

Theology
THURSDAY



What is Theology Thursday?

- **open seminar, workshop;**
- **safe space to entertain real questions;**
(not necessarily to come to conclusions);
- **respectful, honest discussion**
(we are all learners with our own experiences).



What is the goal?

(RE)THINK & RESPECT

love God & love one another



TERM TOPIC

It's not what you think...



EVIL...

...is not what you think.



What is Evil?

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VIDEO: What is Evil?

What is helpful about this?

What is problematic?



GENERAL CAUSES FOR EVIL IN THIS WORLD



GENERAL CAUSES FOR EVIL IN THIS WORLD

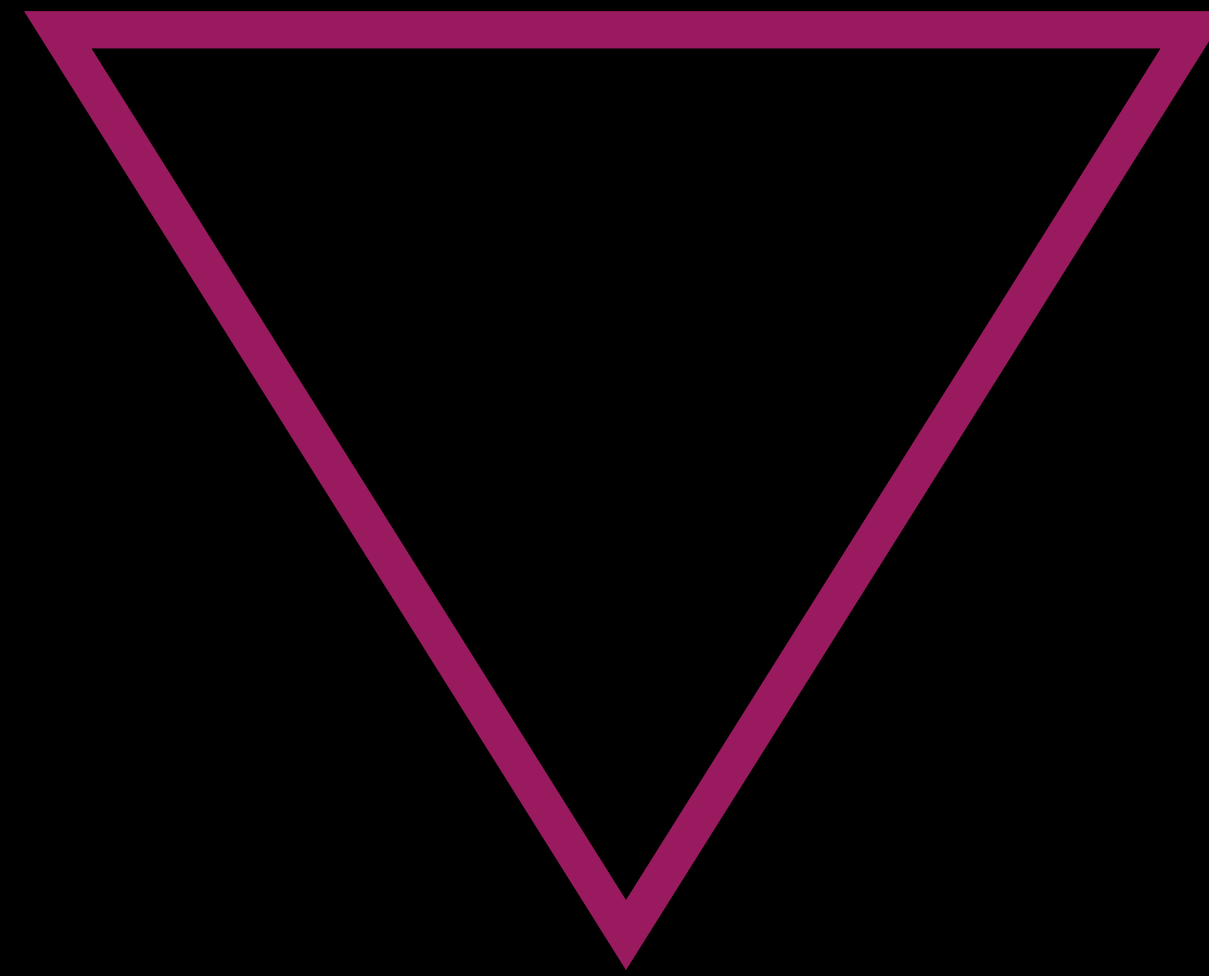
¹ As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,
² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of **this world** and of **the ruler of the kingdom of the air**, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.
³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of **our flesh** and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

