

The Mother of All Battles

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[0 : 00] Well, it must be the crazy season. I walked out of my house this morning in my suit to come to church at 7.30 this morning and realised when I got to the end of my driveway that I was wearing my slippers.

So it is, it must be nearly Christmas. The Christmas carols have been in the shops, you know, for what seems like, I don't know, four months. And we just hear, you know, angels from the realms of glory.

The first Noel the angel did say, hark the herald angels sing. Angels stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing hallelujah. While shepherds watch their flocks by night all seated on the ground, an angel of the Lord came down and glory shone around.

Lots of angels in Christmas carols and in Christmas plays, especially at kindergartens, and on Christmas cards, especially cheesy ones you can buy from Coorong.

We love our angels at Christmas, don't we? But have you ever stopped to consider what place angels might have in the rest of your year?

[1 : 08] We ought to ask that question, I think. How do angels, good or evil, fit into our Christian life, not just into our Christmas carols?

Daniel chapters 9 and 10 are key passages from God's word that give us a rare view into the unseen angelic realm. And it's not necessarily an easy view for us to take in, is it?

We're all very well schooled in a naturalistic, materialistic worldview that says, if you can't see it, it's not there.

Or if you can't measure it in some kind of, I don't know, synchrotron or something, it's not there. On the other hand, if we do want to know about these things, about angels and demons, then we're surrounded by so many weird and wonderful ideas that we just don't know where to begin.

You know, there's just, there's angel stuff in New Age bookshops, there's angel stuff in Islam and Mormonism, in Hollywood movies, in Roman Catholic devotions, in charismatic conferences on spiritual warfare.

[2 : 29] Where the list goes on. Where do we, where do we turn? Well, of course, we begin and we end with the scriptures, the word of God. But this issue is made a bit more difficult by the fact that the Bible actually doesn't teach us a lot about angels or demons, especially not systematically.

You know, it doesn't say, I am setting out to tell you about the angelic realm. So, tonight, as we come to these particular chapters in Daniel, it's essential, if we want to know about these things and this reality, that we prick up our spiritual ears, as it were.

Because here, in the worldview that the book of Daniel is set in, an unseen, the unseen reality is on display.

And it's very sobering, it's very confronting, it's very challenging, and it's very comforting. Now, that said, the main purpose of this passage, or this long passage that we read over this kind of chapter and a half of Daniel, is not here primarily to teach us about angels and demons.

The main message of the book of Daniel is once again the main message here. God is in control. He is sovereign over all of human history.

[3 : 55] He is sovereign over all of salvation history. And God here is revealing more of his saving ways, his powerful ways to his people through his chosen servant, Daniel.

But the way in which he is choosing to reveal himself is not so much through a vision here, but through an angelic messenger.

Now, we know that in the Bible, angels have a number of different roles. They can be proclaiming the glory of the Lord, like at Christmastime. They can be coming to visit.

They can be coming to announce judgment. And here, they can be coming to give a message. And in fact, that's what the word angel means, messenger. And it's just as the book of Hebrews describes angels.

This is a really important verse for us in thinking about the angelic realm. It says, Are not all angels, spirits in the divine service, sent to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

[5 : 03] Angels are there to serve those of us, to serve humans who are to inherit salvation. And that's what they are doing in this passage.

And when we left Daniel last week, as Catron said, he was confessing the sins of his people, seeking God's forgiveness on their behalf. And when we begin our passage today, we find him again in the same position, still continuing in prayer, as our passage begins in verse 20, While I was speaking and was praying and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God on behalf of the holy mountain of my God.

All the decades, and they have been decades by this stage, all the decades of captivity in Babylon have done nothing to diminish Daniel's passion for his people and his homeland and for the temple of the Lord.

It's what he calls the holy mountain of my God, Jerusalem and the temple. He is desperate that his people should be able to return there to continue to restart the sacrifices.

And he knows it was their sin that caused their expulsion from the land. And so he acknowledges the sins. He continues to seek God's forgiveness. But we saw last week that something in particular had prompted Daniel's prayer at this time.

[6 : 35] And we read at the start of chapter 9 that Daniel had been reading the Bible. He read from the book of the prophet Jeremiah and he saw there that Jeremiah said, a message from God, that the exile to Babylon would last for 70 years.

