstein situates it nearly eight years later in 530 B.C.⁴⁹ Shea, on the other hand, convincingly argues that their coregency began in 535 B.C. and that this set the stage for the events described in Daniel 10.⁵⁰ Shea mentions a document cited by Oppenheim, which seems to speak of Cambyses' enthronement as king of Babylon during the New Year's festivities: "From the 27th day of Arahshamnu till the 3rd day of Nisanu a(n official) 'weeping' was performed in Akkad, all the people (went around) with their hair disheveled. When, the 4th day, Cambyses, son of Cyrus, went to the temple ... priest of Nebo ... came (and) made the 'weaving' by means of the *handles* and when [he le]d the image of Ne[bo] ... Nebo returned to Esagila, sheep-offerings in front of Bel and the god *Mâ[r]-b[iti]*."⁵¹

⁴⁵ Shea, "Wrestling with the Prince of Persia," 233.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 236-39; cf. Herodotus, *History* 3.16-17, 2529, 37; and Strabo, *Geography of Strabo* 17.1.27.

⁴⁷ M. A. Dandamaev, *A Political History of the Achaemenid Empire*, trans. W. J. Vogelsang (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 64. Two authors who attempt to interpret Cambyses in a more positive light are W. Spiegelberg, *Die sog. demotische Chronik des Pap. 215 der Bibliothèque Nationale zu Paris* (Leipzig: 1914), 3233; and Pierre Briant, *Histoire de l'empire perse de Cyrus à Alexandre* (Paris: Fayard, 1996), 6668, 109-10, 495-96. However, Shea rightly concludes, While some exaggeration may have crept into the traditions in the course of time, they probably contain more than a kernel of truth (Shea, *Wrestling with the Prince of Persia*, 238).

⁴⁸ Briant, *Histoire de l'empire perse de Cyrus à Alexandre*, 82.

⁴⁹ Dubberstein, The Chronology of Cyrus and Cambyses, *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature* 55 (1938): 417-19.

⁵⁰ Shea, *Prince of Persia*, 23944; and idem, An Unrecognized Vassal King of Babylon in the Early Achaemenid Period II, *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 9 (1971): 101-3.

⁵¹ Shea, *Wrestling with the Prince of Persia*, 244. See A. L. Oppenheim, Babylonian and Assyrian Historical Texts, in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, ed. J. B. Pritchard, 3d ed. (New Haven, CT: Princeton University Press, 1969), 306. This text was first published by T. G. Pinches, *Transactions of the*

Though admitting that the chronology of this text is not clear, Shea underscores the possible parallels with Daniel 10.

What we find when these dates are compared is that the period of Daniel's mourning (during which also the angels wrestled with the prince of Persia)—twenty-one days—is the exact equivalent of the length of time between the date in Nisan on which Cambyses entered the temple during the New Year's festival, the 4th, and the date in Nisan on which the events of Dan 10 are described as occurring, the 24th. If the 24th of Nisan was the twenty-first day of Daniel's mourning, then by working backwards we find that the first day of Daniel's mourning was the 4th of Nisan, *the same day on which Cambyses entered the temple during the New Year's festival*.⁵²

Though this observation says nothing about the *duration* of Cambyses' reign, it does point up the circumstances that may have provoked the prophet's three weeks of prayer and fasting. Given Cambyses' bellicose character and his hatred of foreign religions, one can understand why Daniel would have devoted himself to prayer and fasting on behalf of his people and the project of reconstructing the temple already undertaken in Jerusalem.

The possible relationship between Daniel 10 and this text on Cambyses' enthronement is interesting but not conclusive. However, if the chronology proposed by Shea is correct, this points up a close relationship between the celestial activity of angels and demons and the affairs of people and kingdoms.

The Meaning of the Phrase "with the Kings of Persia" (Dan. 10:13)

If the title "prince of Persia" (v. 20) denotes a demonic being, what then is the significance of the problematic expression "with the kings of Persia" (v. 13)? What is the identity of these kings and their relationship to the "prince" (שָׂר) of Persia? And how does one explain the plural "kings" (מְלָכִי) in verse 13?