Ephesians 2:1–3

GENERAL CAUSES FOR EVIL IN THIS WORLD

Actions of humans
“flesh” | sin in me

Absence of God
“world” | sin in the world



Activity of Adversary (Enemy)
“devil”

UNHOLY TRIANGLE OF EVIL



What do the Bible passages on the handout (and maybe those you recall) say about evil?



ABOUT THE UNSEEN WORLD...

(according to the Bible)



About the Devil / Satan...

Matthew 12:24–27

But when the Pharisees heard this they said, “He does not cast out **demons** except by the power of **Beelzebul**, the **ruler of demons!**” Now when Jesus realised what they were thinking, he said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is destroyed, and no town or house divided against itself will stand. So if **Satan** casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will **his kingdom** stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? For this reason they will be your judges.

- there is an enemy, labelled *Satan* (= accuser) and *Beelzebub* (= Prince Baal)
- this enemy has demon subordinates, “ruler of demons” (hierarchy)
- this enemy has a kingdom / domain
- Jesus & his kingdom overcome & cast out the enemy

About the **unclean** | **evil spirits** / **demons**...

Matthew 10:1

Jesus called his twelve disciples and gave them authority over **unclean spirits** so they could cast them out and heal every kind of disease and sickness. (...) 5 Jesus sent out these twelve, instructing them as follows: “Do not go on a road that leads to Gentile regions and do not enter any Samaritan town. 6 Go instead to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near!’ 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out **demons**. Freely you received, freely give.

Mark 1:23–27

And just then there was in their synagogue a man with an **unclean spirit**; and he cried out, saying, “What do we have to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are — the Holy One of God!” And Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet, and come out of him!” And throwing him into convulsions, the unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice, and came out of him. And they were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the **unclean spirits**, and they obey Him.”

- “**daimōn**” | “**evil spirit**” | “**unclean spirit**” are interchangeable in the NT

About the unseen world...

- demons | unclean (or evil) spirits
- “sons of god” (*b’nei elohim*, e.g., Gen 6:2, Ps 82:6)
- offspring of Genesis 6 “sons of god” and humans: *Nephilim*
- *Cherubim* (two wings?., e.g., Gen 3:24, Exod 25:19)
- *Seraphim* (six wings, e.g., Isa 6:2)
- angels (Heb.: *malach*, Gr.: *angelos* = messenger, no wings?)
- named angels (i.e. Michael, Gabriel)
- regional princes (“Prince of Greece”, “Prince of Persia,” see Daniel 10)
- “rulers [*archontōn*], (...) powers [*exousia*], (...) world forces [*kosmokratōr*] of this darkness, (...) spiritualities of wickedness in the heavenlies [*pneumatika tēs pōnerias*]” (Eph 6:12), “power” [*dynamis*] (...) “dominion [*kyrios*] (Eph 1:20f)
- etc...



“There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.”

C.S. Lewis to J.R.R. Tolkien in the Preface to *The Screwtape Letters*

About the unseen...

What do *you* do with the Bible's worldview?