And Daniel could see that events in his time were lining up temporally in terms of time and politically. Babylon had fallen.

This chapter is actually set in the first year of a new leader, a Persian leader, Cyrus, and under him the Median leader, Darius.

Daniel sensed that the exile could be coming to an end. But he's seeking God's wisdom in prayer to see whether he has discerned this correctly. And we see straight away that God honors his request. Do you know that God honors every request for wisdom? It says that in the book of James. If you ask for wisdom, God will give it to you. Now, particularly here, he gives it to Daniel in the form of a visit from an angel.

[7 : 51] Now, before we look at these next verses, I want you to think, when was the last time that you tried to ring a company to like settle a bill or a dispute or something like that and you were put on hold for so long you were convinced that they'd forgotten about you?

Has that ever happened to you? Yeah, it happened to me like a couple of weeks ago. I rang the doctor about my thumb and the receptionist put me on hold straight away. They go, can I put you on hold? Yeah, okay. And you're already on hold.

And I'm on there for so long listening to the static-y FM, you know, daggy radio that they have. And I've decided that my little flashing light on their phone system must have exploded or something because they're not picking up.

So I hang up and I ring again thinking this is going to be better. And actually it was better and I finally did get through after being put on hold again. Yeah, that's okay. So they put me on hold but that's okay.

I did get to speak to someone. Now Daniel, Daniel has been praying for some time. In chapter 10, we see that he's been praying for a very long time, three weeks.

[9 : 05] But Gabriel, when he comes to Daniel, wants him to know that he hasn't been put on hold. Have a look at these verses with me, verses 21 to 23.

Gabriel comes while Daniel was still speaking. It says in verse 21, he comes in swift flight. There are no dawdling couriers for God.

And he comes at the time of the evening sacrifice or when, if the Jews had been in Jerusalem with their temple operating, the evening sacrifice would have been happening.

And this was the time when the Jews knew every day with confidence that their prayers were being heard as they maintained their covenant relationship with God through the sacrifices and their prayers.

And this is the time when God hears because he always hears. And finally, Gabriel himself says in verse 23, at the beginning of your supplications, a word went out.

[10:15] That is, an answer from God went out. At the beginning, as soon as you started speaking, and I have come to declare it. As soon as you asked of God, Daniel, God answered.

That's the way God always is with his people. Isaiah 65 verse 24 says, Isn't that a marvelous promise?

There is no phone queue in heaven, no waiting list, there is no magic length or form of words that your prayers have to take to ensure God's response.

Jesus says in Luke, your heavenly father knows what you need before you ask him. He is a good God with open ears turned towards his children.

Daniel has asked for wisdom and he shall receive it. It has been on its way since he asked. Now, Daniel wants to get his interpretation of Jeremiah correct.

[11:27] But from our standpoint in history, we actually know that he's on the right track. We know that the first year of Darius the Mede was the time when King Cyrus of Persia had finally beaten down Babylon.

And we know that not long after King Cyrus came to power, he made an edict, a declaration to all the lands now in his empire that those who had been removed from their particular homeland, including the Jews, could return.

It's really Ezra and Nehemiah talks about that at the end of Chronicles, end of two Chronicles. It says, and King Cyrus made this edict and everybody got to hear it.

And it's just this amazing fulfillment of God's promise that someone would come, destroy Babylon and make a way for the exiles to return home.

Now, we don't know whether it would have happened already or it was in the works when Daniel was praying, but it was certainly around the corner if it hadn't happened already.

[12:38] Either way, Daniel would soon be seeing his people return home. And it would be very tempting for him, seeing this as an old man, to believe that the golden age had finally arrived and that it would be smooth sailing from here on in for the people of God.

But God has news for Daniel. Daniel's prayer for wisdom and understanding was a genuine one. And so God is going to reveal to him much more than he could have imagined.

Despite the fact that the exiles in Daniel's time would be returning, there's actually another layer of prophetic truth to Jeremiah's words that Daniel needs to know.

This return from Babylon would not be the end of the troubles that the people of Israel would see. In reality, it wouldn't just be 70 years, but the angel says 70 weeks of years or 70 times 7 years before the end of trouble for the people of God would come.

So you see in verse 24, 70 weeks are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and profit and to anoint a most holy place.