At least three solutions are proposed. Several commentators amend the Masoretic text by replacing "kings" (מְלָכִי) with "kingdom" (מְלָכּוּת). The Revised Standard Version adopts this solution with the translation "so I left him there with the prince of the Kingdom of Persia."⁵³

Another solution loosely interprets the plural "kings" (מְלָכִי) as meaning "succession of kings." This option is proposed by d'Enviu: "It becomes evident, however, from the entire narrative that the angel indicates that he will remain near the *present Persian king*

and his successors."⁵⁴

A third approach, similar to the second solution, suggests that the author was imprecise in his use of the plural and singular. The Vulgate, for example, translates with the singular: "*et ego remansi ibi juxta regem Persarum*."⁵⁵

Society of Biblical Archaeology (London, 1872-1893), and later by Sidney Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts, Relating to the Capture and Downfall of Babylon* (London: Methuen, 1924), plates XI-XIV, 110. See also Jean-Jacques Glassner, ed., *Chroniques mésopotamiennes* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1993), 204; and Dandamaev, *A Political History of the Achaemenid Empire*, 64.

⁵² Shea, "Wrestling with the Prince of Persia," 245-46 (italics added).

⁵³ This modification also necessitates the addition of the term prince (see *ibid.*, 241).

⁵⁴ D'Enviu, *Le Livre du Prophète Daniel*, 1345 (italics added). See also René Peter-Contesse, *Manuel du Traducteur pour le livre de Daniel* (Stuttgart: Alliance Biblique Universelle, 1986), 163.

⁵⁵ Cf. the NIV rendering I was detained there with the king of Persia.

However, Shea's conclusion here is preferable. The designation "kings of Persia" refers to the two kings—Cambyses, the Babylonian head of state,⁵⁶ and Cyrus, the king of Persia—without identifying either one or the other with the "prince of Persia." Such an interpretation does not understand the mention of the "kings of Persia" to be a definition of the designation "prince of the kingdom of Persia." As previously noted, the clear distinction between the terms שָׂר and מַלְכֵי in the Old Testament and the parallel between the prince (שָׂר) of Persia and the angel Michael argue against such an interpretation. However, it is true (as Shea rightly observes) that verse 13 implies that the "kings" were located at the same place where the angel Gabriel experienced opposition from the prince of Persia. It seems, then, that the explanation of this apparently close rapport is found in the *strategy* of the prince of Persia rather than in his *identity*. Even as Satan rose against Israel to incite King David to oppose the will of God (1 Chron. 21:1), *so this malevolent angelic "kingdom-prince" attempted to accomplish his evil intentions by the intermediary of two heads of state, Cyrus and his son Cambyses*. This latter one, by his belligerent and impudent character, opposed God's people. As Boyd states, "What occurs on earth, again, is a replica and a mirror of what occurs in heaven. Indeed, it is a microcosmic example of the macrocosmic spiritual struggle."⁵⁷

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Daniel 10 in Its Broader Context

This intimate relationship between celestial and terrestrial activity is indicated elsewhere in Daniel. Daniel 11:1 reads, "I [Gabriel] took my stand to support and protect him" (NIV). To whom does "him" refer? Though it is possible to understand that Gabriel came to the aid of Darius the Mede, it is preferable to understand that Gabriel protected Michael. The immediate context implies this interpretation: "No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince" (10:21, NIV). Also in light of Daniel 6 it is difficult to imagine in what way Gabriel could have supported Darius.⁵⁸ Michael, Israel's primary angelic defender, needed the help of Gabriel during the reign of Darius. And in the same way Gabriel, Israel's primary angelic messenger, called on Michael in his struggle against the prince of Persia. However, to understand that Michael needed the help of Gabriel during the reign of Darius, in the same way that Gabriel called on Michael in his struggle against the prince of Persia, affords the reader unusual insight into angelic activity in favor of the people of God.

Daniel 6:5–16 speaks of efforts on the part of Babylonian dignitaries to influence Darius against Daniel. However, God sent His angel to shut the mouths of the lions (v. 22). This miraculous intervention obligated Darius to reformulate his political stance to

⁵⁶ Whatever may have been the precise political position of Cambyses on May 11, 535 B.C., the term מַלְכֵי is quite adequate for describing the *role* of Cambyses and his father Cyrus. See Robert D. Culver, מַלְכֵי, in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 1:507-10.

⁵⁷ Boyd, *God at War*, 90. The scene evokes the apocalyptic account of Satan who, in the form of a dragon (Rev. 12:9) will give his power and his throne and great authority to the beast (13:2). Such a conclusion concerning these angelic princes is in stark contradiction to Wesley Carr, who affirms, These beings never have anything to do with the concrete acts or persons of government. Indeed even in Daniel they relate only to past empires, and are only a device for explaining history (*Angels and Principalities: The Background, Meaning and Development of the Pauline Phrase hai archai kai hai exousiai*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 42 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981], 35).