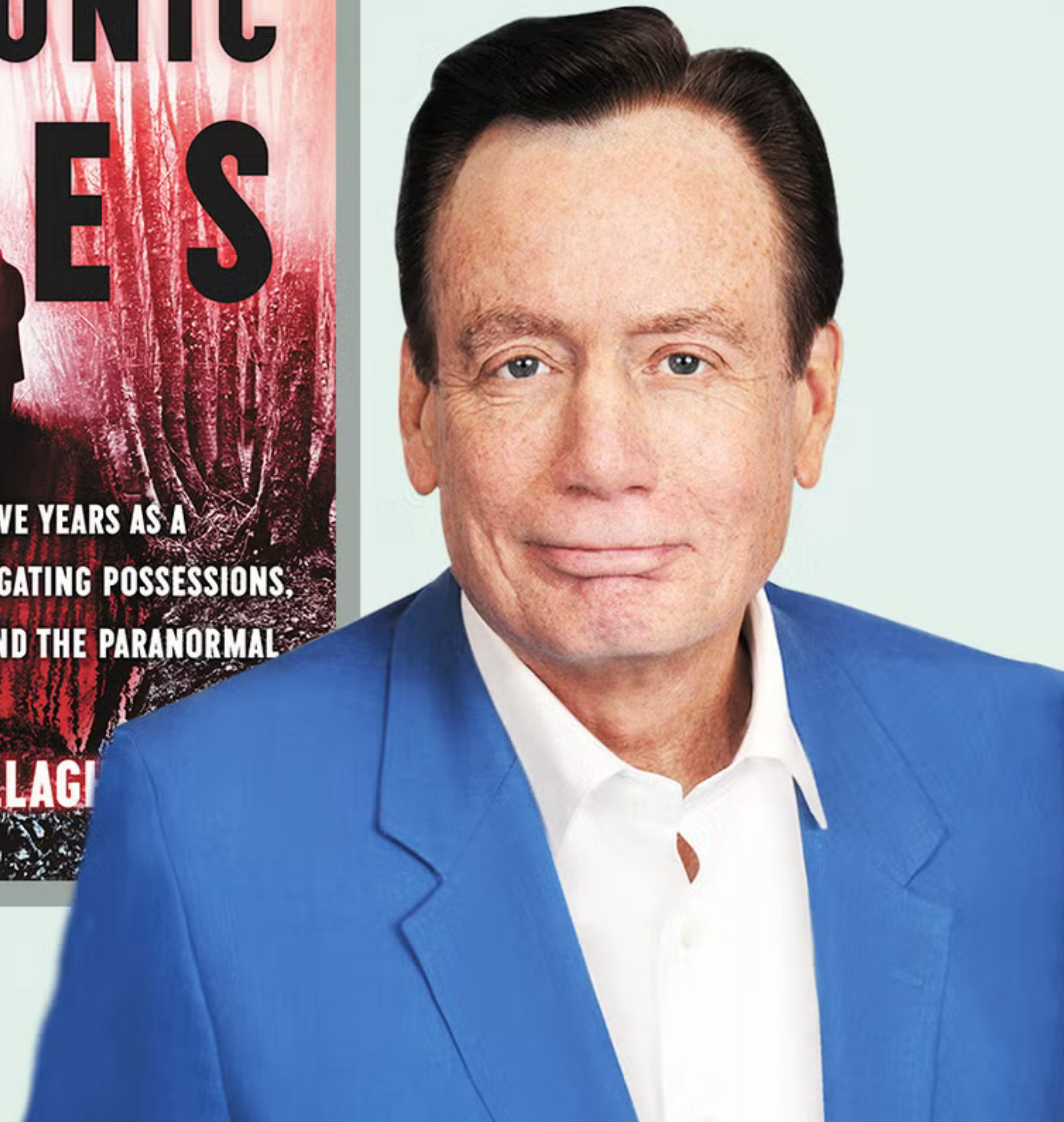
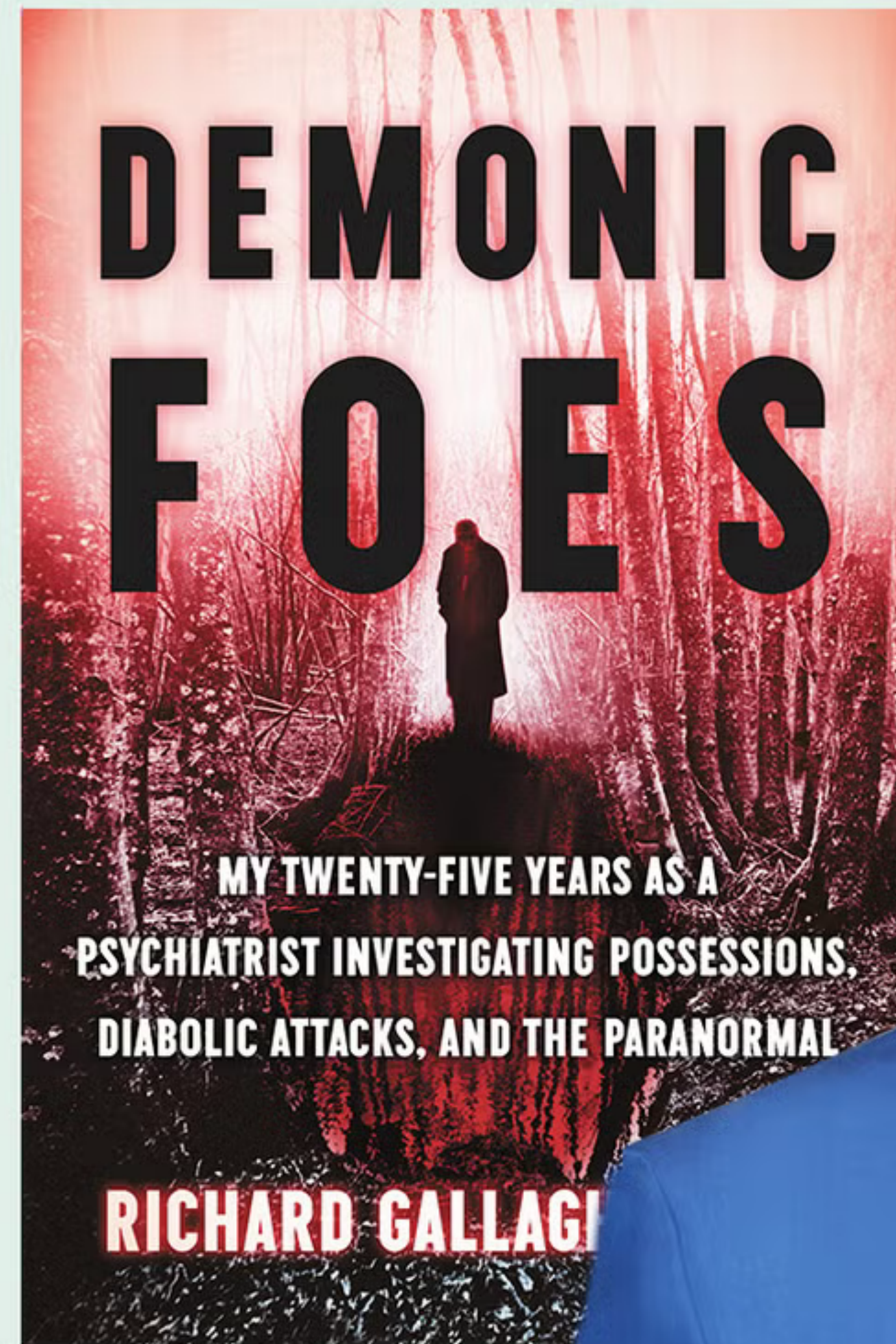
Do you (really) think there are beings like angels & unclean spirits etc.?