[14:12] Now when this first return from exile happened, it would be interpreted by many in the light of the prophet Isaiah's words that Israel had finally paid in full or even double for her sins.

It was finished. The golden age had arrived. But God wants the people to know that the end of sin has not taken place yet, not even close in Daniel's time.

There would be more events to come and there would be more troubles to come that would turn the people of God back to him and that would reveal the judgment upon the people of God.

There would be a set of events in the second century BC and then of course there would be the set of events in the first century AD.

Now the angel goes on to break down this 70 times 7 years and we should understand I think that he's not talking about 7 years as literal blocks of time.

[15:25] So this weeks of years being literal blocks of time. Sometimes it works out that way and I think that's in God's providence here but the most important thing for us to remember is that the week of years is a relative period of time.

It's known by God. It's bounded. It's under God's control. It will work out to some historical circumstances but it will have another layer that is not a literal it was 490 years.

So he says in verse 25 Know therefore and understand from the time that the word went out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the time of an anointed prince there shall be seven weeks or seven weeks of years.

So this is probably the time that Jeremiah was prophesying in captivity. He got carted off to Babylon as well. That the return was imminent.

And then the end of that period is when they got a high priest so the anointed prince here means a high priest back in the service of the temple in Jerusalem.

[16:40] So it's like starting back up the worship to God. So that's your kind of first bounded time seven weeks of years and in fact it would be around 50 years that that would happen to the next high priest called Joshua.

Then the angel says there'd be a long period of time where the city of Jerusalem and the temple would be rebuilt. But that wouldn't be an easy time. It wouldn't be the golden age and you can read in Ezra and Nehemiah that it was nothing like the golden age.

There was opposition from without and from within. There was still idolatry. There was still syncretism. That is mixing of pagan religions with the Jewish religion.

There was opposition from the neighboring countries and the different powers. So the angel says and for 62 weeks it shall be built again with streets and moat but in a troubled time.

Then he goes on in verse 26 after the 62 weeks an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing and the troops of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.

[17:49] Its end shall come with a flood and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. He shall make a strong covenant with many for one week and for half of the week he shall make sacrifice and offering cease and in their place shall be an abomination that desolates until the decreed end is poured out upon the desolator.

Now once again this end the focus of the prophecy is the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. You remember me talking about him a couple of weeks ago this guy this ruler who was a Seleucid kind of who took over from those who took over from Alexander the Great he was so arrogant that he'd given himself this name Epiphanes which meant I am God in your midst how good am I and he would invade Jerusalem and kill the high priest that is the anointed one here in verse 26 he'd ransack both Jerusalem and the temple the angel then predicts what would happen in response faithful Jews led by a guy called Judas Maccabeus would war against this bloke Antiochus and his army and they would suffer many losses it was a terrible time some Jews would betray their own people Antiochus would stop the sacrifices in the temple and he would finally bring the ultimate insult as we've heard a couple of times already the ultimate desolation defiling the altar the temple by placing a pig on it and sacrificing this pig to the pagan god

Zeus this is what the angel calls the abomination that desolates just the most horrifying thing you can think of in the temple to the one true God however there will be decreed an end that God will pour out on the desolator and his reign will come to an end Jews will once again rebuild their land and their way of life and their zeal for the Lord will increase again now for Daniel having been reflecting on the 70 years coming to an end and maybe starting to feel hope this wasn't good news for the people in the second century reading this book it was kind of good news but maybe they were reading that it was going to get worse before it was going to get better yes God would bring it to an end but even for those people in the second century and their descendants there was a sense in which the word still pointed towards something that hadn't yet taken place

I mean think again about those words in verse 24 to finish transgression to put an end to sin and to atone for iniquity to bring in everlasting righteousness to seal both vision and profit and to anoint a most holy place they are exalted words are they not they're huge promises and on one level in the second century AD yes vision and profit had been sealed all the things that had been predicted especially through Daniel came true the most holy place the temple was regained re-cleansed said aright once again but on another level it was completely clear that sin had not been done away with sacrifices still continued after all the effects of sin amongst people and between people and God are still abundantly evident the golden age of the Messiah the kingdom of God which this language is really describing had certainly not yet come and in fact the Roman Empire would then come in after their victory and make the people slaves again in their own country and it's this situation in which we find the people of Israel when Jesus is born and so we see that the prophecy has yet another layer sometimes scholars talk about