⁵⁸ I agree with Shea that Darius was in fact Gubaru, general of the Persian army under Cyrus, who conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. (William H. Shea, "Darius the Mede: An Update," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 20 [1982]: 230).

favor the Hebrews (vv. 24–27). Walvoord concludes, “The beginning of the second great empire with the fall of Babylon in chapter 5 was, then, more than a military conquest or triumph of the armies of the Medes and Persians. It was a new chapter in the divine drama of angelic warfare behind the scenes.”⁵⁹

The immediate context of Daniel 11:1 also addresses this intimate relationship between celestial activity and the terrestrial scene. For example beginning in 10:21 a complex and intentional literary structure demonstrates that 11:1 is not an incidental phrase that needs to be reformulated or amended (the verse belongs to the central body of revelation that begins in 10:20), and 10:20–11:1 and 12:1–3 form an inclusio frame around the

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revelation of 11:2–45.⁶⁰ David summarizes the implications of these observations this way: “First, he [Gabriel] discloses to Daniel the heavenly battle that goes on behind the terrestrial scene: 10:13, 20-21; 11:1. Second, he reveals the historical consequences of the preceding supra-historical battle: 11:2b–45. Lastly, he returns to the celestial scene and the vindication of his people: 12:1–3 ... *the terrestrial struggle involving the accession into world power of a new kingdom bound to persecute Israel (11:2–45) presumes a whole heavenly battle going on behind it.*”⁶¹

While Daniel 1–5 depicts the history of world empires, chapters 6–12 (and especially chapters 10–12) unfold the reality of the conflict that rages in the supraterritorial scene (cf. Isa. 24:21).⁶² As Lincoln states, these chapters depict “war in heaven between the angels of the nations which has its counterpart in events on earth.”⁶³

The Angelic Princes of Daniel 10 and the Contemporary Notion of Territorial Spirits

Though the limits of this study do not allow for an exhaustive analysis of the contemporary doctrine, several observations can be made based on the preceding study of Daniel 10. First, angelic princes mentioned in Daniel do *not* rule over *geographical* areas with “explicitly defined boundaries.” The archangel Michael, for example, is described as “the great prince who protects *your people*” (12:1, NIV, italics added). This emphasizes the protective role of Michael in relation to the *people* of God rather than with respect to a given *territory*. Michael remained the guardian angel of the people of God, whether Israel was in the Promised Land or was dispersed in exile among the nations. And in view of the parallel between Michael and the angelic princes of Persia and Greece, one can conclude that the same correspondence exists for the latter, that is, the “princes” are over the *people* of Persia and Greece and their

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sociopolitical structure rather than their respective geographical boundaries.

⁵⁹ John F. Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation* (Chicago: Moody, 1971), 255.

⁶⁰ Pablo David, “Daniel 11, 1: A Late Gloss?” in *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings*, ed. A. S. van der Woude (Leuven: University Press, 1993), 512.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 509, 512 (italics added).

⁶² This is understandable, as chapters 25 consist of revelations given to pagan monarchs, while chapters 712 convey revelations given to the prophet Daniel himself.

⁶³ A. T. Lincoln, “Liberation from the Powers: Supernatural Spirits or Societal Structures?” in *The Bible in Human Society*, ed. M. Daniel Carroll R., David J. A. Clines, and Philip R. Davies (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 350.

This same emphasis on peoples and sociopolitical structures is seen throughout the Book of Daniel. The Babylonians conquered Judah (Dan. 1–5), but were soon supplanted by the Persians (Dan. 6–10), who themselves were conquered by the Greek Empire (11:2). Then the Greek Empire split into four kingdoms (11:4–36). As Lowe concludes, “The princes of Daniel 10 rule not over ... fixed geographical regions, but over imperialistic empires whose boundaries expand and contract... . So the respective princes may be tutelary powers, but if so, then they are expansionistic—not geographical—spirits.”⁶⁴ Taken in this sense, they are better termed “empire spirits” rather than territorial spirits.⁶⁵