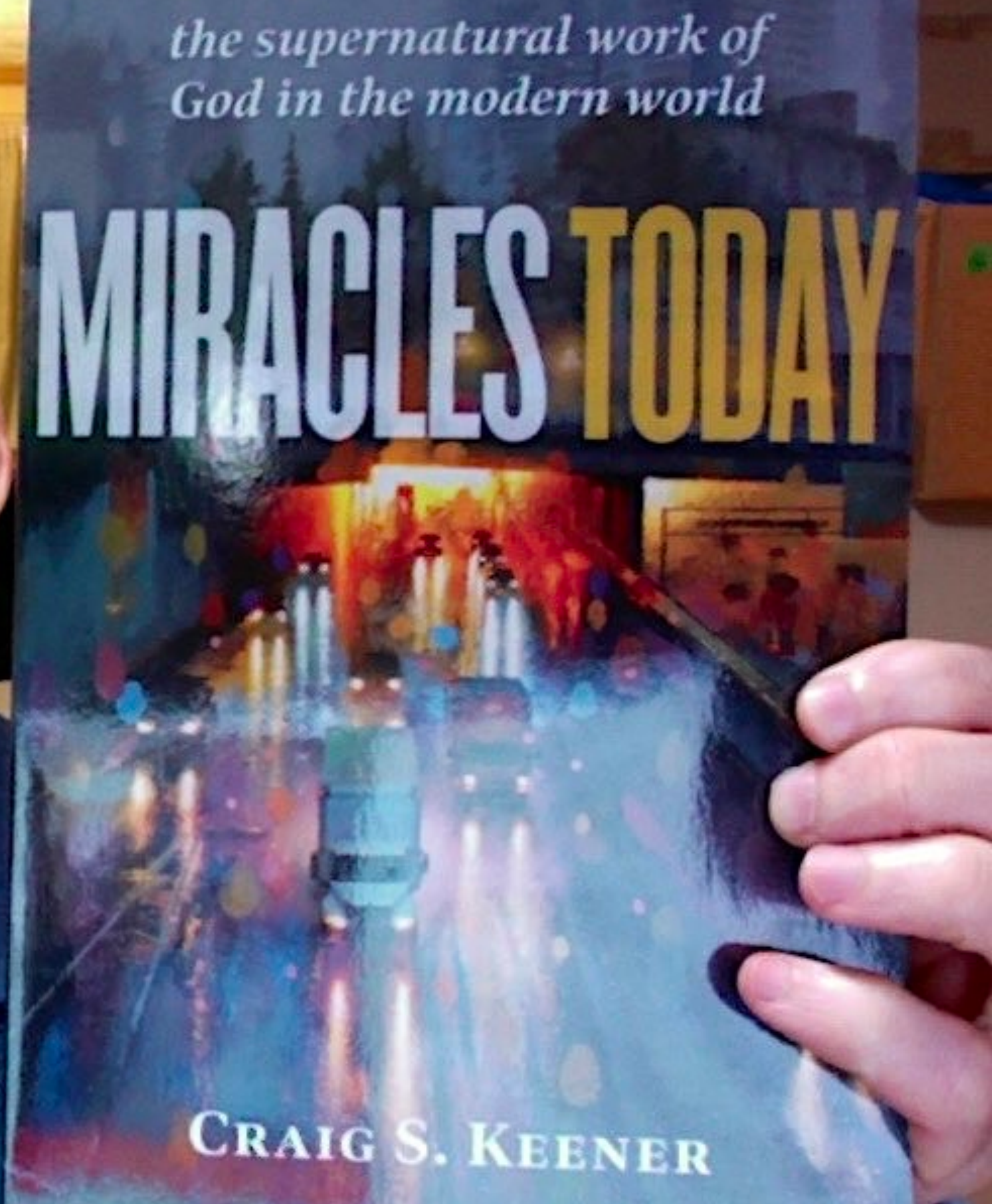
ABOUT THE UNSEEN WORLD...