Old Testament prophecies as kind of telescoping they you know when you've got a telescope you can have it all bunched in together and you can just kind of see the start bit and the end bit but actually when you drag it out there's many more bits in between that have to come before that end bit and so when the angel keeps talking to Daniel about the time of the end there is a sense in

which there's an end for the Babylonian exile there's an end for the second century Antiochus Epiphanes war but then there's got to be another end doesn't there the true end to sin when the Lord Jesus Christ comes when he is born when he lives when he dies on the cross to make a final end of sin and then even further when he comes again to fully bring the kingdom in and we'll see in Daniel chapters 11 and 12 that there's an even clearer vision of that end the second coming of Jesus Christ to truly fulfill all that has been spoken to Daniel now we've just entered chapter 10 and you can relax there's actually not a heap of historical content in this chapter that comes in chapters 11 and 12 and you'll have a good nice break before we get to that but what we see here is that [23 : 55] Daniel has been maybe travelling it's three years into Cyrus' reign so take a breath that that revelation of the 70 weeks of years has finished but now Daniel is in three years later but it's clearly been on his mind he's been travelling or he in his vision travels to the Tigris River very common for prophets to have their visions on the edge of a river and he's with some people but they all flee when he has this vision and he's left alone when he looks up what he sees puts our puny pictures of angels on Christmas cards to shame have a look at the start of chapter 10 verse 5 before he'd seen the man

Gabriel but now he just sees this huge vision this awe inspiring figure and it's as though he'd kind of seen a little way into the heavenly realm before but now the gates have been just thrown open and he's seeing things as they truly are or as good as his brain can conceive them kind of reminds us of that time when Elisha and his attendant are being surrounded by the armies of the enemy and Elisha is not freaked out at all because he knows what is going on in the unseen supernatural realm but his attendant doesn't and so Elisha prays this prayer for him oh Lord please open his eyes that he may see so the Lord opened the eyes of the servant and he saw the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around

Elisha Elisha's attendant got a glimpse into the supernatural realm what was going on in the spiritual heavenly realms whilst Elisha was waging war or was being attacked by the enemy now here Daniel gets a glimpse into the spiritual or the supernatural realm and he sees this figure and there is so much in this vision that it kind of makes us think that this is no ordinary if you can use that term here ordinary vision of an angel it's almost language that describes visitation from God himself and a lot of commentators would say this is God flaming eyes face like lightning sound of his words like the roar of the crowd at the MCG this is massive this is God meeting Daniel but through an angelic messenger still

I think but whatever it is it is God and Daniel are having this meeting and he says my strength left me my complexion grew deathly pale I retained no strength and then I heard the sound of his words and when I heard the sound of his words I fell into a trance face to the ground if you've ever felt jibbed that us humans can't see what is going on in the supernatural realm then maybe Daniel's response will make you think again there is a reason why God shields our awareness from this realm for the majority or for some of us the entirety of our existence it is terrifying terrifying can you imagine if we actually could see what is going on even in this church tonight our flesh would fail we are weak and vulnerable we think that we are so competent and you know scientific and accomplished and progress and all of that but if we truly if God didn't protect us from seeing the spiritual realm we would be on our faces all the time because we would be terrified but do you know God sees us as precious even though we are weak as image bearers even though we are breakable and that's what Daniel then experiences both in verses 10 and 11 and 15 to 19 the angel comes with gentleness comes with words and touch of strengthening comes with love says you are beloved don't be afraid be strong and courageous and Daniel is strengthened now we've got lots of content to look at later but I want to end tonight on this topic that we began with angels good and bad now just like last time we see that the angelic messenger has been sent to Daniel as soon as Daniel prays but something strange happens now in this situation three weeks have elapsed between the time when the angel was sent and the time when he arrives and he gives a very sobering explanation in verse 13 the prince of the kingdom of