This emphasis on the peoples of the earth and their sociopolitical structures is found throughout the Old Testament and distinguishes the biblical literature from the traditions of the surrounding nations. In pagan nations around Israel the identity of a people was defined first in terms of a false god’s relationship to his *territory*. These deities were depicted only secondarily with respect to the inhabitants of those areas.⁶⁶ However, the biblical literature stands in contrast to such mythical and animistic notions. In contrast to this pagan concept (Judg. 11:24; 1 Sam. 26:19–20; 2 Kings 3:27), the Old Testament never accepts such thinking as God’s view. The emphasis is rather on the relationship between God (or the “gods”) and the *peoples* of the earth.⁶⁷

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The fact that the angelic princes of Persia and Greece do not rule over explicitly defined geographical territories is also demonstrated by the previous exegesis of Daniel 10:13. The prince of the kingdom of Persia was not trying to fight his way through, in a geographical sense, to Daniel. *The issue at stake was not territorial, but political and personal.* The political authorities, Cyrus and his son, Cambyses, opposed God’s program through His people Israel, while influenced by a malevolent celestial power.

Second, those who promote the notion of territorial spirits suggest the need for “warfare prayer” or “strategic-level intercession” in which one contends with “an even more ominous concentration of demonic power; namely, territorial spirits.”⁶⁸ Such

⁶⁴ Lowe, *Territorial Spirits and World Evangelisation?* 34.

⁶⁵ Arnold, *Three Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*, 151.

⁶⁶ Daniel Isaac Block, *The Gods of the Nations*, Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Theology (Jackson, MS: Evangelical Theological Society, 1988), 23; cf. Paul Sanders, *The Provenance of Deuteronomy* 32 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 367. For examples of this territorial emphasis in Ugaritic literature, see Manfred Dietrich, *Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit*, *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 24 (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1976), 1.3.iii.30; 1.3.iv.20; 1.3.vi.1116.

⁶⁷ Block, *The Gods of the Nations*, 2829; A. Scott Moreau, “Religious Borrowing as a Two-Way Street: An Introduction to Animistic Tendencies in the Euro-North American Context,” in *Christianity and the Religions: A Biblical Theology of World Religions*, ed. Edward Rommen and Harold Netland (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1995), 16677. The relationship between the gods and the nations of the earth is often conveyed by the expressions אֱלֹהֵי (הַ) גְּוִיִּם (Deut. 29:17; 2 Kings 18:33 [cf. Isa. 36:18]; 19:12 [cf. Isa. 37:12]; 2 Chron. 32:13, 14, 17); and אֱלֹהֵי (הַ) עַמִּים (Deut. 6:14; 13:7 [8, Heb.]; Judg. 2:12; Ps. 96:5 [cf. 1 Chron. 16:26]; 1 Chron. 5:25; 2 Chron. 32:19. (See also Exodus 12:12; Joshua 24:15; Judges 6:10; 1 Kings 11:33; 2 Chronicles 25:14; Jeremiah 43:12, 13.) Block concludes, It is perhaps a measure of the people-centeredness of the Hebrew perspective that, although references to Jahweh’s abandonment of his people are common, only rarely is the focus on his forsaking the land of Israel (*The Gods of the Nations*, 150). Intertestamental and later Jewish literature also addresses this relationship between the angelic princes and the *peoples* of the earth (*Sirach* 17:17; *Jubilees* 15:30–32; *1 Enoch* 20:12; *2 Enoch* 19:5; *Testament of Nephtali* 8:310:2; *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* on Deut. 32:8 and Gen. 11:7; *Pirque Rabbi Eliezer*, chap. 24).

⁶⁸ Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 18. Such strategic-level intercession is to be distinguished from what is termed in the literature ground-level spiritual warfare (which involves casting demons out of individuals) and occult-level spiritual warfare (which confronts demonic forces released through occultic activity). See Wagner, *Confronting the Powers*, 21–22.

intercession frequently involves both the naming of the territorial powers that influence a specific geographical area as well as aggressive prayer against these demonic spirits in order to lessen their grip on the region and prepare the way for more effective evangelism.⁶⁹ Furthermore Wagner states that Daniel 10 “shows us clearly that the only weapon Daniel had [by which] to combat these rulers of darkness was warfare prayer.”⁷⁰ Is this true?

