

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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Angels At War

By Dan Trygg

“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. ⁶ 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. ⁷ 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. ⁸ 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. ⁹ But I heard the sound of his words; and as soon as I heard the sound of his words, I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground. ¹⁰ Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. ...When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ 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.’ ¹⁸ Then this one with human appearance touched me again and strengthened me.”

Daniel 10:5-10,15-18

“And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love (*agapaō*) their life even when faced with death.”

Revelation 12:11

I happened to read this passage from Daniel in my daily reading, recently. **I was impressed by the powerful intangible dread or powerlessness that came over people who were even *near* the presence of this one angel.** Those who were with Daniel fled, and Daniel lost his strength, and was reduced to a near sleep-like state. He had to be strengthened twice by the angel to even begin to converse with him, or look at him.

Angels were a significant part of biblical revelation, and the biblical worldview. The word “angel” occurs 197 times in the Bible, and many people had encounters with angels, in some manner or another. **There are varieties of angels, and often times even their presence is startling, and overwhelming.** People who encountered them fell to the ground. **Some of these angels, at least, are amazingly powerful.** One angel of Yahweh went out into the camp of the Assyrians and killed 185,000 men in one night (Isa. 37:36). Another angel killed all the firstborn male offspring of both man and beast in the land of Egypt in one night (Ex. 12:23; Heb. 11:28). The plague of the firstborn was the tenth and final strike that showed the superiority of Yahweh over the Egyptian gods, and even Pharaoh himself, that secured the release and departure of the Hebrew people from their bondage to the people of Egypt. **An entire nation was set free from slavery to another nation, because of what *one* angel did in one night!** In Revelation 9:14,15 we are told of four angels who are bound, who will be released in the last days, and will bring about the death of a third of humankind.

In 2 Peter 2:10-12, **Peter warns of arrogant, self-willed people who would mock such angelic beings,** while **other angels, who are greater in might and power than these foolish humans would not dare to speak in such fashion. They know their appropriate limits,** and it is not their place to pass judgment or mock even the powers of darkness. There is only one Judge, and He reserves the right to pronounce judgment.

This warning is repeated almost word for word in the book of Jude, verses 4-10. The point of the entire passage is to “stay in your lane”, ...that is, stay within your assigned area of responsibility, and be obedient to carry out the will of God that is assigned to you.

These people have turned the grace of God into a license to disregard Him. They throw off all restraint or good order, so that they could puff themselves up with self-importance. They think they are above the law, and fulfill their sensual desires. **They also overestimate their own power, and think they can mock and deride these angelic majesties. They don't realize that doing so is like poking a bear! Their arrogance and impudent posturing will be their undoing,** as their choices will put them outside the protections which accompany obedience and humility. They become grumblers, fault-finders, flatterers to gain advantage, people looking for power and importance, but not ones who truly exemplify the character or walk of Jesus Christ. Instead, they are worldly-minded, cause divisions in the Body, and are devoid of the Spirit of God.

I want to emphasize the point that is communicated by all three of these passages: The spiritual powers that are set against us are *much more powerful* than we are, in ourselves. It is not *our* place to mock, judge or speak arrogantly against such beings. We need to stay in submission to the authority and responsibility that ARE OURS in Jesus Christ. We need to clearly know and understand WHAT our authority is, and WHERE it is. And we need to clearly understand that the authority and power are in JESUS, *not in ourselves*. We are only in the authority and power of God when we are yielded to Christ, and walking in His will. When we go outside of that, we are in

danger of being exposed, ...of being vulnerable to the enemy. **THANK GOD that He graciously covers us with much more grace and protection than we deserve.** THANK GOD that He keeps the enemy at bay, and under restrictions, MUCH MORE than we have any awareness of. As we saw from the first paragraph, if the enemy had his way with us, we would be *toast* in a very brief time. We need to seriously understand this, ...that the enemy is dangerous, AND that God has protected us, ...**BUT do not foolishly play with fire. Treat it properly.**

In the story, *The Life of Pi*, Pi is a young boy whose father is a zoo keeper. To teach Pi how dangerous the tiger is, he ties a young goat outside the bars of the tiger's cage, and forces Pi to watch as the tiger is able to reach out past the bars, and pull the goat *through* the bars into the cage, and kill it. It happens so fast, and suddenly, that it was shocking. The point of this lesson was for Pi to clearly see how dangerous that tiger really was. Those bars offered only limited protection, and you better not get too close, or be mindless around that tiger. BUT, if Pi *was* mindful, careful, and followed the proper protocols, he *would* be able to carry out his duties around the cage. This is a great word picture of our relationship with these spiritual beings. If we handle them appropriately, and with wisdom, we will have no problems. If we are foolish, as the arrogant false teachers mentioned above, we put ourselves in danger.