[30 : 02] Persia opposed me 21 days three weeks so Michael one of the chief princes came to help me and I left him there with the prince of the kingdom of Persia and have come to help you understand what is to happen to your people at the end of days now when he talks about the prince he's not talking about a human prince he is talking about a powerful angelic or demonic ruler it's interesting in the last few decades in Christian writing and thought there's been a new movement that has attempted to think on a very macro level about spiritual warfare now when I talk about

spiritual warfare I mean that it's true that Satan and his demons want to attack

Christians we're in a battle the apostle Paul talks about that all the time we don't need to argue about that but there's this movement that talks about spiritual warfare on this kind of macro level and talks about engaging territorial spirits and what they mean by that is that there is some kind of powerful demon over a particular city or country or government and if the Christians want to reach that city or government for Christ they need to discern kind of what that evil spirit is all about and they need to work out how to either kind of cast him out cast him down or how to thwart his particular plans for that particular place and there are many groups it's particularly big in ministry in South

America there are many groups that have you know tell these amazing stories that they've sensed this particular territorial spirit over an area and you know it could have been like a maybe a demon masquerading as a tribal god or a spirit of pride or you know freemasonry or something and then when they pray against that and do all their warfare things they see a new and greater fruit in evangelism and they call that strategic level spiritual warfare now you all perked up like to say when I've been talking about this and it is fascinating isn't it but whether we've kind of you know if we heard about it a lot or not we kind of automatically think oh it's a bit kooky a bit you know superstitious or you know a bit wacky well I think there is much about it that's kooky or wacky particularly some of the practices that they kind of you know describe that you know don't really have a basis in the bible but we actually have here in Daniel definitive evidence that territorial spirits are no myth this is not a kooky doctrine this angel that has come to

Daniel was late because he was caught up in the spiritual war that was going on in the heavenly realms and he was particularly opposed he says by the prince of Persia that is the evil spirit whom Satan has kind of given responsibility over the Persian empire to turn them away from God to use them to turn others away from God and when he returns this angel says he's going to be fighting another evil spirit the prince of Greece and we know that that will be the next empire that will rise against the people of God and he says he's going to join with God's archangel Michael so they can call Michael your prince which is like a good angel and he's your prince for Daniel your in the plural he's the prince or the angel that has responsibility over to look after the people of God

Israel as I said not a view of the unseen world that is easy for us to take in but there are good biblical reasons for thinking that yes there are powerful evil spirits with special appointments from Satan over kingdoms like Persia and Greece in Luke 4:6 the devil took Jesus up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and then tempts him with these words to you I will give all this authority and their glory for it has been delivered to me and I give it to whom I will now Satan is a liar and he has an inflated view of his power in relation to the sovereignty of God but under God it is actually true that Satan is as 2 Corinthians 4 says the god of this world and it's probably true as we can see in Revelation 13 that he gives his power to those who worship him and he's called in Mark 3 the prince of demons now the

[35 : 45] New Testament tells us the job of the prince of demons job is taken on himself is to darken the minds of unbelievers he deceives the world he plants his weeds throughout the world he takes people captive to do his will he plucks up the seed of the word when it is preached he thwarts missionary activity he throws ministers into prison and if this is what satan does then we can assume that this is what his sub princes do as well and this is exactly why the prince of the kingdom of persia tried to hinder the messenger from reaching daniel because the messenger was bringing a message of truth verse 21 the messenger says to daniel but i will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth but satan is about lies satan is a liar a deceiver from the beginning the main aim of him and all his princes is to keep the truth from being known and believed see the truth frees people says in john 8 it sanctifies people it says in john 17 so the territorial spirits like the prince of the kingdom of persia do their main work of corruption and destruction by making sure the truth doesn't get through or blinding the people of their area to the truth of god now for daniel if this truth didn't make it through what might happen one his people might relax and think we're home safe it's over we've returned we can just relax we don't have to be on our spiritual guard anymore or they might have thought hang on a second everything started to go wrong again god hasn't fulfilled his promises he's not a faithful god the covenant hasn't been upheld or they might not realize that god actually does have it all in control they might not realize that god has the end already decreed for their different desolators across the centuries the truth would strengthen them set them free sanctify them and the prince of persia wanted to stop the angel from bringing it to daniel now how should we

conclude on these things for our time today ought we to start to pray against the evil spirit that has been given charge of doncaster of manningham of melbourne well maybe it wouldn't be unbiblical to understand that there are high ranking demonic powers over various cities regimes dominions governments and that they work to create as much evil and corruption and spiritual darkness as they can and strive to interrupt our evangelism our unity our mission our ministry as much as they can but what do we learn from

