

Ephesians 6:10-12

Finally, **(After all I have taught you)** be strong in the Lord in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Intro: Do you believe in Angels? What comes to mind? Topic Spiritual Warfare (Plug in class), Over Time there has been a shift

What they will learn:

So today as we go through the scriptures, there are **three realities** that we are going to learn. What are these realities? The realities we are going to be looking at today will be this.

1. We are in a spiritual battle, 2. The enemy has been stripped of their defenses 3. We need to make a choice

All of these three come down to this: **Allegiance**

We need to make a choice of who we are going to stand with. Because at the end of the day. There is no neutrality. There is no neutral ground. We are either serving Christ or we are standing against him.

Question: Who are you going to stand with?

1st Reality: We are in a spiritual battle. All of us - this is what we have born into. Whether we like it or not. You're welcome.

Recap on Ephesus: Located in modern day Turkey, It was a pagan hotbed, Known for its sorcery, magic, charms, amulets. **It had what Temple that was built there?** Temple of Artemis- All around the Mediterranean for the festivals and rituals.

Acts:19 Christ Followers burned 50,000 drachmas worth of magic scrolls – Drachma – 1 silver coin/ days wage 136 years 10m 21days a lot of money

When they became a Christian: they stopped buying, selling, and making idols, stopped going to all of the feasts/rituals – Then the economy was losing money, Business owners were turning against Christians and wouldn't hire them. Same with those of the guilds, leather smiths/blacksmiths guild wouldn't hire them.

No job, no money to support their family - They were seen as: antisocial, unpatriotic, disrespectful to Artemis, a threat to civic unity. They were slandered, some beaten, there was mob violence against them.

And when Paul is writing this:

Everything they were experiencing, the out casting, the persecution he tells them – **It is not flesh and blood the you are wrestling against – It's not the people.** Are you sure Paul? Yeah, but it sure looks like the people. If it's not the people then who is it?

Angelic Host

In order to answer this, we have to go back to **Genesis 1:1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.** Orders Matters. It is saying that God created the Spiritual Realm first. Then the earthly realm.

According to scripture God created his heavenly family first:

Job 38:4-7 4 "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. 5 Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? 6 On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, 7 when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

So, as we see here scripture coming together as a whole: God created: Spiritual Real/Earthly Realm – Heavily Hosts- MS/ SOG – Rejoicing – 3d glasses- popcorn

So- We have the heavenly host- What does scripture say about them?

Sons of God (bene elohim) / Cherubim — throne guardians /Seraphim — derived from the Hebrew word saraph, meaning "to burn,"/ Malakim (Angels) – Messengers / Archangels — warrior leaders Michael/ Gabriel

These are the angelic hosts: Everyone was getting along great until 1 got prideful.

And who is this being? He is called: The “serpent” in Genesis” – The Dragon in Revelation, Ha Satan, The Satan- Adversary or Deceiver, Lucifer- the shining one, and, the evil one. These are not his name we really do not know what his name is, but this is the role he plays towards us. He is never named in scripture.

The Devil:

Who is the Serpent: He was a Cherub – A throne guardian. Ezekiel 28 tells us that he was full of wisdom and beauty, and was in Eden, in the garden of God – This is where he was anointed a guardian cherub. Scripture tells us that he was the seal of perfection - . But something happened – His heart became proud because of his beauty; he became corrupt and then tried to make a cosmic power grab self-exulting himself above the other heavenly host to overturn Gods order and enthrone himself. Through these acts and his deception of Adam and Eve he was cast down out of heaven out of the presence of God. And over time we see other fallen angelic hosts rebel against God as well.

So why is this important? Because these are the rulers, the authorities, the cosmic powers, and the spiritual forces of evil that we are fighting against. These are the powers deceiving mankind, these are the ones who are behind the scenes influencing and manipulating mankind to do their bidding. You might say Mike I don’t believe you.. Fine don’t believe me.. But explain to me .. News –Mass division, School shootings, mass confusion, murder, rape, stabbings, woman/child garbage – car- Dad hatchet/hammer burned..

Why? Because we do not wrestle against flesh and blood

Enemies Warfare:

Our enemy’s warfare is: Based on lies and deception

This is why Paul tells us: **2 Cor 4:4 “The god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, Why?---to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.**

Jesus tells us– the devil- is the father of all lies, he was a murderer from the beginning”

His tactics: Keeping people in spiritual darkness (blinding the eyes), deception, fear, distorting the truth, distractions, rebellion, false worship, and before Christ the power of fear over death.

The enemy’s strategy has always been through a counterfeit worship through spiritual blindness. Why? It is to keep people from knowing who God is, What Jesus has done, and What true freedom really is, And to keep them blind so they really do not know who they are worshipping.

This is why when Jesus sends Paul out and tells him in Acts 26:18 “I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God.

Listen: Blindness is not force, It’s deception. The enemy cannot force anyone to do anything. The Devil didn’t and cannot take authority, Humans yield it. “You are slaves to the one you obey” Romans 6:16

He is not God; He is not equal to anyway shape or form of God. He has no power over someone unless they believe him or fears him. It is only through our sinful desire, lusts, passions, and disobedience we relinquish any type of control.

So, these are nonbelievers. But, what about believers? The question comes up a lot – Can believers be possessed? Can a fallen angelic being

take possession over us? What do you guys think? No, If the Spirit of God comes and now dwells inside of me- Whose house is it? Gods House, His domain, there aint no squatters going to be allowed and just come in and take this place over.. We are now the walking tabernacle walking in the wilderness.