A marked difference stands between the nature of Daniel’s prayer and what is presently termed “strategic-level intercession.” Daniel never sought the names of these cosmic powers nor did he employ their names in his intercession—a practice more in keeping with occultic arts.⁷¹ In fact there is no indication that Daniel was aware of what was taking place in the heavenlies during his three-

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week period of prayer and fasting. It is not until *after* this period that Daniel received revelation about the identity of the angels engaged in this heavenly struggle.⁷² And even then, the only angel who was named was Michael (10:13), who fought on behalf of Israel. The evil angelic princes of Persia and Greece were identified by their generic titles. In light of this, Lowe concludes, “If this passage teaches the importance of names, it is angelic names which are consequential. Generic titles are sufficient for demons.”⁷³

Also Daniel did not engage in aggressive prayer against such powers with the expectation of “binding” or “evicting” them. The prophet did not pray *against* cosmic powers but *for* the people of God and the fulfillment of God’s redemptive purposes (cf. Eph. 6:18–20). Apparently Daniel’s focus in prayer was not on the celestial warfare in the heavenlies, but on the promises of God (Dan. 10:12; cf. Jer. 25:11; 29:10) and their fulfillment on the terrestrial scene. Indeed, these promises were fulfilled, but not immediately. Historically the immediate obstacles to the reconstruction of the temple were not overcome for another decade and a half. Furthermore the prince of Persia continued to exert his influence for another two hundred years until the time of the Greek Empire. Nevertheless in direct response to Daniel’s prayer God sent an angel⁷⁴ to counteract the evil intentions of the prince of Persia and to reveal God’s unfolding program to the

⁶⁹ Concerning the importance of identifying and naming the spirits, see Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 148; idem., *Confronting the Powers*, 200-201; Bob Beckett, “Practical Steps toward Community Deliverance,” in *Breaking Strongholds in Your City: How to Use Spiritual Mapping to Make Your Prayers More Strategic, Effective and Targeted*, 155. Such a practice reflects the assumption that the discerning of the name of a spiritual being gives a person power over that spirit.

⁷⁰ Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 66.

⁷¹ Clinton Arnold, *Power and Magic: The Concept of Power in Ephesians in Light of Its Historical Setting* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 5455.

⁷² Walvoord states, Daniel probably had observed the Passover on the fourteenth day and the Feast of Unleavened Bread which followed from the fifteenth day to the twenty-first. If the vision came to Daniel immediately after his twenty-one days of mourning, his fast must have begun immediately after the new moon celebration, concluding just before the vision was given to him (*The Book of Daniel*, 241).

⁷³ Lowe, *Territorial Spirits and World Evangelisation?* 47. This observation underscores a distinguishing feature of the biblical literature in contrast to the noncanonical literature of later Judaism. In the latter the emphasis on names and angelic hierarchies is quite frequent. For example Sammaël is the angelic prince of Rome, and Dubbiël is the angelic prince of Persia (*I Enoch* 26:11, 12; and Babylonian Talmud *Yoma* 77a).

⁷⁴ There are at least three angelic manifestations in this narrative. The man dressed in linen (Dan. 10:5) is possibly a theophany manifesting God’s glory. The literary structure of the passage suggests that the angels of verses 10 and 16 are identical and refer to one who was engaged in the conflict against the prince of the kingdom of Persia. Then there is Michael, the guardian angel of Israel. See Christopher Rowland, A Man Clothed in Linen: Daniel 10.6ff. and Jewish Angelology, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 24 (1985): 99-110.

prophet. Such historical facts underscore the absolute sovereignty of God in the outworking of His purposes and in response to the prayers of His people. Indeed, "he does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth" (Dan. 4:35, NIV).

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Conclusion

Several factors related to the use of the term שַׂר in Daniel 10:13, 20 confirm the view that the designations "prince of Persia" and "prince of Greece" refer to angelic (demonic) beings. These were not mere human princes nor were they "territorial spirits"; they were powerful national angels or "empire spirits" who opposed God's carrying out His purposes through His people Israel. While Cyrus and his son Cambyses opposed the reconstruction of the Jewish temple in the terrestrial sphere, spiritual warfare was being waged in the heavenlies as the angel Gabriel countered the malevolent influence of the angelic prince of Persia on the political situation on earth. In this celestial warfare Daniel's prayer was not without significance. The angel Gabriel was sent to Daniel in direct response to his prayer (v. 12). But in addition, Daniel gained victory over the opposing prince of Persia as the prophet continued to pray. As a result of Daniel's intercession God unveiled in chapter 11 His program for Israel's future. The fruit of Daniel's intercession is not only the revelation of chapter 11, which unveils God's program for Israel's future, but also the eventual removal of the immediate obstacles to the rebuilding of the temple.