The reaction of some people, in light of this, is to run the other way, and retreat in fear. But, like Pi, **we are given the job to deal with "serpents", "scorpions", "the roaring lion", and spiritual powers of all varieties.** It is our assignment. **We are to resist these spiritual beings, as the conflicts come.** Sometimes they come as aggressive attacks against us, and we need to stand firm, ...and other times, we are on assignment to bring the truth into the enemy's camp, and we will encounter his resistance against our advance. **When we are properly prepared, and are being obedient and "staying in our lane", we can avoid disaster, ...and accomplish the assignments God gives to us.**

What was the counsel of Jude, the brother of Jesus? "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the *agapē*-love of God, expectantly welcoming the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire..." (Jude 1:20-23). Now, this isn't specifically just about spiritual warfare. This is also about dealing with the influence of some of these unhealthy, self-seeking false brothers or sisters, as well. **What do we do? We keep ourselves centered in our walk with God,** ...building ourselves up in our faith, ...praying in the Holy Spirit, ...keeping ourselves in the *agapē*-love of God, ...eagerly receiving the mercy of God, both for ourselves and others. **What this does is to keep us connected with and abiding in Christ, where the Source of our spiritual vitality and authority resides. It also keeps us from getting entangled with frustration, and the irritations of the flesh, that can often occur in our interactions with one another in the Body** (because we are all people in process).

Remember that the primary approach to spiritual warfare is *corporate*, not *individual*. Paul used the word picture of the Roman infantryman, who was equipped for fighting in a *phalanx*, a team-centered approach to advancing against the enemy. The men would stand side-by-side, presenting a wall of shields, and a roof of shields, as they progressed into battle. **As long as they were armored up, did not break ranks, each one doing his job, and they worked together..., they were nearly invincible.** They needed to be mindful of each other, because the success of the team rested upon the health and effectiveness of each individual. Thus, it is crucial to "keep ourselves in the *agapē*-love of God". The ability to consider others before yourself is a key element of team work that enables us to succeed.

There is a higher call of love, however. It is the call to love God before our very lives. We began this study considering the awesome and overwhelming presence of some of the angels. We do not have all the information about Satan, but it would seem that he was once one of the chief angels. If Ezekiel 28:12-18 is a reference to him, **Satan was once an anointed covering-cherub, one of the greatest of the angels,** ...one who was closest to God Himself, under His very throne (cf. Ezk. 1). **He is clearly presented as the one in control of the angelic rebellion.** All the renegade angels chose to follow Satan in his opposition to God, ...in his attempt to become like God (Isa. 14:12-14). In Revelation 12, John records an allegorical description of a spiritual war. **Satan is described as a dragon, who is defeated by Michael and his angels, and is thrown down to the earth. He is filled with wrath, and seeks to attack the people of God. We can overcome him because of the blood of Jesus,** -- that is, that He was the sacrificial Lamb of God sent to pay for our sins; **because of the word of our own testimony** -- that is, that we have personally identified with Jesus by faith, and we are His; **and because we choose to not love our lives even to death** -- that is, we are willing to lay our lives down, if necessary, out of loyalty to Christ. In the verse, it is stated negatively, "they did not *agapē*-love their lives even to death." **What this means is that they choose to *agapē*-love Jesus more!**

Remember, *agapē*-love is a choice to prefer someone above yourself. **We can overcome the enemy if we will prefer Jesus above our very selves.** When we clearly know it is all about Jesus, ...and that we are saved by Him, not our own works, ...and we have truly made Jesus our King by our faith-commitment to Him, ...and loyalty and love for Him is above anything else, ...then **what else can the enemy do to us?** He will have no way to defeat us. **We will conquer him, no matter what the challenge. The gates of hades will not be strong against the church** (Matt. 16:18).