Daniel about how to engage in this war firstly we learn that he had no idea what was going on in the heavenly realms he actually wasn't called to work it out and to pray against it specifically but what he was doing was praying his normal faithful confessions adorations all of that leaning on the grace of God proclaiming the gospel as he had it in the old testament and all of that was actually part of his warfare he didn't know what was happening in those three weeks but there was a prompting in him to just keep praying and mourning and fasting and all of that and I think that as he was doing those normal faithful things

God was using that in the spiritual realms there was stuff going on stuff that Daniel could know about his normal needing to pray as he reflected on the scriptures and stuff that God knew about and the angels knew about that he couldn't see and it wouldn't have mattered if it was revealed to him or not in a sense he was still playing his part he was still doing what he was called to do in the New Testament Paul says that we have weapons of warfare that are that are effective against demonic powers but those weapons of warfare are the things we are called to do as disciples day in and day out we are to exercise our faith we are to stand on the truth of God's word we are to trust in the power of

Jesus blood we are to proclaim the gospel we pray yes we pray against evil spirits but if we don't know what is going on in the spiritual realm that is okay that is okay by God because he knows and he's got it in control we just need to pray what we can see and pray for each other we think someone's being afflicted by a demon yes we can pray you can see that in the New Testament but if we don't know what spirit there is over Doncaster that's okay but we can pray for Doncaster we can pray for the gospel to go forth we can pray that God would send his angels to fight against the demons over Doncaster that is a good thing to pray second of all for today we need to know that there is a spiritual battle going on behind the normal natural conflicts and troubles that we see in our life there is a spiritual battle going on for

Daniel the fact that they mention prince of persia and prince of greece is supposed to say to him there's a spiritual thing going on here it's not just Cyrus and Alexander the great that are coming along there is a spiritual battle going on behind the troubles and the conflicts that you see we need to know that Paul says in the New Testament that our fight is not against flesh and blood but against the powers and the principalities and the rulers of this dark age there is a spiritual battle going on behind what we see and so we ought to battle that out not between each other not humans fighting humans not getting gnarly and angry giving people the cold shoulder instead praying against Satan's work to attack the unity of the church thirdly we need to know that that demons are not rivals of

[43 : 42] God could you see the hierarchy in this picture in Daniel God is God fighting against the demons it is God in charge of absolutely everything and then the angels and demons and humans and humans pictorially what's up and down and all of that but can you understand that it's not the demons fighting against God God knows God can send his angels to do his bidding God is in control and in fact where we stand in salvation history after the death and resurrection of Christ we have so many promises in the New Testament of how not only are the demons no rival for God they have been absolutely triumphed over they have been disarmed let me read to you from Colossians 3 God made you alive together with

Christ when he forgave us all our trespasses erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands he set this aside nailing it to the cross he disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them triumphing over them in the cross that prince of Persia that prince of Doncaster they've been disarmed they have been made a public spectacle of when Christ died and broke the power of sin and death they continue to do their work but only for a limited time they continue to wage their war but they don't have power over those who trust in Christ you can call on the name of the Lord Jesus you can know that

God is in control we are in a battle there is an unseen spiritual realm God God is calling us to be more intensely faithful to be deeper disciples not to be kind of kooky superstitious whatever to be

deeper disciples to do as Daniel did to pray to seek wisdom and to follow the Lord all of our days let's pray Lord our God we just sit here tonight acknowledging that you are the Lord of Lords the King of Kings the most powerful the only wise God we acknowledge Lord that you have shielded us from things that would absolutely terrify us were we to see them we thank you Lord that you are indeed fighting a battle for our salvation in the spiritual realm we thank you Lord that the decisive victorious blow was landed when the Lord Jesus died and was raised again and Lord we sit and stand here tonight saying that we put our trust in him we stand in the power of his blood we proclaim the gospel we exercise our faith all in your strength Lord to your glory we ask Lord that you would continue to fight against the evil spirits that are working in our midst trying to turn us away from your truth trying to prevent it from reaching our friends our family our city our nation we pray Lord that you would use us use our prayers as you have ordained them in the spiritual battle so that more would come to know you and that we would be sanctified and set free day in and day out by your truth we pray in Jesus name Amen