

(This is written to give you good things to enjoy, because look again at what Paul told Timothy (1 Tim 6:17-18)! I think he was thinking of us at the time: **17 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be conceited and not to put their hope in the uncertainty of wealth, but in God, WHO RICHLY PROVIDES ALL THINGS TO ENJOY. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, and to be generous and ready to share...**) The following ice breaker is just a starter for your group. The message comes after the second bar. Please enjoy!)

CROWD BREAKER: What is the best news you heard this week? —The scribe

Note: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. The purpose is to unite, not divide; to fearlessly proclaim the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. The goal is to create memories from Sunday that will serve for a long time. BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study. This study is also a great devotion, taken slowly through the week.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions raised by Pastor Mark's message from this Sunday. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.**

The video: Jesus is standing at the door

The door is either to keep people out or keep people in. **How does this work?**

Daniel 10 Angels, their purpose and the power of prayer.

1In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a message was revealed to Daniel, who was called Belteshazzar. The message was true, and it concerned a great conflict. And the understanding of the message was given to him in a vision.

2In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three full weeks (21 days). **3**I ate no rich food, no meat or wine entered my mouth, and I did not anoint myself with oil until the three weeks were completed. **Describe the elements of this fast in your own words. Why was he**

in mourning? Do you remember Daniel's fast in the first chapter, around 605 B.C., where he refused the king's rich food? This fast is happening now around the year 537, 68 years later. Do you think Daniel's first fast was only temporary, that at a certain time, he began to eat like everyone else? Mark mentions that Ezra and Nehemiah are contemporary to these events...***Why does it matter? What were they doing concerning the return and restoration?***

4On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, **5**I lifted up my eyes, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. **6**His body was like beryl, his face like the brilliance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of polished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.

7Only I, Daniel, saw the vision; the men with me did not see it, but a great terror fell upon them, and they ran and hid themselves.

8So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision. No strength remained in me; my face grew deathly pale, and I was powerless. **9**I heard the sound of his words, and as I listened, I fell into a deep sleep, with my face to the ground.

10Suddenly, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. **11**He said to me, "Daniel, you are a man greatly loved. (***How important is this affirmation?***) Consider carefully the words that I am about to say to you. Stand up, for I have now been sent to you."

And when he had said this to me, I stood up trembling.

12"Do not be afraid, Daniel," he said, "for from the first day that you purposed to understand and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. **13**However, the prince of the kingdom of Persia opposed me for twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. **14**Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision concerns those days." ***Spiritual principle warning. Notice: When did God first answer Daniel's petition? Why did it take twenty-one days for Daniel to receive the answer? What would have happened, do you think, if Daniel had left off fasting on the fifteenth day, exhausted and discouraged? What does this suggest, concerning spiritual warfare and the part we play? How real are the forces? How real is the battle?***

Look up Ephesians 6:10-20 **10**Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. **11**Put on the full armor of God, so that you can make your stand against the devil's schemes. **12**For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this world's darkness, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ***Spiritual principle warning: Notice with whom we fight. Why is it important to NOT wrestle "with flesh and blood?" Where are the "heavenly***

realms" where evil forces dwell and rule and make war? Where is this battle being waged? How are you doing?

13Therefore take up the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you will be able to stand your ground, and having done everything, to stand. **14**Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness arrayed, **15**and with your feet fitted with the readiness of the gospel of peace. **16**In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. **17**And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. **18**Pray in the Spirit at all times, with every kind of prayer and petition. [Scribes note: The Greek says, "by means of praying in the Spirit at all times. **Why is it so vital we pray in the Spirit?**] **Take a moment to talk about the armor. What do you notice?**

To this end, stay alert with all perseverance in your prayers for all the saints. **19**Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will boldly make known the mystery of the gospel, **20**for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it fearlessly, as I should. **Tie this passage to what Daniel was doing in prayer and fasting. What is the result when we pray? Who else gets involved? Why is it encouraging to know that there are battles in heavenly places being fought on our behalf?**

How does James confirm this when he says, "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much?" (James 5:16) What happens when we pray and do not lose heart? Jesus asked, "When the Son of Man returns, will He find faith on the earth? Answer Him. Are you expecting your prayers to work? Do you expect them to "change the environment" as you pray? Michael came as Daniel prayed. Did Daniel pray to angels? Why not? But do angels respond? Why? Who sent the angel the moment Daniel prayed? (Look above again, at verse 12. Look again at chapter 9: 23) At the beginning of your petitions, an answer went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are highly precious. When, did the answer get sent out that time? How soon after the prayer? Talk about the importance of perseverance.)

What happened when we prayed the Lord's prayer, the "Our Father," together? Look closely at that prayer: What elements do you see? Are there references to angels or saints? (No!) But how central is the will of God to this prayer? How important is it to know God's will, as Daniel did when he prayed? How do the angels respond when we pray like this, in like faith?

Daniel 10: **15**While he was speaking these words to me, I set my face toward the ground and became speechless. **What is the fruit of a visitation like this?** **16**And suddenly one with the likeness of a man touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and said to the one standing before me, "My lord, because of the vision, I am overcome with anguish, and I have no strength. **17**How can I, your servant, speak with you, my lord? Now I have no strength, nor is any breath left in me." **Why the lips?**

18Again the one with the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me. **19**"Do not be afraid, you who are highly precious," he said. "Peace be with you! Be strong now; be very strong!"

As he spoke with me, I was strengthened and said, "Speak, my lord, for you have strengthened me." **How powerful were the words the angel spoke?**

20"Do you know why I have come to you?" he said. "I must return at once to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I have gone forth, behold, the prince of Greece will come. **21**But first I will tell you what is inscribed in the Book of Truth. Yet no one has the courage to support me against these, except Michael your prince. **Look how Gabriel describes this conflict. How detailed is he? What can we learn from this? Is the prince of Persia a "good guy" or a "bad guy?" What about the prince of Greece? What kind of courage does it take to support Gabriel against these princes? What inspires that kind of courage? Why is the Word of God called the Sword of the Spirit? How did Jesus use the Word of God when battling Satan in the wilderness for forty days?**

How important is it to take time to pray for one another? What could you do to add to your prayer? Does fasting work? Pray now. Testify to the results.

What is your biggest takeaway from this message? What is your next step? —the scribe

Scribe's historic footnotes: Below is one of the most informative sites I've found regarding Cyrus' conquest of the city of Babylon. You will enjoy the stories behind Cyrus' own rise to the throne of the Medes and the Persians: [How Cyrus Conquered Babylon :: God's Kingdom Ministries \(godskingdom.org\)](http://godskingdom.org)

A further note on angels: **Look up Matthew 18:10**

10[See that you do not look down on any of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father in heaven. ...](#)**What does this mean? How important are the little ones? What do their angels do? How do we know the innocent are the apple of God's eye?**

Look at Psalm 91:11 does this give us enough evidence to say we have a guardian angel assigned to us? Or do we see that angels are ministers who are dispatched to help humans in time of need or to deliver important messages?