



Important Questions Pt 2: Do You Really Understand the Spiritual War? CRCC Bible Study, Thursday June 8, 2017

Last Thursday, we asked “Do you really believe the Bible?” If you recall, we said there are at least *three views of scripture* held by those in the Church. Scripture is:

1. Neither Authoritative NOR Binding (Binding meaning mandatory and must be obeyed). This view says the Bible is not alone in containing truth; Scripture therefore has no special authority to command or conform behavior.
2. Authoritative, but NOT Binding (This view says Scripture IS God’s Word, but is subject to culture, circumstances, and personal vision)
3. Authoritative AND Binding (Man does not have the authority to disobey God; all of Scripture is inspired by God!)

My goal was to nudge you all towards the third view. :)

Then Sunday, as we talked through Ephesians 6:10-12, we said in part:

“...From the beginning of recorded history, biblical history, until now the reality of the spiritual war is evident. From the temptation by the serpent in the garden (called the devil and Satan in Rev 12:9), to the “sons of God” (bene ha-'Elohim) coming into the daughters of men in Genesis chapter 6, to the active principalities over whole regions mentioned in Daniel, to the explosion of overt warfare in the gospels (Jesus encountering many unclean spirits/demons), there is no doubt there is an unseen world and an unseen war in which believers are involved!

“We were reminded via the Text that we are *wrestling*. The image of two people “wrestling” is instructive. This is “hand to hand” combat. This is “in-close” fighting. The goal of wrestling is to completely subdue your opponent until he “taps out.” Those of you who have wrestled know how physically demanding and exhausting it is. Those of you who have fought physically also know that “everyone needs a ground game” since many fights end up as wrestling matches. ;) Our wrestling however is not against “flesh and blood.” We are engaged in a demanding, ongoing, vicious, and brutal fight against spiritual forces!

“We defined what Paul called **Principalities**. *Archē* in Greek. It means “*chief* (in various applications of order, time, place or rank): - beginning, corner, the first (estate), magistrate, power, principality, principle, rule.” The 1828 Webster defines it as, “The territory of a prince; or the country which gives title to a prince; as the principality of Wales.” It implies in context, wicked spiritual beings high in rank; think evil “archangels.”

I’d like to consider tonight’s question by going a bit further into the activity of angels. Since Paul himself framed the battle in this manner, let us look a bit into texts normally not studied...

First Text: Daniel 9:20-23

1. “The man Gabriel” is, based on context, the Gabriel who delivered to Mary the news of her choice as the mother of the Messiah, and to the shepherds the news of the Messiah’s birth! (Luke 1:19, 26). He is said to stand in the Presence of God. His nearness to God is one reason he is considered an Archangel...or a *prince* or *chief* among angels. (Gabriel is also mentioned in Dan 8:16-26 where he helps Daniel, by command, understand a vision.)

2. Gabriel, apparently, was “caused” to fly swiftly to Daniel. His mission was to give Daniel insight and understanding.
3. He makes a statement in v23 that should get our attention. The KJV says that at the beginning of Daniel’s supplications, “the commandment came forth.” ESV: “*At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly loved. Therefore consider the word and understand the vision.*”
4. Consider friends...that this mighty angel was commanded to move at the prayers of a man! Heb 1:14 tells us that angels are “ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation.”
5. This is amazing! And it gives us insight to how things function in the spirit realm.
6. Now...what sort of man was Daniel that such a thing took place? There are many things we could consider (his refusal to eat the King’s idolatrous food (Dan 1:5-15) or his faith after being thrown in the lion’s den for praying to God as examples (Dan 6)). But I think the prayer that preceded Gabriel’s intervention teaches us all we need to know about the man, and can serve as a model for the type of praying that brings VICTORY in spiritual warfare.

Daniel’s Prayer Highlights (Dan 9:1-19)

1. He set his face to seek the Lord. (v3)
2. His prayer was mostly confession; Daniel had a great understanding of how God sees sin! (v4)
3. His prayer was self-effacing. He understood why God’s people had been punished! (vv5-6)

He was passionately and sincerely mourning! (*Jam 4:9-10 - Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.*) He knew that God is holy and man is not; He was humble enough to admit frailty of man (*bôsheth* in Heb; confusion KJV, shame ESV) regardless of one’s position! (vv7-8)

4. He called on God for mercy, again demonstrating a powerful humility! (v9)
5. He prayed for the whole Nation of Israel, admitting their rebellion. (vv9-11)
6. He knew God’s judgment was right and that God is yet righteous! (vv12-14)
7. He pleaded with God. PLEADED. Who prays like this anymore? (vv15-19)

Friends, no wonder we struggle in the spiritual battle. If we would humble ourselves, might we see increased victory? What if we sincerely prayed this way?

Second Text: Daniel 10:5-21

1. Again, there are some amazing things going on here. A few observations:
 - This “certain man” in verse 6 is definitely divine (as he resembles Christ, Rev 1:13-16) and is likely an angel since he was able to be withstood and needed help (v13).
 - If an angel, it is unlikely a human prince could have held him up for 21 days. Therefore, many believe “the prince of the kingdom of Persia” refers to a principality of some sort...a fallen angel with significant influence over a nation.
 - Again, it was the state of Daniel’s humble heart that moved heaven! (v12)
 - Michael is said to be “one of the chief princes” (an archangel) and had to assist the angel in question in his battle. (v13) Michael is also known to be the “prince” or angelic protector of Israel since he is called “your prince” in reference to Daniel (also Dan 12:1)
 - More is said in Scripture about Michael...

Jud 1:9 *Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.*

Rev 12:7-17 *And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. 12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. 13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. 14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. 15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. 16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

Let us be reminded that our Lord and King, Jesus, has defeated principalities and powers and triumphed over them by His cross! We also overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimonies that we belong to Jesus.

If you are one that “keeps the commandments of God and has the testimony of Jesus Christ,” you ARE the remnant of the seed of the woman and you will be attacked! THIS IS WAR!

2. So it seems at least possible that whole nations can be influenced by evil spirits. It seems those spirits are keenly interested in deceiving and promoting depravity.
3. It also seems like **our prayers matter...and subsequently the states of our hearts and lives before God matters...for out of our hearts and lives, we petition God in Jesus Name!**
4. Our LORD, in His sovereignty, has granted us the honor and responsibility to engage in the Unseen War. Friends, this is serious...and YOU matter.

Thank the Lord that although we are involved, it is in Jesus where true victory has been purchased:

Col 2:15 *And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*

Rev 20:10 *And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

Amen!