The devils real power: was the power over death that came from accusation

He could stand before God in his court and say: “They sinned” “They deserve death- Which is eternal separation from you” , They belong to me. The real power was more of a legal accusation and he was the prosecuting attorney.

That was until: Jesus steps on the scene.

Our Second Reality: The enemy has been stripped of their defenses

How is the enemy stripped of their defenses? Well, we have to go to his baptism.

What is the first thing that Jesus does in his ministry? He gets baptized. What happens?

Matthew 3:16

16 And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; 17 and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

This is not random affection: This royal language of enthronement. Ties back to Psalm 2: and Isaiah 42:

Psalm2: 6-8 “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.” 7 I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.

Isaiah 42: “I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations.

This is Jesus’ anointing as King and being commissioned, This God revealing him publicly to the world.

This is the same image of what happened to King David. David was anointed by God.

When King David was anointed, the spirit came upon him and then what happened next? He went to battle. He went and slayed Goliath.

What happened next with Jesus after his baptism? After his anointing?

He went into the wilderness, aka the enemy’s territory and fasted. Why? Not because he was on a 40 days cleanse, not because he just wanted to meditate, he was calling out the enemy.

The devil himself. I was going over this and the image of the old westerns kept popping up in my head. You know in those dusty towns.. the sage brush rolling by, the music.. and there is Jesus, just anointed as King going out to the Battle ground and facing out enemy.

Then the devil does what? He tries to tempt Jesus three times. And to no avail, the devil is defeated with what the Power of Gods Word.

Jesus confronts the enemy as the new representative of humanity, Where Adam failed in the Garden Jesus Won in the wilderness, He was also as the new Israel, where Israel was in the wilderness 40 years and doubted, disobeyed, and tested God, Jesus trusted and obeyed. **Now after concurring the Devil as: Jesus shows that HE is - The True Adam, The True Israel, and the True King.**

And as we see he begin his ministry he goes to the synagogue and opens up the Isaiah scroll, reads it and says, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand... It's here ...

Jesus Reclaiming What is His:

It's like Yahweh stepping into the flesh and stepping out and saying I'm back baby...

And you see this as Jesus encounters the demon possessed man, and it calls out to him- And he kicks him out of the man. And he continues making ground reclaim and showing his authority over the demonic,

then he also goes to the Gerasenes – to the place where the man who was possessed by Legion, and exercised them showing he had authority over them as well. This was not Israel.. This place was outside Israel.. This was part of the nations. If we go back to the Tower of Babel where God divided the nations and put the angelic host over the nations.. Then they went sideways. This is God saying I am taking it all back. I'm taking it all back...

Like the Goonies... All of it is mine. And we see this as he continues in his ministry showing that he has authority over all the demonic forces including death,

We see Jesus raise three people to life. Hey little girl wake up your not dead, hey little boy you are not either, **Yo Lazures, your my boy come on out man, stop playing... your not dead.. And he did this to show his power over death..**

And as we see him continue to his final earthly battle we see him not as a King clothed in armor. But a servant innocent lamb led to the slaughter, And as we spoke about that spiritual warfare with the demonic background, we see it play out in Jesus' trial, The hatred the Pharisees had for him, The mob mentality, Imagine the demonic

influence over that crowd.. This innocent person.. and the fallen just whispering over them... Crucify Him.... Crucify Him.. Crucify Him...

And as he was led like a lamb to the slaughter... and he was hung up on that cross beaten, unrecognizable,

Imagine all the demonic host rejoicing... We did it... We got another one... Look at this holy one of God now.. Pathetic... But what they did not know was that this was all a part of the plan. 1 Corinthians 2:8 "If the rulers of this age had understood it, they would have not crucified the Lord of glory"

Why?

Because every sin that we committed, every act of disobedience, every heinous crime ever committed , that punishment was placed on Jesus.. he took the punishment, the cup of Gods Wrath was poured out on him... And when he gave up his spirit to the Father...

The debt had been paid.. The power over death was no more... There is no more accusation against us, for those of us who put our trust and hope into Christ the debt and accusation has been paid and it is no more.

And Jesus at his death goes down to Sheol Hades and smacks around these guys holding the captives and set the captives free... **Now through his death, burial, and resurrection ...**

He has disarmed the rulers.. Colossians 2:15 "He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Now we come to the 3rd reality: We need to make a choice

Remember the question from the beginning, Who are you going to stand with?

Well ,its time to answer this question. Who are you going to stand with?

Jesus doesn't ask for our admiration, he doesn't ask for our part- time devotion.

He doesn't ask to be added to our lives. He asks for our allegiance-

Because loyalty is due to the King. In order to enter Jesus' Kingdom you must leave the other. This is why He says, Follow Me.

It's a transfer of kingdoms... From darkness to light, From The Devils Rule to Christ Rule, From Rebellion to Obedience.

And it all can be summed up as this:

There are Two Kingdoms: Gods – The devils

Two Masters: Christ – Sin

Two Realms: Light- Darkness

Two Families: Children of God – Children of the devils

Two Allegiances: To Christ – or Against Him

There is no neutrality, no middle ground.

What is your answer?

As Joshua calls out to the people of Israel: I say to you: Choose this day whom you will serve whether it is the god of this world or the King Jesus Christ.. As for me and my house, we will serve Christ. Lets pray....