



## How to be a Good Christian Soldier

### Part 4: Fasting and Spiritual Warfare (Sept 2002)

In our last issue we looked at the example of prayer and fasting found in Daniel 10, and I pointed out that in verse 12 the angel told Daniel that his prayer for understanding was answered immediately when Daniel *began* praying and fasting. Therefore, his ongoing fasting served not to initiate an answer from God but to help overcome the spiritual opposition encountered in bringing that answer to him.

This connection between fasting and spiritual warfare is also seen in the New Testament, even in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who fasted forty days and nights in preparation for His major standoff with the devil in the wilderness (Mat. 4:1-11). At another time when Jesus' disciples asked Him why they were not able to cast a demon out of a boy, He told them that it was because of their lack of faith and then seemingly added, "This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting" (Mat. 17:21 NASB). Nevertheless, Jesus cast the demon out instantly.

In this latter example the demon affecting this child was possibly more resistant to the commands of the disciples because it was of a higher rank. Jude 8-9 indicate that with the higher levels of celestial beings it is often best to ask the Lord Himself to rebuke them. Perhaps they require a higher level of authority to be exerted, which is why Jesus achieved instant success with the boy. The Gospel passage would also suggest, however, that through prayer, fasting, and faith, man's "authority" might increase to the point of being able to address these beings successfully in the name of Jesus as well.

Fasting is mentioned many more times in the Scriptures but more frequently in connection to prayer than to overt spiritual warfare. However, because the command to pray in Ephesians 6:18 is integrally related to the preceding instructions concerning the spiritual armor, I believe that spiritual warfare is intrinsically involved in receiving answers to prayer whether we are aware of it or not. The example in Daniel 10 mentioned above clearly demonstrates this, along with the role that fasting somehow plays in spiritually "clearing the path" for the answer from God to be delivered.