(according to a medical professional)





Dr Richard Gallagher



About the unseen...

Do you have or know of credible experiences with spirits or angels?

Are you brave enough to share one of these experiences?



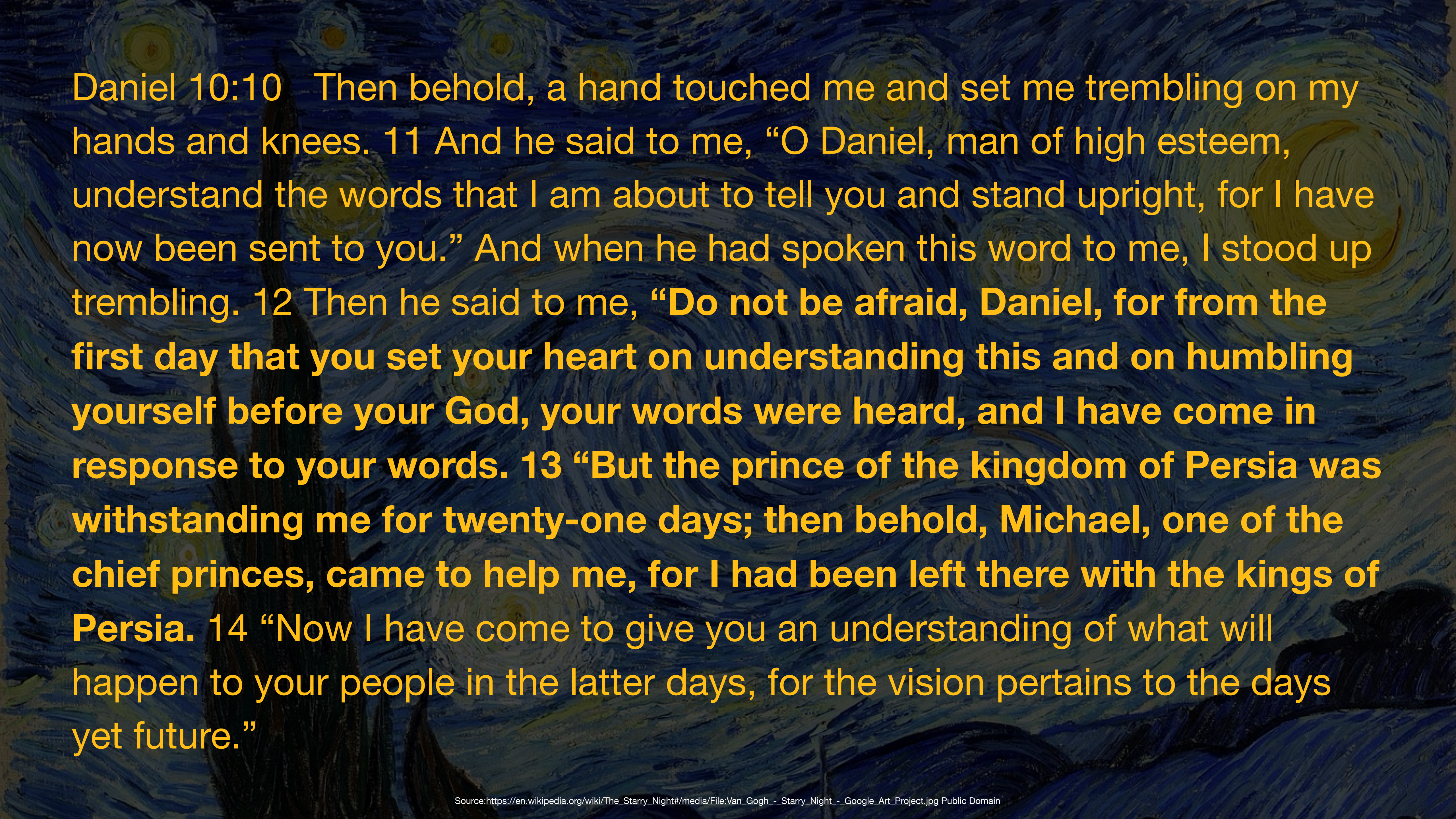


WarfareView

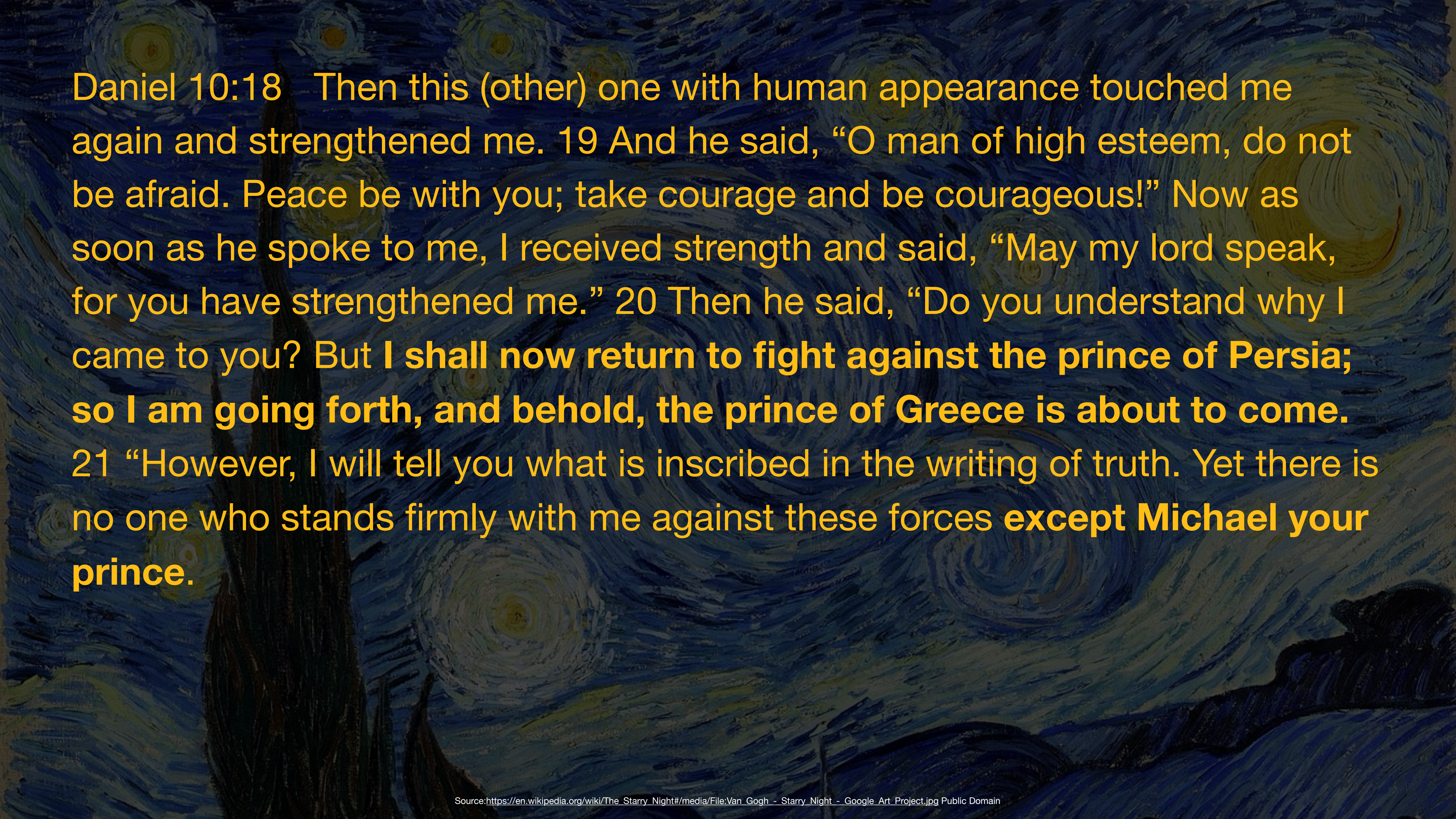


WarfareView

Daniel 10:1–14

The background of the image is a reproduction of the painting 'The Starry Night' by J.M.W. Turner. It features a dark, swirling blue sky with numerous bright, glowing stars and a prominent crescent moon. Below the sky, there are dark, silhouetted trees and a body of water reflecting the light from the sky. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

Daniel 10:10 Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. 11 And he said to me, “O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you.” And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. 12 Then he said to me, **“Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. 13 “But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, 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 give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future.”**

The background of the image is a reproduction of the painting 'The Starry Night' by J.M.W. Turner. It features a dark, swirling night sky with prominent, luminous stars and a crescent moon. Below the sky, there are dark, silhouetted hills and a small, dark structure on the left, possibly a church spire. The overall color palette is dominated by deep blues, blacks, and whites, with some lighter, yellowish-green highlights from the stars and moon.

Daniel 10:18 Then this (other) one with human appearance touched me again and strengthened me. 19 And he said, “O man of high esteem, do not be afraid. Peace be with you; take courage and be courageous!” Now as soon as he spoke to me, I received strength and said, “May my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.” 20 Then he said, “Do you understand why I came to you? But **I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come.** 21 “However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces **except Michael your prince.**

Implications

- if true, there is conflict / war between various (angelic) princes
- this conflict impacts prayer responses & presumably political events
- God is not always to be blamed for so-called “unanswered prayer” (see also 1 Peter 3:7)

Daniel 10:1–14



Warfare View

The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning.

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

1 John 3:8



Warfare View

And having **disarmed** the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, **triumphing** over them by the cross.

Colossians 2:15



Warfare View

Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him **who had the power of death, that is, the devil;** and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

Hebrews 2:14–15

Why this topic? What's the point?

- If the Bible's Worldview with all these entities in conflict is real (if evil is more what you think), then we need to adjust our practice & understanding of the world and our personal lives accordingly...
- If evil can be personified (and not just abstract) some of the things happening in our (personal) world might be more complex...
- This makes more sense of our experience, the world is at war...
- We need to understand our role in this conflict...



Vacationing in a War Zone

<https://reknew.org/2016/09/vacationing-war-zone/>



Q&A



UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUAL WARFARE



FOUR VIEWS

Walter Wink
with Gareth Higgins
and Michael Hardin

David Powlison

Gregory Boyd

C. Peter Wagner
and Rebecca Greenwood

Edited by James K. Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy

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Crucial Questions *about* Spiritual Warfare

CLINTON E. ARNOLD

SATAN AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL



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Foreword by **Carlos Annacondia**

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C.S. Lewis to J.R.R. Tolkien in the Preface to *The Screwtape Letters*

SIN...

...is not what you think.

Next Week, 29 May 2025
19:00 @ Worldview

